

Zimbabwe quits Commonwealth

KAMLENDRA KANWAR
ABUJA, DECEMBER 8

ZIMBABWE'S decision to quit the Commonwealth upon the non-revocation of its suspension appears to have put headline African states like South Africa, Namibia and Mozambique on a collision course with hawkish White nations like JK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Zimbabwe's move has torn apart the facade of Commonwealth unity that had so assiduously been cultivated. The racial divide too has become sharper, sparking off fears that the ranks of those who sulk at White domination will increase in the coming months. This may not lead the aggrieved African nations from quitting the Commonwealth just year, but the emotional bond that binds the Commonwealth has predictably snapped. Even as the summit rolled out the red carpet for Queen Elizabeth II, the symbolic head of the Commonwealth, the

Nigerian daily *Daily Trust* lamented that the African Commonwealth members were allowing "that old wolf Britain" to dictate the guest list. It said they were being "tricked" into betraying Robert Mugabe, setting a precedent for victimizing any member-country which stood up to foreign interference in its internal affairs. The growing schism in the Commonwealth was also evident in the challenge posed to Secretary-General Don McKinnon's continuance for a second term. Though New Zealander McKinnon won by 40 votes to 11, the fact that his challenger Lakshman Kadirgamar of Sri Lanka managed to force a contest showed that the seeds of opposition to White dominance are germinating. Had Kadirgamar thrown his hat into the ring well before the summit, he may have got a few more votes. Even as host Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo took the initiative to set up a six-member panel to go into the contentious Zimbabwe issue on the inaugural

day of the summit, British Prime Minister Tony Blair was casting doubts over whether this was the right course. He said: "I think it would have been better to deal with it straight away but I think it's fine as long as we deal with it. I hope and remain reasonably confident that the suspension of Zimbabwe will continue." As for India, it may draw diplomatic comfort from the fact that Pakistan's re-admission was not even considered at CHOGM-2003. However, on the vital issue of Zimbabwe's re-entry, India's diplomacy left something to be desired. When this country was included in the six-member panel appointed by Obasanjo to work out a Commonwealth response to the contentious issue, the expectation was that India would exercise a sobering persuasive influence in defusing the issue. But so low key was India's participation, that the only other non-partisan member of the six-member panel, Jamaica, was chosen as its chairperson.

Indefinite extension of Zimbabwe's suspension

Abuja, Dec. 7 (Reuters): Commonwealth heads of state agreed today to extend indefinitely Zimbabwe's suspension from the group and appointed a seven-nation panel to monitor political dialogue and human rights in the country, a Zambian source said.

The 54-strong group of mainly former British colonies suspended Zimbabwe early last year on the grounds that President Robert Mugabe rigged his re-election and persecuted his opponents.

The heads of state agreed to appoint a seven-nation committee headed by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to monitor developments in Zimbabwe.

A Commonwealth spokesperson said he could not confirm the agreement and said the heads of state were still in the closed-door meeting. The Zambian source said the special committee would not have to wait until the next Commonwealth heads of state meeting in two years to report progress in Zimbabwe. "The chairman in consultation with the six wise men can recommend Zimbabwe's return before that," he said.

Quit call

Zimbabwe's ruling Zanu-PF party today said it wanted to leave the Commonwealth, shortly after the six-nation panel agreed to extend Zimbabwe's exclusion from the Commonwealth.

Chaos rules in Somalia

By Marc Lacey

THE RECENT sight of Black Hawk helicopters falling from the sky in Iraq prompts comparisons with Somalia, where the downing of a Black Hawk in 1993 spelt the end of an earlier experiment in stabilising a divided, violence-racked nation. A decade after the U.S. withdrawal from Mogadishu, Somalia remains an anarchic country without a central government, a reminder that the conditions that breed terrorism will still exist even if Iraq is eventually stabilised. A recent report prepared by the United Nations, for example, says that the terrorists who carried out last year's bombing of an Israeli tourist haven on the Kenyan coast used Somalia as a training ground, transit point and escape route.

In a series of recent peace conferences, African nations have been taking increasing responsibility for fixing their own problems. Somalia, too, is conducting peace negotiations, on a college campus outside Nairobi. But that is nothing unusual — this is the 14th round of talks in the 13 years since Somalia's last Government collapsed. The talks, punctuated by the occasional fistfight, underscore just how hard it will be to rebuild economic, legal and social structures that were long ago destroyed. This fall, two delegates to the peace conference have died in mysterious circumstances, one by gunshot and the other by strangulation. While investigators have yet to tie the murders directly to the talks, they filed charges this week against a former member of the Kenyan Parliament in

connection with the shooting.

Historically, Somalia has always been more a collection of widely scattered settlements and clans than a unified country. During the 19th century, the British took one chunk and the Italians another. Upon independence in 1960, Somalia became one, at least on the map. In 1969, after years of instability, an autocratic army general named Mohamed Siad

Barre seized power and kept Somalia together from 1969 to 1991, until the Cold War ended.

Today, the clan-ness is back in force with at least five different men claiming to be President of various portions of the country and scores of warlords who have divided up virtually every city block and remote village. U.S. attention is now focussed elsewhere, but the problems that beset Somalia a decade ago have festered.

One of the supposed Presidents is Abdirahman Barre Osman, the younger brother of Somalia's last leader, also has aspirations. It was the collapse of Siad Barre's rule that gave rise to Somalia's 13 years of chaos.

The lone woman in the race is Asha Ahmed Abdalla, who lived in the U.S. for 30 years and ran the Washington-based Somali Relief Agency. She faces an added challenge. It seems the men who have run Somalia into the ground do not think women are up to the job.

Of course, whoever emerges as the next leader will simply enter a crowded field of would-be, has-beens, pretenders and outright frauds. Somalia will almost certainly remain divided, a haunting reminder that the 'war on terrorism' will not be over even if calm someday replaces chaos in Iraq. — *New York Times News Service.*

ly, he took care of some key details: he hired a group of militiamen to protect him, a prerequisite for any leadership position in Somalia, and he opened an e-mail account with the address somalipresidency@yahoo.com.

Who can argue with that? Well, Abdikassim Salad Hassan, for one. He was elected President of Somalia at an earlier peace confer-

ence in Djibouti in 2000 that drew thousands of delegates but was nonetheless boycotted by some key clan leaders. Mr. Salad has acted as President for the last three years. He has named Ministers, moved into a presidential mansion in the middle of Mogadishu and insisted that he be granted the same level of respect as other Presidents during his world travels. But Mr. Salad has had a difficult tenure. The warlords who really control Somalia ceded him no more than a portion of Mogadishu. Several months ago, Mr. Salad's transitional government, which was given authority for three years, reached the end of its term. But with no clear President to replace him, Mr. Salad has hung on to the job.

Dozens of other Somalis who do not currently claim the title would nevertheless like to lay claim to it by

the close of the current peace negotiations. Delegates to the talks are going to first decide on the make-up of the 351-member Parliament. The lawmakers, carefully balanced to reflect Somalia's numerous clans, will then decide on the next leader. Selection Day is a moving target. It was supposed to happen in the summer. It might still occur this fall. If not then, next year is a distinct possibility. Nothing is a sure thing.

The candidates are a colourful lot. There is Hussein Aidid, a former U.S. Marine who is son of Gen. Mohammed Farah Aidid, whom U.S. troops were seeking during the ill-fated intervention in Mogadishu. He does not appreciate the term warlord that is typically attached to him. Abdirahman Barre Osman, the younger brother of Somalia's last leader, also has aspirations. It was the collapse of Siad Barre's rule that gave rise to Somalia's 13 years of chaos.

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A decade after the U.S. withdrawal, anarchy reigns in Somalia, a reminder that the 'war on terrorism' will not be over even if calm someday replaces chaos in Iraq.

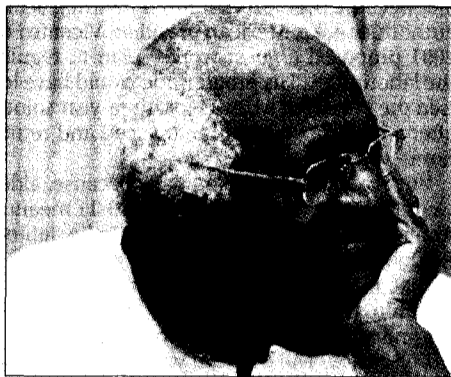
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THE HINDU
Magazine

Future and forgiveness

In an exclusive interview, Nobel Peace Prize winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu speaks to MUKUND PADMANABHAN about the significance of the truth and reconciliation process in post-apartheid South Africa.



One of the foremost figures in the fight against apartheid in South Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu was chosen by Nelson Mandela to head South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC, which worked with a restitutive, rather than a retributive, concept of justice, was set up to investigate the crimes committed by all sides during the apartheid regime. The commission worked on the unique basis of linking amnesty-granting to truth-telling and its hearings were challenged many times in courts of law before it published its final report a few months ago.

In 1975, Archbishop Tutu became the first black Anglican Dean of Johannesburg. A decade later, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace for his non-violent struggle to end apartheid. He chose not to directly associate with party politics, a decision that added to his considerable moral stature.

The Archbishop was in India for a fortnight between November 3 and 18 for what he described as a restful break. He and his wife Leah spent the entire period in Bangalore at the residence of their good friends, the former Ambassador to South Africa, L.C. Jain, and his wife Devaki. The India-New Zealand cricket match, and short visits to Mysore, Melkote and a nearby village to study the Panchayati Raj experiment were the only distractions in a period that was otherwise spent on walks, conversations, reading and sleep.

Archbishop Tutu wanted to spend this visit away from the glare of the media. However, he granted an interview to *The Hindu*, his only interaction with the press during his recent visit. In a conversation that was largely focussed on the TRC, he speaks about the significance of the Commission and the stress it laid on reconciliation, peace and forgiveness to secure the future.

Extracts from the exclusive interview.

THE Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up in South Africa as a compromise between those who wanted a general amnesty to relinquish power and those who wanted people to stand trial for their wrongful acts. Was this compromise absolutely necessary to reach at that juncture in South African history? And why?

ARCHBISHOP TUTU: THERE is no question at all about its appropriateness. And with every passing day, one marvels at the wisdom of this kind of arrangement, even if it may have been imposed by the circumstances. Look at the alternatives. Unfortunately, we have so many ghastly examples right around the world of those who have sought to try alternatives. Think of the experience of Pinochet and Chile, where they opted for a general amnesty. The past doesn't disappear, it has an uncanny capacity to return and haunt one. Pinochet is a very good example, because he thought he had sorted it out and that with his imprimatur everything would be (okay). But it wasn't.

I was in Germany when they were observing the 50 years after Nuremberg. The Germans feel an amazing resentment about what they call the 'victor's justice' that was imposed on them.

We would not have even made it if the (South African) security forces had known that, at the end of the negotiation process, they would have been arraigned. They would have subverted it. As we subsequently discovered, there were arms caches all over the country. I would say although it was a flawed process, it was the best thing we could have had.

How critical was Nelson Mandela for actually selling the TRC idea to the African National Congress (ANC) and his political constituency? Would it have been possible without a man of his stature?

When anyone asks, how did you accomplish what you did, one of the most critical elements in the whole mix is Nelson Mandela. Many people think it was a fairly straightforward matter for the ANC to have accepted this. But it isn't true. There were quite a few in that constituency who would have wanted to see people sort of high-jumped. But Nelson Mandela had the stature, the moral authority, the credibility that came from having spent 27 years in jail.

Aren't concepts such as reconciliation and

peace inherently incompatible with that of justice? Isn't there a paradoxical tension between them? Can justice be subordinated in the interests of reconciliation and peace?

I think when people speak of justice they almost always have one kind of justice in mind ...

Retributive? Retributive justice, yes. The purpose is punitive, setting out to punish the miscreant. But even on the basis of retributive justice, what we set out to do, didn't exclude it completely.

When a perpetrator applied for amnesty, it almost always was the case that the application had to be in open court, had to be public. Imagine what it meant when someone who had kept his identity as member of the death squad under wraps to say in full glare that "I unleashed the kind of thing that I did". In some cases, it was the first time that even wives got to know what their husbands were up to.

Quite a few even got divorced. So I would say that even just in terms of retributive justice, the process did not mean letting off the perpetrator. There was the public shame and embarrassment. But having said that, it is crucial to say that the process was based on restorative justice, where the fundamental purpose is healing.

When an offence has caused a breach in relationship, retributive justice clobbers the perpetrator. In fact, it leaves out of the victim completely. In our process, the victims were given the opportunity of telling their story. I was surprised by how potent telling one's story can be as therapy. We found that telling your story about what happened to a forum that was sympathetic was a form of rehabilitation.

The whole process premised on the principle of Ubuntu. This is the essence of being human. In our understanding a person can be a person only in relationships, not in isolation. Ubuntu speaks of compassion, gentleness, sharing, hospitality, embracing. Ubuntu is in our Constitution, certainly in our interim Constitution, that we will not pursue retribution and vengeance but seek to implement Ubuntu.

You say there is no future without forgiveness. Is forgiveness an absolute moral value? Or is it also a good strategy in conflict situations, a piece of realpolitik?

(Laughs) Take the Middle East as an example where forgiveness is not occurring. There, when one side clobbers the other, the

response is clobber back. It is a cruel playing out of a game where the alternative is that one side has to say, "Sorry". It is the same in a relationship between two people. When that relationship is upset, unless one of them admits that he or she has made a mistake, there is no future to that relationship.

One vital aspect of the work of the TRC, some would say the very one that invested it with real meaning, was related to the grant of amnesty. Isn't it true that most of those who applied were either already in prison or those who feared they would be implicated in some way? In your foreword to the TRC's final report, you suggested as much when you wrote that, "It was something of a pity that the white community failed to take advantage of the Truth and Reconciliation process. They were badly let down by their leadership".

The white leadership, by and large, was a very carping bunch. They missed out on the opportunity. They were faced with a remarkable, extraordinary, exhibition of magnanimity. The generosity of spirit came not only from black people. There were white people who were victims who were extraordinary for their generosity too. But the white leadership on the whole was critical of the commission, they ridiculed it. They said it was a witchhunt against whites, that it was biased towards the ANC.

Instead, the white leaders should have said to the white people, "You just don't know how lucky you are." They should have said that, "Instead of going on the rampage, these people want to extend a hand of fellowship to you. And that we must be as generous as we can in response to their generosity."

As it happened, the ANC did a stupid thing which helped our credibility. When the report was about to be published, we nearly didn't do so because the ANC took us to court claiming that the commission had criminalised the struggle. We based our findings not on our investigations but on the submissions we received. We praised the ANC for the extraordinary and frank way in which it acknowledged the things that happened that shouldn't have happened. For instance, they had a landmines campaign and many of the people killed were not those who they targeted. We said that human rights violations are human rights violations. If you torture for a good purpose, it is still torture. Anyone who reads the report will know how highly the ANC was praised. It carried out a just war struggle, but sometimes used methods that were unjust.

How far is the TRC model applicable to other countries. Can it be replicated and, if so, where?

We have been very careful not to claim that we have a blueprint for replication. But there are certain principles available in the process which are probably universally applicable. You have to deal with what happened during a conflict, you can't sweep it under the carpet. That is a fundamental principle which is applicable everywhere.

If you really want peace, a stable present and future, it has to be a process that enjoys the support of all those who are going to be involved in it. It should not be something that is imposed by one side or the other. Take Sri Lanka as an example. Are you going to deal with the atrocities that happened? Or are you going to cover up and say they did not happen and leave a festering wound? If you do the latter, sure as anything someone will say, "We remember such and such a thing happened" or that "We were treated in such and such a fashion by this or that group." Unless all of this is brought into the open, it is going to imperil the future.

Then, there are the questions that you yourself raised earlier. How are you going to relate justice to reconciliation? What do you do with those who regard themselves as victims? People want to know the truth. For instance, they may want to know, "What happened to my child?" Or, "Who gave the orders for this?" When someone has been abducted, killed and buried secretly, the family is not going to simply effect closure. The truth hurts but it can heal.

The TRC recommended reparations for victims. What do you feel about this being held up for so long?

We have been very distressed by this. But as it happens, I was looking at our newspapers online today and there is a report that the Government has in fact gazetted ... that they are going to set



K. GOPINATHAN

forth the process of paying. Almost everybody, that is the 2,000 victims we identified, is going get 30,000 (South African) rands. This is a quarter of what we recommended.

Julius Nyerere said more than once that until South Africa was liberated, the rest of Africa will be in ...

Bondage. Yes, bondage. What impact has liberation had on the rest of the continent?

One of the most significant things, is a sense of pride. People can point to Nelson Mandela, point to someone who is universally admired and say that he is an African.

You have been quoted as saying that you are not a pacifist and that violence can be acceptable if the moral tone of a society falls. But is it possible to draw a clear line where peace and non-violence may be given up in favour of violence, even war?

We need to have a situation where all kinds of non-violent ways have been attempted to bring about change. But there can be a justification for resorting to force. Certainly there is doctrine of a just war, which the church has enshrined. I believe that force can be used as the last resort, as the very, very last resort.

When did you first become aware of Mahatma Gandhi?

One has always been aware of him in a sense. In the 1950s, we had a passive resistance campaign in South Africa. I was in high school. I was quite aware that there was an influence from this man who showed us a ray of hope.

There have been a spate of attacks on farmers in South Africa over the last few years — 1,500 farmers have been killed according to estimates. A Government-constituted inquiry suggests that these are not attacks against a racial minority, that the motives are not political but criminal. However, some people have drawn parallels with Zimbabwe. Is this parallel overdrawn?

The parallel isn't applicable at all. In Zimbabwe,

it has been totally disorderly, chaotic and even (at the instance of) the Government, which has said people should occupy farms, take them over. It said the redistribution of land was for the poor, the landless. But it has not happened that way. The farms have ended up becoming the properties of cronies of the President.

In South Africa, there is an orderly process of land redistribution, which has been sanctioned by Parliament. If the land has got to be taken over and given back to its original owners, there is compensation for the current land owners. But the attacks on the farmers are disturbing. As you say, the inquiry indicates the perpetrators are criminals. But for the community that is under siege, the impression has got around that this is not the case.

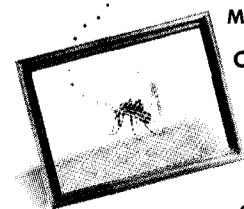
One wishes there is far more effective policing. This is true of so many other areas of crime. But black people can say that they had similar experiences in the ghettos. And that this has now come out into the open because it has spread from the ghettos into the more salubrious areas. ■



I believe that force can be used as the last resort, as the very, very last resort.

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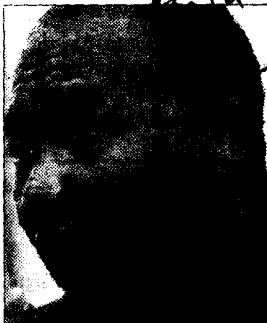
Taylor to quit on 11 August

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

MONROVIA, Aug. 2. — Liberian President Mr Charles Taylor will step down on 11 August, Ghana's foreign minister Mr Addo Akufu Addo said here today after meeting the embattled Liberian leader.

The Ghanaian minister and other envoys from the Economic Community of West African States had travelled to Monrovia to tell Mr Taylor to step down and head into exile.

Nigeria has offered him political asylum if he agrees to resign his



Mr Charles Taylor

post and allow international mediators to broker an agreement to end Liberia's latest bout of civil war.

A 1,500-strong advance guard of Nigerian peacekeepers is due to start

arriving in Monrovia on Monday, and ECOWAS had given Mr Taylor an ultimatum that he must leave office within three days of the soldiers' arrival.

UN okays troops

The UN Security Council has adopted a US-backed resolution for deployment of a multinational force in Liberia under the world body's mandate, adds PTI from UNHQ. The USA pressed for vote as the first contingent of peacekeepers from Nigeria is expected to start deploying from Monday.

Taylor thorn in Liberia olive branch

DAVID CLARKE

MONROVIA, AUGUST 6

REBELS and loyalist fighters embraced at the front line in Liberia's capital on Tuesday as West African troops and US warships built up military might to try to end 14 years of murder and mayhem.

But a new storm brewed over when President Charles Taylor would leave his broken country, as Nigeria said he now appeared unwilling to take up an asylum offer unless Sierra Leone's UN-backed court dropped war crimes charges against him.

The quietest day in Monrovia in over two weeks offered a chance for war-weary people to creep out in a

hunt for scanty supplies of food without the terror of zinging bullets and shrapnel. At the bullet-strewn Old Bridge, scene of some of the worst clashes in combat that has left hundreds dead, Taylor's young fighters emerged to embrace their foes. "No more fighting in my life," said Major Chemical as he hugged Major "K" of rebel Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD).

US officials say their vessels could help the regional force with communications and logistics. But their precise role remains under discussion.

The US has yet to decide whether to commit its own troops to a land where hundreds of people face hunger and disease under a hail of

bullets and shrapnel. Meanwhile, two US ships have arrived near Liberia and a third is on the way. They are carrying about 2,300 Marines.

The peacekeepers aim to keep apart rebels and Taylor's forces and let the former warlord step down and go into exile in Nigeria. Taylor has said he will step down on Monday, but Nigeria said he now appeared unwilling to take up an asylum offer that he had earlier accepted.

"The problem is that Taylor is simply saying that he will be willing only to leave Liberia if the international court drops the war crimes charges against him," Nigerian presidency spokesman Felix Stanley Macebuh said in Abuja. —Reuters

Liberia's Taylor quits, to leave country soon

Monrovia: Liberia's President Charles Taylor resigned on Monday under pressure from the United States which hopes his departure will speed an end to violence that has gripped Liberia and West Africa for nearly 14 years.

Charles Taylor

Mr Taylor is now expected to leave the broken shell of a nation founded by freed American slaves in the 19th century. At least 2,000 people perished in the most recent fighting with rebels for the capital Monrovia.

"I want to be the sacrificial lamb," Mr Taylor said in a handover speech filled with religious and African imagery that began in a sombre tone and grew more upbeat as Mr Taylor got into his usual confident stride.

"There are two things that I want for the people of Liberia, one that they live, two that they see peace... Today for me is a day of moving forward. We must now put the past behind us.

"I leave you with these parting words, God willing I will

be back," Mr Taylor said.

Vice-President Moses Blah, a former brother-in-arms from the Liberian leader's days of bush war, was sworn in as president after Mr Taylor's resignation.

Mr Blah will stay until October and then hand over to an interim administration picked by warring factions and political parties at talks in Ghana, said Ghanaian President John Kufuor, also chairman of the West African regional bloc.

Rebels drummed and sang that their troubles were over near the front line that cuts through the suffering capital Monrovia, where fighting has stranded hundreds of thousands without food.

"It is our expectation that from today, the war in Liberia has ended," Kufuor said. Also on hand, were President Thabo Mbeki of continental power South Africa and Mozambique's leader Joaquim Chissano representing the African Union.

Boxed into a corner by rebels, under UN sanctions, wanted by Sierra Leone's war crimes court and told to quit by US President George W. Bush, Mr Taylor had little choice but to go or fight to the death. Reuters

Taylor takes refuge in Nigeria

Africa 129-15
18/8

CALABAR (NIGERIA), AUG. 12. The Liberian President, Charles Taylor, today arrived in the Nigerian city of Calabar, a day after handing over power and leaving his shattered nation for exile.

After a brief stop-over in the capital Abuja, Mr. Taylor arrived in Calabar in the early hours of the morning.

He was met by the State Governor and was driven to a set of three luxurious hilltop residences set aside for him and dozens of his family members and associates.

"No problem. I am okay," was all Mr. Taylor said to reporters.

Mr. Taylor handed over power to his deputy and accepted Nigeria's offer of asylum under pressure from the world community which hopes his departure will speed an end to nearly 14 years of violence in Liberia, a nation founded by freed American slaves.

A recent upsurge in fighting had seen most of the country with rebels. He has been indicted

ed by a U.N.-backed war crimes tribunal in Liberia's neighbour Sierra Leone, which has accused him of supporting brutal rebels there during its civil war.

Nigerian officials have shown little enthusiasm for Mr. Taylor's arrival. Nigeria lost hundreds of peacekeepers in Liberia in the 1990s, many at the hands of Mr. Taylor's forces.

Human rights group have demanded the former warlord be handed over to the tribunal, but so far no protests have been made against his arrival in Nigeria.

Tucked away near the Cameroon border in a port city once known for the export of slaves, the former President will be far away from some of his bitterest enemies who also took refuge in Nigeria in the 1990s.

Prince Yormie Johnson, the Liberian warlord who drank beer while his men hacked up the former dictator, Samuel Doe, is now living in a spacious house in one of the wealthiest suburbs of Lagos, in southwestern Nigeria.

Another of Mr. Taylor's former rivals, Roosevelt Johnson, took refuge in the central city of Jos after a violent rupture with Mr. Taylor in 1998.

Fighting between Mr. Taylor and Mr. Johnson in the mid-1990s killed thousands in the Liberian capital Monrovia.

— Reuters

Rebels want to head Govt.

MONROVIA, AUG. 12. Liberian rebels said for the first time today that they wanted to head an interim Government now that the President, Charles Taylor, had gone into exile. — Reuters

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Rebels cede control of Monrovia

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MONROVIA (LIBERIA), AUG. 14. Rebels handed over control of their territory in Liberia's capital, including the vital port, to West African and U.S. troops on Thursday, lifting two months of sieges against the isolated and starving city.

The U.S. Ambassador, John Blaney, and the rebel chief of staff, Abdullah Sherrif, shook hands in the centre of a bridge marking the front-line of the war-divided capital, signalling the rebel handover.

Small numbers of West African peacekeeping forces and U.S. Marines crossed into rebel territory after the ceremony.

At least four West African military vehicles went directly to the port, control of which is crucial to getting food and other aid flowing again, particularly to the famished Government-held side of the capital.

Firing into the air, insurgents left the port and retreated north, heading toward the Po River, their promised new boundary outside the city. They kept their AK-47s, rocket-launchers and other arms, and many carried away stereos, sacks of food aid, and other loot.

It was not immediately clear if the insurgents had complied with their pledge to pull out of the city entirely by noon on Thursday.

Pressing, excited masses on both sides cheered as two U.S. fighter jets swooped back and forth above the crowd.

West African forces held back hungry crowds on the Government side. Civilians on the for-



U.S. Marines from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit arrive at the Robertsfield airport outside the Liberian capital, Monrovia, on Thursday as part of a peacekeeping effort in the war-torn nation. — AP

mer rebel side rushed the bridge by the thousands, shouting, "We want peace!"

The peacekeepers, trying to curb the chaos, turned them back.

Opening of the front-lines came as scores of U.S. Marines landed at Liberia's airport, 45 minutes' drive outside the capital. The U.S. said on Wednes-

day it would send 200 troops, including a 150-member rapid reaction force, in support of the 10-day-old West African peace mission.

The developments followed Monday's resignation and departure of the President, Charles Taylor, a former warlord blamed for 14 years of conflict in Liberia.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush, had refused to send in any significant number of troops until Mr. Taylor left, and rebels had likewise made that a condition for their ceding of territory in the city.

Rebel control of the port has left hundreds of thousands on the Government-held side with little to eat but leaves. — AP

15 AUG 2003

THE HINDU

15 ^{Aug} 2003

Africa

LIBERIA'S WOES

HO-10 1678

THE PEOPLE OF Liberia have been so exhausted by the deprivations of war that there is little energy left to celebrate the ouster of the abominable Charles Taylor as President. Any relief that Liberians may feel over the warlord's departure into exile in Nigeria will be tempered by the awareness that their country faces a very uncertain future. That Mr. Taylor has been replaced as President by his comrade in arms, Moses Blah, who has just as notorious a reputation for brutality, might be the lightest of the burdens the nation has to contend with. Mr. Blah has promised to hand over power to a transitional government soon. The presence in the country of a multi-national peace-keeping force and sustained international pressure will probably ensure that Mr. Blah keeps his pledge. However, there is no sign that a more enlightened political leadership capable of helping Liberia recover from over 14 years of external and internal strife will emerge. The rebel forces, loosely grouped in an organisation called Liberians for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), are as rapacious as the troops that remain loyal to Mr. Taylor and his associates. A particularly horrific aspect of the West African wars is that virtually all sides have used child soldiers as frontline troops. Many stages will have to be crossed over many years before Liberians can recover a sense of normality.

That other countries of Africa have stepped forward to help the people of Liberia offers some hope in an otherwise bleak scenario. South Africa and Nigeria have already dispatched soldiers to secure a ceasefire between the warring groups. Their presence offers a measure of protection to almost half of Liberia's two million people who have taken refuge in the capital, Monrovia, and other cities. The peace-keeping force is expected to be reinforced by

contingents from the other countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In agreeing to strengthen the peace-keeping force, the countries of ECOWAS have demonstrated a keen understanding that Liberia's problems afflict the whole region. ECOWAS must however ensure that the member countries do not spark off another round of war by squabbling among themselves over shares in Liberia's timber and diamond trade. In the past, intra-regional interventions in Africa have degenerated into fratricidal conflicts for similar reasons. Nigeria, as the exiled warlord's host, bears a special responsibility to see that his menace remains under check. Mr. Taylor, who has built an intricate web of relationships with other leaders in the region, is bound to manipulate these connections as he tries to fulfil his vow to return to power. Nigeria must restrain Mr. Taylor even if it is unable to hand him over to the international court, which has indicted him on charges of crimes against humanity for the atrocities committed by Liberian troops in Sierra Leone a few years ago.

It is far from certain that ECOWAS will be able to restore peace in Liberia through its efforts alone. Several African leaders have requested the United States to play a major role in the peace-restoration and humanitarian efforts. By sending [redacted] and securing Mr. Taylor's ouster, ECOWAS has met the two conditions that the Bush administration had set for the insertion of its troops into Liberia. While a 2300 strong Marine Expeditionary Force is anchored less than a hundred miles offshore from Monrovia, the U. S. has deployed only a small liaison team thus far. Its new-found interest in West African oil may possibly induce it to opt for a stronger military presence. This is something that must be closely watched.

16 AUG 2003

THE HINDS

Idi Amin called himself 'a pure son of Africa'

Aug 10 12 1978

JEDDAH, Aug. 16. Idi Amin called himself "a pure son of Africa," but his bizarre and murderous eight years as President of Uganda typified the worst of the continent's military dictatorships.

Mr. Amin, who died on Saturday, was 80, Ugandan officials said, though other sources had him born in 1925.

Mr. Amin, who had lived for years in exile in this Saudi port city, had been hospitalised on life-support since July 18.

He was in a coma and suffered from high blood pressure when he was first admitted to the King Faisal Specialist Hospital. Later, hospital staff said he suffered kidney failure.

A one-time heavyweight boxing champion and soldier in the British colonial army, Mr. Amin seized power on Jan. 25, 1971, overthrowing Milton Obote while he was abroad.

What followed was a reign of terror laced with buffoonery and a flirtation with Palestinian terrorism that led to the daring 1976 Israeli raid to rescue hijack

hostages in his country.

In Kampala, Uganda, an aide of the President, Yoweri Museveni, called Mr. Amin's death 'good'.

"His death and burial will signal the end of our bad past."

Mr. Obote once called Mr. Amin "the greatest brute an African mother has ever brought to life."

Ugandans initially welcomed Mr. Amin's rise to power, and his frequent taunting of Britain, former colonial ruler of much of Africa, often played well on the continent.

But his penchant for the cruel and extravagance became evident in 1972, when he expelled tens of thousands of Asians who had controlled the country's economy. Suddenly deprived of its business class, the East African nation plummeted into economic chaos.

Mr. Amin declared himself President-for-life of his landlocked country of 24 million, awarded himself an array of medals and ran the country with an iron fist, killing real and

imagined enemies.

Human rights groups say from 100,000 to 500,000 people were killed during his eight-year rule. Bodies were dumped into the Nile River because graves couldn't be dug fast enough.

A semilliterate school dropout, Mr. Amin boasted that he knew "more than doctors of philosophy because as a military man I know how to act."

"I am a man of action," he said.

And words. He said Hitler "was right to burn six million Jews," and offered to be king of Scotland if asked. He challenged his neighbour and frequent critic, Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, to a

hydroelectric plant at Jinja.

"Even Amin does not know how many people he has ordered to be executed ...

The country is littered with bodies," said Henry Kyemba, Mr. Amin's longtime friend and former Health Minister, when he defected to Britain in 1977.

Mr. Amin was born into the small Kakwa tribe in Koboko, a village in north-western Uganda. His mother was a self-proclaimed sorceress of the Lugbara tribe and he was in his 30s before he had regular contact with his peasant father.

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Mr. Amin was born into the

boxing match, and wrote to the former U.S. Richard, Nixon, wishing him "a speedy recovery" from Watergate.

Mr. Amin was a well-regarded officer at the time of Uganda's independence from Britain in 1962, and Obote made him military chief of staff in 1966.

The 112-kg President called himself Dada, or "Big Daddy," and in 1975 was even chosen as for the one-year rotating chairmanship of the Organization of African Unity despite objections from some member states.

But mismanagement and corruption of his entourage drove Uganda into an abyss and its economy tumbled toward subsistence levels.

The United States and Britain severed ties during Mr. Amin's rule. Israel went from staunch military and economic ally to hated enemy for refusing to support his aggressive military ambitions.

In 1976, a Palestinian group hijacked an Air France airliner to Entebbe Airport in Uganda and kept its Israeli passengers

as hostages. Israeli commandos flew to Entebbe under cover of darkness and rescued the captives. Mr. Amin claimed he had been trying to negotiate a peaceful resolution, but there was plenty of evidence that he was in league with the hijackers.

Mr. Amin's overreaching designs led to his downfall after his troops failed in their attempt to annex parts of Tanzania in October, 1978.

Tanzanian troops counter-invaded, routed Mr. Amin's Soviet- and Arab-equipped army and reached Kampala in April 1979.

Mr. Amin, a convert to Islam, fled to Libya, then Iraq and finally Saudi Arabia, where he was allowed to settle provided he stayed out of politics.

In later months, he was joined by one of his two wives and his 22 children.

Mr. Amin moved into a luxury house in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, with cars, drivers, cooks and maids paid for by the Saudi government.

He would occasionally telephone journalists abroad to announce fantastical schemes to reconquer Uganda, or to protest against cuts in his gasoline allowance. But the Saudis got an-

Mr. Amin is believed to have married at least four times and had some 30 children, many of whom had joined him in exile in Saudi Arabia. — AP



The former Ugandan President, Idi Amin, being sworn in, in this 1971 file photo.

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Mr. Amin is believed to have married at least four times and had some 30 children, many of whom had joined him in exile in Saudi Arabia. — AP

Nemesis of Asians

DUBAI, Aug. 16. The former Ugandan President, Idi Amin, was the nemesis of the rich and flourishing Asians in the country. In 1972, he expelled virtually the entire 80,000 Asian population, including about 50,000 Indians, saying he had been ordered by god to do so in a dream. He also usurped the business and wealth of the Indians, many of whom were traders, leading to the country's economic collapse. — PTI

THE HINDU

17 AUG 2003

Keeping the peace in Liberia

By Tim Weiner

IT WAS high noon at the bridge over the Po, and Colonel Mac was eyeball to eyeball with General Iron Jacket. As the peace-keeper and the rebel came to an understanding deep in the Liberian countryside, Liberian negotiators were in Ghana trying to make a peace to keep. On Monday night the Government and two rebel groups — Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia — signed an accord aimed at ending the war by sharing power in an interim Government.

Past peace agreements had been broken soon after they were made, but there were those who believe that Monday's accord offers hope for a lasting end to the killing. The mediator for the talks, Abdulsalami Abubakar, himself a retired Nigerian general and former junta leader, said on Monday night: "Liberia will never be plunged into another spiral of violence in the quest for political power, or under the false pretence of liberating the people."

While the larger framework takes shape, peace is being made day by day in places such as the Po River. "You will not cross this bridge," the Nigerian colonel, Mac Noyoko, chief of operations for the West African peacekeeping force sent to still the guns of Liberia, told the rebel known as General Iron Jacket.

The colonel was calmly trying to talk to the self-styled general, a commander of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, or URD that laid siege to Monrovia, the

capital, for more than two months, fighting in the city this summer began slowly trickling back, and the day that the West African peacekeepers, who are supported by a contingent of 200 U.S. Marines, began to push out of Monrovia north into the bush — LURD land.

At the rebel group's base, a shack of the edge of Monrovia, Ansumana S.

grow to 3,250. Then, he said, Ecomil was there to rid Monrovia of weapons and militias, including the irregular armed government forces established by Mr. Taylor. Peacekeeping is to be turned over to the United Nations in the fall. At that point, any U.S. troops will be out of Liberia, the U.S. President, George W. Bush, said in an interview with Armed Forces Radio and Television recorded on Thursday and made public on Monday.

Gen. Okonkwo said that people were moving freely in areas where peacekeepers were deployed. "Markets are now open. A sense of normalcy is returning, and the situation is improving daily," he said.

But Liberia will not know real peace until the countryside is free of fighting. Everyone knows that the automatic rifles, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars that racked Monrovia did not simply disappear when the fighting stopped. There are great swaths of this country where no outsiders have been for years, but from these provinces, unconfirmed reports of killings continue to filter into Monrovia.

Relief groups such as Doctors without Borders plan to trek into Liberia's north this week, up to Lofa County, where the LURD launched its rebellion three years ago, to assess the situation. The Government and the rebels agreed on Sunday to let them go unmolested. "Unfortunately, the situation on the ground is still very fragile," said Ross Mountain, U.N. special coordinator for humanitarian affairs, in Monrovia. — *New York Times*

Liberia will not know real peace until the countryside is free of fighting

Kwestul, known as General Push the Butson, is a local. "I've been anything contrary to what you explained in a calm, firm voice, 'you are declaring hostilities between me and you. Don't do anything contrary to that, because you will not like the consequences.'"

General Iron Jacket had two questions. "And if one of my men dies," he asked. "And if I die?"

Colonel Mac replied: "You will not die if you go peacefully. This bridge belongs to us." The colonel turned and left, and General Iron Jacket waxed philosophical: "If the war's finished, the war's finished."

It may well be, a week after the flight of the former President, Charles G. Taylor, once a rebel warlord. Liberia has seen little but bloodshed since Mr. Taylor began fighting his way to power in 1989. Monday was the day that a life returned to the street market of Monrovia, the day that some people who had fled fighting in the countryside only to be trapped by

OF FIND

70 AUG 2000

Africa

Rwandans vote in presidential polls

KIGALI (RWANDA), AUG. 25. Thousands of Rwandans turned up early on Monday to vote in the first multiparty presidential election after a vigorous campaign of healing the wounds from the 1994 genocide. Reports of harassment of Opposition supporters by security forces marred the otherwise peaceful campaign.

In the capital Kigali, where shops were closed and the streets were mostly empty, voters clutching identity cards and radios lined up to cast their votes. For many, it was a day like none other.

"There was no choice in previous elections," said an elderly man, referring to the two single-party Hutu regimes that had ruled Rwanda from independence in 1962 to the genocide.

Some 3.9 million voters were eligible to cast ballots in 11,350 polling stations across the tiny central African nation of rolling green hills and extinct volcanoes.

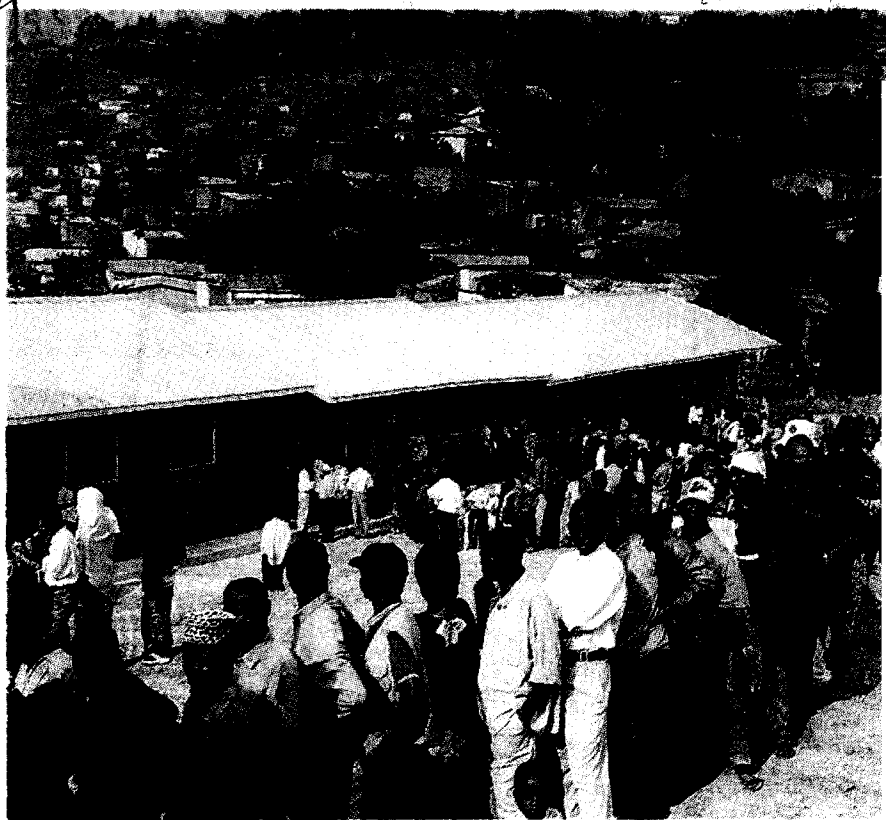
First results are expected early on Tuesday, and the winner will be announced on Wednesday, said Chrysologue Karangwa, head of the National Electoral Commission.

The election was billed as a showcase of how far the country has come in the nine years since a regime of extremists from the Hutu majority orchestrated the slaughter of more than half a million people, mostly minority Tutsis.

But as people lined up to vote, there was genuine concern about everyday issues like grinding poverty and persistent unemployment. The genocide not only shattered Rwanda's society, but it also wrecked the struggling economy.

Supporters of the President, Paul Kagame, and the leading Opposition candidate, Faustin Twagiramungu, all agree that the winner needs to create more jobs, provide more access to education and raise the incomes of the more than 60 per cent of Rwanda's 8.2 million people living on less than \$1 a day. "We now have peace and security," said Emmanuelle Bijogo, a 20-year-old in Kigali. Now "the Government needs to create more jobs for people."

Bijogo said he plans to vote for Kagame because of the president's solid record



Rwandans, braving early morning chill, wait for their turn to cast votes in Kigali on Monday. — Reuters

and the sense that "if Kagame is removed, there will be trouble." Mr. Kagame, a minority Tutsi, led the rebels who in 1994 toppled a regime of extremist Hutus. As Vice-President and Defence Minister, he then led the fight against remnants of the genocidal regime who attacked the country from bases in neighbouring Congo. At the same time, the Government rebuilt schools and hospitals, nursed the economy back to health and started the process of reconciliation.

The National Unity Parliament elected him President in 2000 after the resignation of the previous President.

Mr. Kagame's record has made him

popular among Rwandans. Backed by seven of the country's nine recognised political parties, he is expected to win the election.

But unemployment remains high, and Rwanda is struggling to diversify an economy dependent on coffee and tea exports and foreign aid, which covers more than half of the country's budget.

Though officials deny harassing Opposition supporters, European Union observers and Western diplomats say at least some of the claims are true.

After voting, Mr. Kagame called the election "a big democratic step" and said it was proof that "ethnicity is on the way to being a thing of the past." — AP

Thumping win for Kagame

AP
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KIGALI (RWANDA), AUG. 26. The incumbent Rwandan President, Paul Kagame, told the world on Tuesday that the genocide-scarred Rwanda is "on the right path," after scoring an overwhelming election victory seen as confirming support for his efforts to heal the African nation's wounds.

Election officials said Mr. Kagame had 94 per cent support with about half the districts reporting in Monday's presidential vote, the first since a 1994 genocide that left more than 500,000 people dead. Most victims were minority Tutsis killed by Hutu extremists.

"This victory is a foundation for the next stage of development we are entering to," Mr. Kagame told supporters at a stadium early on Tuesday, pumping his fist in the air. "Our victory should be a message to the outside world that Rwanda is on the right path."

Monday's election, the first in Rwanda in which there were opposing parties, was billed as a showcase of how far the country has come since the 1994 slaughter.

The Electoral Commission Chairman, Chrysologue Karangwa, said Mr. Kagame's main competitor, Faustin Twagiramungu, had just 3.5 per cent, while the third candidate, Jean-Nepomuscene Nayinzira, had slightly more than 1 per cent. Unofficial final results were to be released later on Tuesday.

The election was "a sign that we are developing politically," said Emmanuel Karisa, a 25-year-old university student, his thumb stained with ink from stamping it on the photograph of his candidate, one of four that appeared on the ballot. "There was no choice in previous elections," said 73-year-old Jean-Baptiste Gakwaya, referring to the two single-party Hutu regimes



The Rwandan President, Paul Kagame at a victory rally — AFP

that had ruled Rwanda from the time it gained independence from Belgium in 1962 until the genocide. After the election, Mr. Kagame addressed thousands of backers and members of his Rwandan Patriotic Front gathering at Rwanda's main Amahoro Stadium, where results were posted on the electronic score board as they were read on radio and TV.

"I thank you for the confidence you have placed in me and I will not let you down," said Mr. Kagame, waving his baseball cap in salute to jubilant, dancing supporters.

Mr. Kagame is a Tutsi who led the rebels who toppled the Hutu extremists in July 1994 to end the 100-day genocide.

He then led the fight against remnants of the genocidal regime who attacked the country from bases in neighbouring Congo. Parliament elected him President in 2000. — AP

THE HINDO

27 AUG 2003

Liberian president agrees to resign

Monrovia: Liberian President Charles Taylor, under US pressure to quit, said on Friday he had agreed to step down but wanted to wait until an international



C. Taylor

force was in place before leaving office.

In Lagos, a senior Nigerian government official said Mr Taylor had accepted an offer of asylum. "He has accepted," said the official, who requested anonymity. "Taylor asked to be given 40 days but Nigeria said it should be some time this month."

Mr Taylor said in a speech on Friday to religious leaders at the presidential mansion in Monrovia: "I think it is important that peacekeepers come first. I can't understand why the US wants me out before they arrive."

US officials said Washington was pressing through the United Nations and West African countries to persuade the former warlord, accused of masterminding more than a decade of tangled regional conflicts, to get out of Liberia.

Violence in the last month alone has claimed an estimated 700 civilian lives in and

around Monrovia as rebels battled government troops for control of the capital.

The World Health Organisation said more than 97,000 people displaced by the fighting were living in makeshift camps and cholera and other diseases were on the rise in Liberia.

US President George W. Bush, who visits Africa next week, said on Thursday he had made no decision on sending US troops but that the "first step" was for Mr Taylor to leave.

A Nigerian official said President Olusegun Obasanjo had agreed to ask Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, a close ally of Mr Taylor, to help facilitate the asylum deal and possibly fund his stay in Nigeria.

Hundreds of people jogged through Monrovia's streets in a second day of unprecedented protests on Friday. One carried a US flag, others had scrawled slogans like "No More Taylor" on torn sheets of cardboard.

UN diplomats said this week that Mr Taylor had rejected an earlier Nigerian exile offer because authorities could not guarantee that he would not be extradited to face trial in Sierra Leone at a UN-backed court for war crimes. Reuters

5 JUL 2003

5 JUL 2003

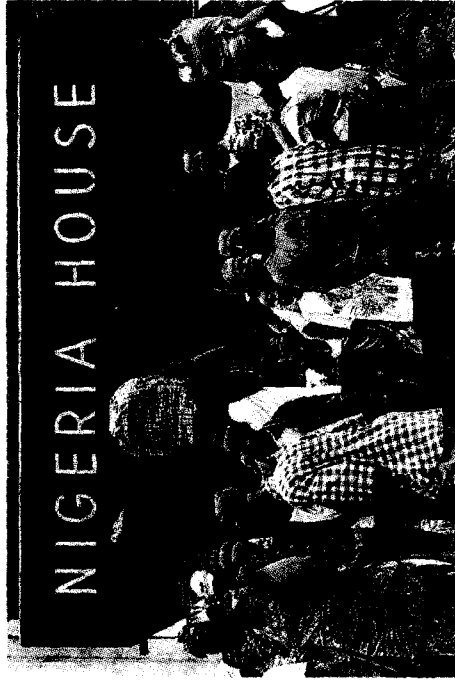
Liberia's 'Iron Lady' plots peace

ACCRA (GHANA), JULY 6. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a divorced mother-of-four who is Washington's unofficial candidate to succeed the Liberian President, Charles Taylor, has warned that any American troops sent to the devastated country would have to stay for two years.

Ms. Sirleaf, a former Liberian Finance Minister who has been exiled and imprisoned, said: "I hope they would have a robust mandate and be prepared to stay for one or two years, as long as it takes to train a proper army and police force."

She was speaking for the first time to a British newspaper at peace talks between rebel factions in the neighbouring Ghana. She is one of the few women at the talks and seems able to make rebel leaders wilt through sheer force of personality — reinforced with the booming American twang that underpins her West African accent. She has already been dubbed Liberia's Iron Lady.

Her chances of becoming President have been helped by American insistence that Mr. Taylor's successor should not



Nigerians gather at their embassy in Monrovia, in an attempt to obtain tickets to leave Liberia on Saturday. — Reuters

be drawn from armed rebel factions.

If she succeeds, she faces a gargantuan task. Liberia has been ruined by the brutality and avarice of Mr. Taylor, who is slowly caving into international pressure to cede power. In 14 years of civil war, about 300,000 people — a tenth of Liberia's population — have been killed. "I hope the United States will

She does not lack self-confi-

dence. "I've got more experience and better contacts than anyone else. If there's someone else who can match me then they're lurking deep in the shadows," she said.

A Western diplomat explained: "The rebels have no choice but to listen. In effect, the Americans have given the rebels a shortlist with Ellen's name at the top."

Her plea for peacekeeping troops may not sit well in the White House. The U.S. President, George W. Bush, is wary of committing troops. On Friday, he hedged his bets by ordering a team of experts to West Africa to assess the situation.

Mr. Taylor has said he will step down, but only after the arrival of a peacekeeping force to prevent further chaos. A senior official in Nigeria revealed that he has accepted an offer of asylum.

Ms. Sirleaf says that it will take five years to undo the damage done by Mr. Taylor. She wants him tried for crimes against humanity. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2003

Africa

Taylor accepts asylum offer, with riders

877

RD-15

MONROVIA (LIBERIA), JULY 7. The embattled Liberian President, Charles Taylor, urged the United States to send peacekeepers as part of a plan in which he would step down and go into asylum in Nigeria. However, he gave no timeframe for quitting power and insisted the transition should be orderly.

The calls on Thursday by Mr. Taylor and the Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo, for a peaceful transition in Liberia increase pressure on the U.S. President, George W. Bush, to send U.S. troops to enforce a ceasefire in the war-ravaged West African nation.

Mr. Bush's five-nation visit to Africa starting Monday included Nigeria, the top mediator in West Africa.

A U.S. military experts team is in Liberia to assess whether to deploy troops as part of a regional force, as the U.N., European powers and the Liberians have sought.

Mr. Taylor is under intense international pressure to step down and is holed up in the capital surrounded by rebels.

Another complication is the threat of trial on war crimes charges that Mr. Taylor's faces after his indictment by a U.N.-backed court in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Taylor made his announcement after Mr. Obasanjo met him at Monrovia's airport to offer asylum in his country. "I thank my big brother for coming," Mr. Taylor said. "He has extended an invitation and we have accepted an invitation."

But, Mr. Taylor said, "It is not



Captain Roger Coldiron (centre-left), and the U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, John Blaney (centre-right), address the media in the Liberian capital Monrovia on Monday. A team of U.S. military experts arrived in Liberia to assess whether troops could be deployed as part of an intervention force to restore order in the war-torn West African nation. — AP

unreasonable to request that there be an orderly exit from power." He said the U.S. participation in an international peacekeeping force was "crucial in every way".

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Obasanjo would not say when the Liberian President would step down, but Mr. Obasanjo said, "We believe that it will not take place in the near future."

Both warned that too hasty a departure could spark new fighting in the West African nation, where hundreds were killed in a failed rebel push into the capital last month.

"We believe the exit should

not take place in confusion ... in a way that will lead to more bloodshed," Mr. Obasanjo said. "We believe the transition should be orderly and peaceful."

He said the peacekeepers' deployment should take place "in a very, very short time".

Though Mr. Taylor did not specify on Sunday whether the deployment of a peacekeeping force was not a condition for his departure, he said it was "necessary ... to prevent disruption".

The Bush administration showed little enthusiasm for Taylor's acceptance of Nigeria's asylum offer. — AP

THE HINDO

8 JUL 2003

Riots in Lagos over fuel prices

AP/CP
SDP
CPA
Lagos, July 7 (Reuters): Nigeria's top union official today said police shot dead at least 10 protesters during violence in Lagos as a general strike over fuel prices entered its second week — but police denied the killings.

Mobs also burned cars and looted shops and homes in the south-eastern city of Uyo as violence flared in the world's eighth largest oil exporter, just days before a planned visit by President George W. Bush.

"It has been confirmed that police have killed over 10 people in Lagos," strike leader Adams Oshiomhole told a news conference in Abuja. "This is despicable and unacceptable."

But Lagos police spokesperson Emmanuel Ighodalo said: "The police did not kill anybody at all. (It) all took place peacefully. Nobody was even wounded."

Oshiomhole said President Olusegun Obasanjo's government had offered a new compromise price for gasoline, but it did not meet the demand of his umbrella Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC).

As Bush winds up his five-nation trip to Africa in Nigeria on Friday night and Saturday, he is likely to focus on Nigeria's status as a regional power and major supplier of oil to the US. The strike has so far not threatened the visit. Protesters today blocked major roads and torched piles of tyres in the industrial and impoverished western part of Lagos. "Right now we are managing a crisis," Lagos police chief Young Arebamen said of the situation in shanty towns ringing the sprawling city.

AFRICA / MBEKI PRESSES BUSH ON TROOPS FOR LIBERIA

U.S. not to overextend deployment

PRETORIA (SOUTH AFRICA), JULY 9. The United States President, George W. Bush, pledged today that he will not overextend U.S. armed forces even if he sends troops to join a peacekeeping force in Liberia.

Mr. Bush renewed his pledge to "be involved" in Liberia, where civil war has dragged on for years and conditions in Monrovia have become desperate amid a political stalemate involving the President, Charles Taylor.

The South African President, Thabo Mbeki, pressed Mr. Bush on whether the U.S. planned to play a role in the crisis. "I said, 'Yes, we'll be involved, and we're now discussing the extent of our involvement,'" Mr. Bush told reporters during a joint news conference with Mr. Mbeki.

The U.S. already has tens of thousands of soldiers in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo. Mr. Bush said that whatever he decides to do about Liberia, "we won't overextend our troops."

Mr. Mbeki said the military burden in Liberia peacekeeping "really ought to principally fall on us as Africans."

The U.S. has trained battalions of African troops, Mr. Bush said, and "helping people help themselves" was one method of ensuring the U.S. military would not become stretched too thin there. "It's in our interest that we continue that strategy so that we don't get overextended," he said.

Mr. Bush did not say whether he will deploy troops to Liberia. He promised that "we will work closely with the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States to enforce the ceasefire, to see to it that Mr. Taylor leaves office so there can be a peaceful transition in Liberia."

Mr. Bush defended his use of pre-war intelligence on Iraq, saying he is "absolutely confident" in his actions despite the discovery that one claim he made about Saddam Hussein's weapons pursuits was

based on false information. Democrats have argued that the White House's acknowledgment that Mr. Bush misspoke earlier this year when he said Mr. Hussein tried to buy uranium in Africa justifies a broad review of how the administration used pre-war intelligence on Iraq.

Mr. Bush, at a news conference here with Mr. Thabo Mbeki during a five-nation African tour, took on his critics. "There's no doubt in my mind that when it's all said and done, the facts will show the world the truth," he said. "There's going to be, you know, a lot of attempts to try to rewrite his-

tory, and I can understand that. But I'm absolutely confident in the decision I made."

Mr. Bush did not directly address the misstatement itself, made during his State of the Union Address in January. Instead, he defended his decision to go to war based on a larger body of information.

"There is no doubt in my mind that Saddam Hussein was a threat to the world peace," Mr. Bush said. "And there's no doubt in my mind that the United States ... did the right thing in removing him from power." — AP

Mbeki misleading Bush: Tsvangirai

HARARE, JULY 9. The Zimbabwean Opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, accused the South African President, Thabo Mbeki, on Wednesday of making "false and mischievous" statements on political talks in Zimbabwe.

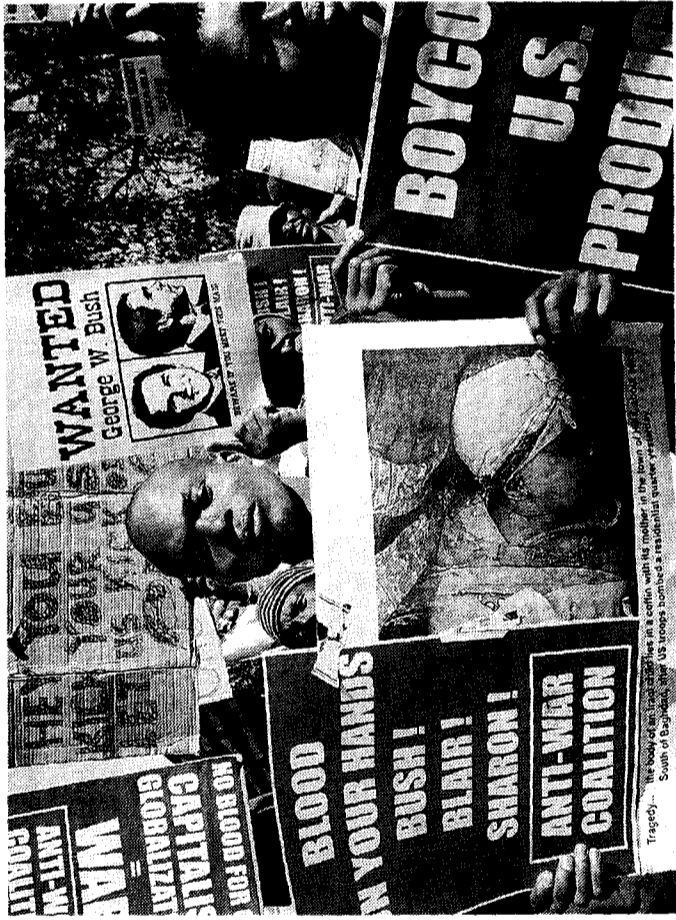
Mr. Tsvangirai said that no talks were taking place and that Mbeki's statement to U.S. President George W. Bush that a dialogue had begun was "without foundation whatsoever."

Mr. Mbeki, repeating remarks he made in a television interview in South Africa, said he informed Mr. Bush that Zimbabwe's ruling party and the Opposition Movement for Democratic Change have begun talks on their nation's deepening political and economic crisis. "We have urged the Government and the Opposition to get together ... they are indeed discussing all issues.

That process is going on," said Mr. Mbeki in Pretoria.

Mr. Tsvangirai called Mr. Mbeki's statements "manifestly partisan." "Statements claiming that there is dialogue going on are patently false and mischievous," said Mr. Tsvangirai who has been charged with treason.

He said claims on talks between the Zimbabwe President, Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party and the Opposition were aimed at "buying time" for Mr. Mugabe and at delaying efforts by "potential genuine brokers," such as the United States, to help end the political and economic crisis. Earlier talks between the two sides broke down because of the dispute over Mr. Mugabe's narrow and tainted re-election victory last year and demands that the Opposition drop a court challenge of the election. — AP



Protesters hold placards against the U.S. President, George W. Bush's visit to Africa, in Pretoria on Wednesday. — Reuters

Liberian peace plan under discussion

ACCRA (GHANA), JULY 16. Mediators at Liberian peace talks have presented rebel factions with a proposal that would exclude them from top positions in an interim government, rebel leaders, who control most of the country, said on Wednesday. According to a ceasefire deal signed last month, an agreement on a transitional government was to be completed by Thursday.

According to the proposal, one of several under discussion at peace negotiations in Ghana, the two main rebel movements would not be eligible for the offices of President, Vice-President, or Cabinet posts in an interim government.

The Liberian President, Charles Taylor, who has promised to step down, would not have an active role in the interim government.

Meanwhile, in Monrovia Tuesday, relatives of two Deputy Ministers said they were informed that the men had been killed.

The two, Issac Nuhan Vaye, a Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Public Works and John Winpoe Yormie, Deputy Minister of National Security, were arrested on June 5, about the same time Mr. Taylor announced he had uncovered a coup plot.

The draft peace plan, a copy of which Charles Benny, leader of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, or

AP
10-15-04
LURD, showed to The Associated Press, calls for the interim government to be inaugurated by August 2 and for new elections to be held by October 2004.

Elections would be open to all parties. A new elected government would be expected to be in place by early 2005, the document said.

Mr. Benny said he believed the plan for such an interim government was proposed by major Western countries who have been advising negotiators working to end fighting in their war-torn country.

He said rebel groups were taking the proposal seriously, but had not yet taken a position on it.

The Government of the former warlord-turned-President, who launched Liberia's 1989-96 civil war, is besieged by rebels trying to oust him.

Mr. Taylor was isolated further by a war crimes indictment issued against him last month by an international court in Sierra Leone, where Mr. Taylor supported a brutal rebel movement known for cutting off people's limbs and facial features.

The U.S. President, George W. Bush, said on Monday that any deployment of American troops to Liberia would be limited in size and duration and would depend on Mr. Taylor stepping down and leaving the country.



Kang Yormie, daughter of the former Minister, John Yormie, breaks down while making an appeal for a probe into her father's death, at a press conference at her home near Monrovia on Tuesday. — AP

ONE HIND

17 JUL 2003

Africa 18.15 CONGO / STEP TOWARDS ENDING CIVIL WAR 18

Rebel leaders sworn in Vice-Presidents

KINSHASA (CONGO). JULY 17. Congo's main rebel leaders were sworn in on Thursday as Vice-Presidents in a new power-sharing Government created to end the country's nearly five-year-long civil war that has left over 3 million people dead.

At a ceremony attended by thousands in Congo's capital, Kinshasa, hopes were high that this would be a major step toward reunifying this vast Central African nation, at war since 1998.

The two rebel leaders — Jean-Pierre Bemba of the Uganda-backed Congolese Liberation movement and Azarias Ruberwa of the Rwanda-allied Congolese Rally for Democracy — were two of four new Vice-Presidents sworn in under the Congolese President, Joseph Kabila.

The other two were Abdoulaye Yerodia Nbombasi, allied to Mr. Kabila, and Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma, a member of the country's unarmed political opposition.

Together, the four Vice-Presi-

tions within a year. On Wednesday, the rebel leaders sounded optimistic about peace after meeting separately with Mr. Kabila.

"There is no more doubt, it's irreversible," Mr. Ruberwa said.

"We are here as partners and not as belligerents," Mr. Bemba echoed that sentiment.

"We have turned the page from the war," Mr. Bemba said. "The five years we passed in the rebellion gave us ... the pathways to get this country out of the crisis."

But Congo still faces numerous hurdles as it tries to end years of strife. The Kinshasa-based Government is weak and incapable of establishing rule of law across Congo, a country the size of western Europe.

But in Africa's third-largest nation, people remain hopeful that the transition government will hold and mark a major step toward the end of the conflict. The conflict has killed an estimated 3.3 million people. — AP



Chipe, a 10-year-old Hema tribal militia fighter, chases a woman out of her house at gunpoint in the market in Bunia, Congo, in this May 18, 2003, file photo. About 30 per cent of those fighting in the civil war in the country are children under 18. — AP

dents form a major part of the new power-sharing Government, agreed to in December. Headed by Mr. Kabila, the Government, the Gov-

THE FINCH

18 JUL 2003

Liberian troops, rebels battle near Monrovia

Abian: Liberian government troops were on Friday battling rebels on the doorstep of Monrovia, defence minister Daniel Chea said, as a west African team of monitors was due to arrive to assess the situation in the war-torn nation.



Charles Taylor

Mr Chea said on telephone from Monrovia that his forces and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), the main rebel group, were engaged in a heavy fighting 12 kilometres outside the seaside capital.

"The situation has not changed at all," since hostilities resumed two days ago, he said. "The rebels are using mortars and machine guns, and we are exercising maximum restraint," the defence minister said, adding that the government forces had not retaken the strategic town of Klay Junction, about 35 kilometres outside Monrovia.

Mr Chea said he would discuss the situation with the team of monitors from the 15-nation Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), when it arrived in Monrovia to assess the situation on the ground. The ECOWAS last month brokered a ceasefire between the Liberian government and rebels. "I am awaiting the ECOWAS team today, they can see for themselves what is going on," he said.

Accusing the LURD of trying to spike the ECOWAS-brokered truce and undo ongoing peace parleys in the Ghanaian capital Accra, Mr Chea said, "We don't want to act in a manner which will facilitate LURD to take steps

that will lead to a total breakdown of the ceasefire."

The rebels, meanwhile, angrily rejected accusations that they had started the fighting, saying government troops had advanced on their positions in breach of the truce. Kabineh Ja'neh, the leader of the LURD delegation at peace talks in Accra, said, "We entered the capital and then we pulled back to facilitate the ceasefire. What are the government troops doing in our positions. Charles Taylor now only controls Monrovia and is trying to gain more territory, that's all."

Many residents and refugees in Monrovia feared the fighting could reach the city centre. Tens of thousands of people who fled earlier clashes between the rebels and government soldiers are living rough in the heart of Monrovia, amidst an acute shortage of food, water and medicines.

The LURD last month launched its most audacious attack in a four-year rebel war, fighting their way into the heart of Monrovia before pulling back to the edges to pave the way for the ECOWAS-brokered ceasefire, signed on June 17. Liberian President Charles Taylor recently accepted an asylum offer from Nigeria after agreeing to quit under the west African-brokered peace deal.

But Mr Taylor did not give a date for his departure and has stressed he will not leave until an international peacekeeping force arrives to ensure a smooth transition in Liberia. Mr Taylor has also been charged with war crimes by a UN-backed court in Sierra Leone for his role in that country's barbaric decade-long civil war. AFP

Troops to Liberia

91-8 226/7
US unilateralism at end of the road? Africa

For Washington to commit to sending peacekeeping troops to Liberia, however tentative the decision is an event, given the disdain for multilateralism that has been the hallmark of the Bush administration since its inception. Unlike Iraq, where Washington's intervention has been unilateral to a fault, Liberia doesn't have oil, and there is no compelling US economic interest for intervention. There is, of course, a human interest — Liberia has been racked by unusually bloody civil wars for the last 14 years. It has seen coups, purges and ethnic wars since 1980, and Charles Taylor, the current President, has gained notoriety for, among other things, recruiting child soldiers for his army. He has been indicted by a court in neighbouring Sierra Leone for war crimes. His sway, however, may be ending as rebels, who already control most of the country, are at the gates of Monrovia. The civil war has cost 200,000 civilian lives so far, and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeeping troops haven't been effective. Western troops with their superior training and equipment would be useful.

Given the dead end that US unilateralism has reached in Iraq, the Bush administration could be readying some multilateral efforts to show that it is capable of altruism — the President's recent trip to Africa where he committed \$15 billion to an anti-AIDS effort was another gesture. One doesn't know, however, how serious the offer of troops is, as it is hedged by too many restrictions. One, the troops won't go in unless Taylor keeps his promise of stepping down and leaving the country. One doesn't trust his word and in any case he has promised to return. Secondly, US troops will be limited in numbers and duration. That opens the possibility of a repeat of Somalia. If Bush does send troops to Liberia, he should do so with a clearer sense of purpose than President Clinton had with respect to Somalia.

The calculated hope that his gesture will set an example for others in Iraq must be at the top of a mind like Bush. That he has hedged his bets so well must take away even reflexive credit that might otherwise be extended. If even the thought occurs to us, it is for reasons the American President should understand.

THE STATESMAN

U.S. to position forces off Liberia

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JULY 25. The United States President, George W. Bush, has directed the Secretary of Defence to position "appropriate military capabilities" off the coast of Liberia, but the White House has said that the role of the United States will be limited — to support the deployment of an ECOWAS force (from West Africa) once that comes about.

"The immediate task of the ECOWAS force is to reinforce a ceasefire and begin to create conditions where humanitarian assistance can be provided to the Liberian people," a White House statement said.

In an appearance at the Rose Garden with the Palestinian Prime Minister, Mahmoud Abbas, Mr. Bush did not get into the specifics of the deployment of force and said that he was looking forward to working with other African countries and the United Nations on the Liberian crisis.

In another statement the White House said the Liberian



Liberians mourn the death of relatives in mortar attacks at a school in Monrovia on Friday. — AP

President, Charles Taylor, "must leave" the country.

Last week, there were indications from the Pentagon that a three ship expeditionary force of marines is being moved from the Mediterranean Sea to the coast of Liberia; and that this process could take several days. The estimate is that this American force — 4500 marines and sailors — will be about 4500

personnel. Separately the United States has been beefing up security of its Embassy in Monrovia, which has come under attack. (An AP report from Monrovia said artillery shells crashed into the U.S. Embassy compound and refugee-crowded neighbourhoods around it today killing 12 Liberians and wounding 100 in the bloodiest barrage in days.)

HINDIX

26 JUL 2003

Sierra Leone's rebel leader dead

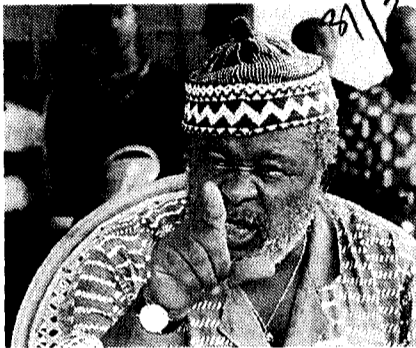
Amir

FREETOWN (SIERRA LEONE), JULY 30. Foday Sankoh, the indicted leader of a vicious 10-year rebel terror campaign in Sierra Leone, died in United Nations custody at a hospital in the capital, Freetown, the spokesman for the war crimes court said on Wednesday.

Sankoh (65), died late on Tuesday night in a U.N.-controlled section of a city hospital, said David Hecht of the U.N.-Sierra Leone War Crimes Court.

There was no immediate information on the cause of death. Sankoh had been ill, and disoriented, since his capture in early 2000. In June 2002, in one of the last court hearings at which he spoke, the rebel leader appeared dishevelled, in matted white dreadlocks, and rambled. "I'm a god," the handcuffed former warlord told court officials then. "I'm the inner god. I'm the leader of Sierra Leone."

Authorities announced in October 2002 that he had suffered what they at first called a mild stroke. The War Crimes Court said in June it was pursuing a waiver on a U.N. travel ban against Sankoh so it could send



The Sierra Leonean rebel leader, Foday Sankoh, in this May 5, 2000, file picture.

him outside this West African country for treatment.

The court's acting chief of defence, John Jones, said then that Sankoh was in a "catatonic, stuporous state."

Sankoh, a former wedding photographer and soldier, trained in the Cold War guerrilla camps of the Libyan leader, Moammar Gadhafi. His companions there included Charles Taylor, now President of the neighbouring Liberia, who also has been indicted as an alleged principal culprit in the Sierra Leone terror campaign.

Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front was founded in 1988-89. — AP

THE HINDI

Taylor looks to U.S. for help

MONROVIA, JUNE 28. With fighting receding — for now — from Liberia's devastated capital, the President, Charles Taylor, joined his desperate people in calling for the United States' help out of the war in his ever more bloodied West African nation.

But Mr. Taylor, making a victory tour of his shelled capital after chasing rebels out this latest time, gave no sign of hearing the U.S. President, George W. Bush's solution for the war — that Mr. Taylor himself, an indicted U.N. war crimes suspect, step down.

"We ask the international community, most specifically the United States, to do everything within its power to help Liberia and Liberians out of this mess," Mr. Taylor, a veteran political operator during 14 years of war-making in West Africa, said in a radio address.

Mr. Taylor's words came after rebels pulled out of the western edge of the capital, ending a 4-day siege by artillery, small



Liberians take out a demonstration seeking peace in Monrovia on Friday. — Reuters

arms and rocket barrages that killed an estimated 500 civilians as insurgents and Mr. Taylor's forces battled for control of Monrovia's port.

The port, on the west side of the city of 1 million residents, has now repeatedly proved the stopping point for rebels as they press home their 3-year-old war to take the capital and topple Mr. Taylor.

Mr. Taylor spoke hours after fighting stilled. As he spoke, thousands of Liberians rallied outside the U.S. Embassy, pleading for help from the superpower that helped found Liberia — a nation created by freed American slaves — in the 19th century.

"George Bush we are dying," said the message on one sign in the crowd. — AP

African
1991

Liberian scene worsens

26/6
MONROVIA (LIBERIA), JUNE 25. Shells exploded in refugee-crowded neighbourhoods of Liberia's capital on Wednesday, sending thousands of civilians fleeing as the President, Charles Taylor's forces battled rebels pressing hard into Monrovia.

Fighting shattered a week-old truce and raised prospects of the deadliest possible end to Liberia's 3-year-old insurgency: an all-out battle among undisciplined armies for the city of 1 million, now packed with hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Battles on Tuesday night and Wednesday appeared to mark the fiercest yet combat in the city. They also signalled the first time Mr. Taylor's forces and rebels had battled virtually through the night. "This blatant act of terror will be fought all the way," Mr. Taylor declared on his private radio station on Wednesday, denying, as artillery boomed, that he had fled the city.

"My life is no more important than yours," the Liberian President vowed. "I am here with the men and women in arms, encouraging them to fight on. Because my survival is their survival, and their survival is mine." Fighting was reported to

be concentrated at the city's port, on the west side. The Red Cross put out appeals over the radio for blood for injured at Monrovia's hospital, but shells slamming into the city made it almost impossible to venture out.

Mr. Taylor's forces have lost at least 60 per cent of the country to two rebel groups, each determined to drive out Mr. Taylor, a U.N.-indicted war-crimes suspect accused of roiling West Africa's conflicts for 14 years.

Rebels pushed across Monrovia's St. Paul's river bridge late Tuesday, breaching the capital for the second time in a month.

The attack comes with the seaside capital filled to bursting, with school yards, shelled buildings and the Liberia's national soccer stadium packed with tens of thousands of refugees.

Shells hit up to midnight in Monrovia's Sinkor neighbourhoods.

They burst among scores of families, said one private resident of the district. He spoke briefly by phone, describing the scene as a shell landed just outside his house, before fleeing himself. Artillery boomed into the daylight, against a backdrop of small-arms fire. — AP

AP 2
ZIMBABWE / U.S. OFFERS DEAL TO REBELS IN RULING PARTY 400-15 ✓

Powell calls for Mugabe's overthrow 276

WASHINGTON, JUNE 25. America on Tuesday offered Zimbabwe "generous assistance" in exchange for its ruling Zanu-PF party ousting the President, Robert Mugabe, and agreeing to hold free elections.

Making the offer, Colin Powell, the U.S. Secretary of State, admitted that "Robert Mugabe and his cohorts may cry 'black-mail.'" But he said they should be ignored. The starving, oppressed Zimbabwean people could not wait much longer for their "rescue".

Washington, working with Britain and the European Union, has imposed a visa ban on Zimbabwean leaders, frozen the Government's overseas assets and sent substantial aid through non-Governmental channels.

Gen. Powell is now proposing a direct bargain with disaffected elements of Zanu-PF: join hands with the Opposition party in Parliament and amend the law to allow for Mr Mugabe's removal.

He said: "With the President gone, with a transitional Government in place and with a date fixed for new elections, the United States would be quick to pledge generous assistance to the restoration of Zimbabwe's political and economic institutions, even before the election."

Writing in the *New York Times*, Gen. Powell called on the world, in particular South Africa and its neighbours, to take strong action "that fully reflects the urgency of Zimbabwe's crisis".

He accused Mr Mugabe of political violence, vote-rigging, economic mismanagement, "unchecked corruption" and the cynical transfer of commercial farmland to his cronies.

"In the long run, President Mugabe and his minions will lose, dragging their soiled record behind them into obscurity.

But how long will it take? How many good Zimbabweans will have to lose their jobs, their homes, or even their lives before President Mugabe's violent misrule runs its course" Gen. Powell expressed confidence that other donors would be "close behind"



The Zimbabwean Opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, leaves the High Court in Harare on Wednesday. Mr. Tsvangirai is accused of plotting to remove the President, Robert Mugabe, from power. — AP

Washington in rewarding a new transitional government. But the promise does not appear to have been fully co-ordinated with London, the second-largest donor to Zimbabwe.

Britain is likely to be wary of any scheme that could be portrayed by Mr Mugabe as a Western plot to impose change.

Meanwhile, a Zimbabwean officer who led massacres of thousands of people in Matabeleland in the 1980s told the High Court in Harare on Tuesday that he was offered thousands of pounds to secure the security forces' support for the Opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai.

Air Marshal Perence Shiri, often de-

scribed as the "Butcher of Matabeleland", was giving evidence for the state in the treason trial of Mr Tsvangirai, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change, and two colleagues.

They deny charges of plotting to assassinate Mr Mugabe and stage a coup before last year's widely condemned presidential election, which Mr Mugabe won.

Marshal Shiri, an army brigadier at the time of the massacres, told the court that Job Sikhala, an MDC MP, offered him \$10 millions (Zimbabwean) to win over Generals and the rank and file to serve an MDC government. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2003

LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR / FIERCE FIGHTING IN CAPITAL

40-15
2/16

Taylor vows to live or die with troops

Africa ✓

MONROVIA (LIBERIA), JUNE 26. Shells and rockets pounded refugee-crowded neighbourhoods of Liberia's capital as rebels pressed home their three-year war to oust the President, Charles Taylor, wounding hundreds and leaving thousands of others cowering in the coastal city without escape. The fighting on Wednesday shattered a week-old truce and raised the possibility of a deadly endgame for Liberia's civil war: an all-out battle among undisciplined armies for the city of 1 million residents, now also packed with hundreds of thousands of refugees.



A family with a child wounded in an explosion at the U.S. embassy diplomatic complex flees the place in Monrovia on Wednesday. — AP

Mr. Taylor pledged to live or die with his troops, with rebels on three sides of the city and the Atlantic Ocean on the fourth. The U.S. embassy opened the gates of its residential compound to Liberians seeking shelter, and thousands of them crowded in on Wednesday — hoping proximity to the Americans would mean safety.

Hours later, three pieces of ordnance — believed either mortars or rockets — landed within the high-walled compound and exploded, sending those taking refuge there running. Survivors rushed out bleeding victims, some missing limbs — using a wheelbarrow and bloodstained shirts as stretchers.

In Washington, the State Department press officer, Brooke Summers, said a guard and a gardener employed by the U.S. embassy were killed. The last

Americans had recently been moved out of the residential complex to the heavily-guarded U.S. embassy across the street.

"Everybody in the world is sitting to watch us die," a refugee, Suah Kolli, cried at Monrovia's John F. Kennedy hospital, where hundreds overflowed the hospital's wards and sprawled, moaning and bleeding, in slippery hallways. The French humanitarian group, Medecins Sans Frontiers, evacuated another hospital overrun by fighting, and by midday was treating scores of wounded in its own compound.

Refugees packed schoolyards, shell-gutted houses and the country's main soccer stadium, while many of Monrovia's people simply cowered in their homes. Aid workers described a humanitarian nightmare even

before fighting broke out on Tuesday, with cholera and starvation rampant among the crowded refugees. Mr. Taylor's forces have lost at least 60 per cent of the country to two rebel groups determined to drive out Mr. Taylor, who has been indicted by a U.N. war crimes tribunal that has accused him of fuelling West Africa's conflicts for 14 years.

At midday, Mr. Taylor took to the airwaves of his private radio station to dispel a rumour he had fled. "This blatant act of terror will be fought all the way," Mr. Taylor declared, as artillery boomed. "My life is no more important than yours," he said. "I am here with the men and women in arms, encouraging them to fight on. Because my survival is their survival, and their survival is mine." — AP

LIBERIA / CEASEFIRE TAKES HOLD

**Taylor, rebels asked
to honour pact**

19/6/03

MONROVIA (LIBERIA), JUNE 18. A new ceasefire began to take hold on Wednesday in Liberia, and Washington and West African nations pressed the Liberian President, Charles Taylor, and rebels to carry out in full their pledge to end years of vicious civil war.

The deal called for an end to fighting late on Tuesday in the 3-year-old war, which has seen rebels push to Liberia's capital in their drive to force out Mr. Taylor.

"The eyes of the world are on you now," the former Nigerian military ruler, Abdulsalami Abubakar, mediator of talks that brought the ceasefire signing on Tuesday in Ghana's capital, warned Mr. Taylor's Government and Liberia's two rebel movements. Mr. Abubakar urged Mr. Taylor's fighters and their rebel enemies "not to betray their Liberian compatriots" by breaking their accord.

There was no immediate word on Wednesday of any new fighting. Action on the rest of the deal was to start soon after a ceasefire verification mission, with logistical support from the United Nations, is to arrive in Liberia by the weekend. A West African-led "stabilisation force"

of 2,000-plus troops would follow, said Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary of the West African regional bloc that pressed for the deal. Mr. Chambas said the force could include the U.S. or other Western contributions. U.S. authorities confirmed that some U.S. role was being considered in the force for Liberia, a nation founded by freed American slaves in the 19th century.

Immediately after the weekend verification mission, political talks were to start on an interim government — one that would exclude Mr. Taylor, an indicted war-crimes suspect accused in 14 years of gun-running, diamond-smuggling and conflict in West Africa.

Under the accord, Liberia's government, rebels and political parties will "seek within 30 days, a peace agreement. The peace agreement shall amongst other issues, cover ... formation of a transitional government, which will not include the current President." Mr. Taylor's six-year term would end in January. The U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan called the pact "an important step forward" and urged other countries to give relief aid. — AP

THE HINDU

19 JUN 2003

TREASON TRIAL / OPPOSITION TO CONTINUE STIR

Court orders Tsvangirai release

HARARE (ZIMBABWE), JUNE 20. A judge ordered the Zimbabwean opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, released on bail on Friday after two weeks in jail on treason charges, but put limits on Mr. Tsvangirai's political statements.

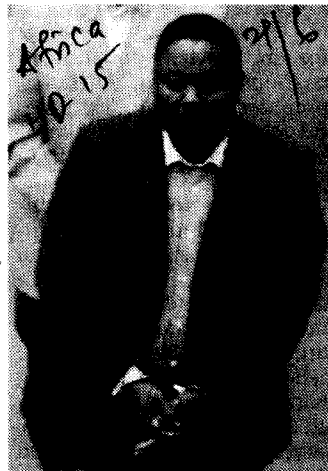
The head of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change is barred from advocating the removal of President, Robert Mugabe, by what Judge, Susan Mavangira, termed "violent or other unlawful means."

Mr. Tsvangirai was expected to be released later on Friday.

Opposition officials said Mr. Tsvangirai was being held in what they described as a filthy, overcrowded cell. They vowed to continue their struggle.

"His incarceration has only served to strengthen the people's resolve to intensify peaceful efforts to tackle the crisis of legitimacy in Zimbabwe," opposition sources said.

Mr. Tsvangirai was arrested



The Zimbabwean Opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, is led out of the High Court in Harare recently. — AP

on June 6 on treason charges following a week of anti-government strikes that affected the already fragile economy.

The State prosecutors said Mr. Tsvangirai had called on supporters to oust Mr. Mugabe and incited them to violence.

While denying those allegations, Mr. Tsvangirai said he called for peaceful protests to get Mr. Mugabe to the negotiating table to discuss the nation's political and economic crisis and his possible retirement after 23 years in power.

Mr. Tsvangirai and two senior opposition officials are already on trial on treason charges, which carry a possible death penalty, for allegedly plotting to assassinate Mr. Mugabe two years ago.

The three politicians deny the charges and say they were framed by the Government to weaken their party. Mr. Tsvangirai ran against Mr. Mugabe in last year's elections, which independent observers say were marred by state-orchestrated political violence, intimidation and vote rigging. — AP

HINDO

21 JUN 2003

THE HINDO

Explosions rock Monrovia

Africa *MO-1A* *10/6*
MONROVIA (LIBERIA), JUNE 9. French military helicopters started evacuating Americans and Europeans from the besieged capital of Liberia on Monday, ferrying them out of embassy compounds to a French ship in the Atlantic.

The evacuation came as Liberian soldiers reported more fighting on the western edge of the city, and more explosions were heard.

The first helicopters took off from the compound of the European



Union. Aid agency workers, ducking against debris sent flying from the twirling blades, ran down a rocky hillside and climbed into French Cougar helicopters. European Union forces stood guard. "We can't work, and we had to leave," said one belonging to French aid group. A total of 91 international residents of Liberia were evacuated from the E.U. compound, said David Parker, acting head of the E.U. mission in Liberia. They included foreign staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross and U.N. agencies.

Helicopters then touched down at the neighbouring U.S. Embassy compound to start collecting about 100 Americans who had gathered there overnight. Lebanese families, who make up much of the merchant class of West Africa, also were flown out from the European compound. — AP

Americans fleeing fighting between rebels and government forces arrive at the U.S. embassy compound in Monrovia on Sunday. — AFP

10 JUN 2003

AFRICA

AP 5 ca

ZIMBABWE / GOVT. CRACKS DOWN ON OPPOSITION

47-15

Clashes erupt as protests continue

4/6

HARARE (ZIMBABWE), JUNE 3. Police fired tear gas at protesters on Tuesday, as an Opposition strike against the increasingly repressive rule of the President, Robert Mugabe, entered its second day.

Opposition officials have vowed to press ahead with a planned week of national protest despite a harsh crackdown by police and troops who have arrested dozens of protesters.

Authorities were swift and brutal in trying to disperse crowds on Monday.

On Tuesday, police used tear gas against people gathered in the streets in the western Harare township of Warren Park, the Opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) said in a statement. There were no reports of injuries.

Banks and most businesses were closed in the capital and traffic was light. Riot police were stationed throughout the city.

In other reports of unrest cited in the Opposition statement, ruling party militants had attempted to evict Opposition activists from their homes in Kwekwe.

The MDC said the actions brought the country's economy to a standstill and organisers pledged a week of similar actions they say will mark the most significant challenge to Mr. Mugabe's 23 years in office.

The Opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, said violence against protesters by police and the military would not deter the party's leaders and supporters.

Zimbabwe is facing its worst political and economic crisis since independence in 1980. Foreign aid, investment and loans have dried up amid political violence, state-orchestrated human rights abuses, the seizure of thousands of white-owned farms and disputed presidential elections last year.



STOMPING OUT CRITICISM?: Zimbabwean riot police beat people during anti-Government protests in Harare on Tuesday. — AP

International food aid has averted mass starvation, but Zimbabwe still faces annual 269 per cent inflation and acute shortages of currency, gasoline, medicines and other essential imports.

Opposition leaders were rounded up in police raids on Monday under draconian security laws allowing the Government to ban any gathering.

At least four other people suffered gunshot wounds in other demonstrations, and scores of others were forced to lie on sidewalks or the ground while police or soldiers beat them with rubber batons.

At least 154 people, most of them Opposition activists or officials, were arrested

across the country on Monday, a police spokesman said in a statement.

Mr. Tsvangirai was arrested at his home in Harare early on Monday but he was later released.

His party lodged an appeal before the nation's Supreme Court against charges that he had defied a court order to call off strikes and demonstrations called on Monday through Friday.

He was scheduled to go to court later on Tuesday where he was to hear a request by the state to tighten bail conditions and restrict his movements in light of the court order, which declared the demonstrations illegal. — AP

SEE HINDO
SEE HINDO

- 4 JUN 2003

ZIMBABWE / GOVT. VOWS TO CRUSH DEMONSTRATIONS

Tsvangirai held amid countrywide protests

HARARE, JUNE 2. Authorities arrested Zimbabwe's Opposition leader today, vowing to crush the launch of anti-Government demonstrations the Opposition hopes will mark the most significant challenge yet to the President, Robert Mugabe's decades-long rule.

Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the Opposition Movement for Democratic Change, was arrested at his home today and accused of planning an illegal demonstration, said William Bango, an Opposition official.

Police had come several hours before, around midnight, but left when they found Mr. Tsvangirai was not at home. Mr. Tsvangirai, a former trade union leader, has become increasingly defiant in his calls for Zimbabweans to rise up against Mr. Mugabe and his policies which the Opposition blames for sinking the country into economic and political disarray.

The Opposition had called for a week of strikes and protests against the Government beginning Monday.

In Harare, it appeared the strike was taking hold, with most shops, banks, and factories closed. Traffic was light, and only a few commuter buses were running.

Opposition officials said they were planning for street demonstrations later in the day.

It was not clear whether or not Mr. Tsvangirai would appear as scheduled in court where he is standing trial for treason. The Government says he was part of a plot to assassinate Mr. Mugabe, charges he and his fellow defendants — two senior Opposition officials — deny.

State television, in its nightly news on Sunday, said the demonstrations and strikes called by the Opposition will be "met with the full wrath of the law."

It said ruling party youths would break up Opposition street demonstrations and quoted the Defence Minister, Sidney Sekeramayi, as saying "enough measures" were being taken to stop protests. "Our soil is very sacrosanct. We shall not allow it to be recolonised," Mr. Sekeramayi told the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation.

The Government has repeatedly accused Britain, the former colonial ruler, of funding the Movement for Democratic Change and Opposition-backed labour unions to mount a campaign to oust Mr. Mugabe.

The television showed footage of troops and riot police be-



Opposition activists flee teargas on the first day of a week of mass action in Harare on Monday.
(Inset: Morgan Tsvangirai) — AP

ing deployed in Harare, and file footage of tear gas being fired on demonstrators in previous protests. Armoured vehicles and troops carriers headed into Harare on Sunday from their base at Inkomo barracks, 40 km northwest of Harare.

Zimbabwe is facing its worst economic crisis since independence with record inflation of 269 per cent and acute short-

ages of hard currency, local money, gasoline, medicines and other essential imports and food. Only international food aid has averted mass starvation.

Stores and supermarkets reported panic buying of food and provisions during the weekend that compared to the traditional rush by shoppers ahead of Christmas and other holidays.

— AP

HPD-15

A landmark for Nigerian democracy

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BY S

ABUJA (NIGERIA), MAY 29. The Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo, took the oath of office for a second term as Nigeria's leader on Thursday, in a landmark for democracy in Africa's most populous nation.

More than a dozen fellow African leaders watched as Mr. Obasanjo, in traditional white robes, raised his hand before an invitation-only crowd under high security in Nigeria's capital.

"I, Olusegun Obasanjo, do solemnly swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and that I will preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria," Mr. Obasanjo pledged, drawing cheers and applause from the crowd. "So help me God."

Nigeria, an oil-rich nation of 120 million people, has never managed a successful civilian-run presidential election. Military coups blocked all previous attempts, sometimes weeks af-

ter the vote. Mr. Obasanjo's 1999 election to a first term, in a military-run vote, ended 15 years of often brutal, corrupt military rule.

He easily won re-election on April 19, in a vote that opposi-

tion candidates charged was marred by fraud. International observers expressed concern, but none questioned the victory of Mr. Obasanjo, a southern Christian, over top rival Muhammadu Buhari, a northern

Muslim. Both men were themselves former junta leaders.

Marking Nigeria's prominence in Africa, fellow African presidents turned out in force for the ceremony, held in an open-air arena.

The Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe, flanked by Zimbabwean security guards running alongside his car, was among those spotted rolling into the arena.

Inauguration organisers said the leaders of South Africa, Senegal, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Cameroon, Mali, Gambia and Sao Tome and Principe.

Leaders settled into a curtained pavilion of bullet-proof glass, before a crowd of Nigerian ex-military rulers, tribal chiefs, political party leaders and other VIPs. The ceremony was filled with hours of pageantry, run on time — an unusual enough event that observers marvelled at it. — AP



Olusegun Obasanjo waves to the crowd after taking the oath of office in Abuja on Thursday. — AFP

THE FINDD

30 MAY 2003

Africa Toll in Congo fighting 280

40.15
BUNIA (CONGO), MAY 21. A team of French military officers wrapped up its mission to assess whether to send troops to troubled north-eastern Congo as the death toll from more than a week of tribal fighting rose to 280 people, U.N. officials said on Wednesday.

The French team, made up of army and navy officers, spent Wednesday discussing the logistics of deploying French troops with top U.N. military officials in Congo, said Hama-

27/5
doun Toure, the U.N. spokesman in Congo.

Since arriving on Tuesday, the French officers have been briefed on security in the region and have studied the local airport and other areas to identify a possible military headquarters and how to deploy and supply the troops, Mr. Toure said.

The United Nations wants to send an international force to the north-eastern Ituri district to keep fighting between rival Hema and Lendu tribal factions

from erupting again. The French have been asked to lead the force and are considering the request. A Pakistani military officer was scheduled to arrive in Bunia, the capital of Ituri, on Wednesday to explore the possibility of deploying Pakistani soldiers alongside the French troops, Mr. Toure said. Meanwhile, aid workers continued to recover bodies from the streets of Bunia, bringing the total number of confirmed dead to 280, Mr. Toure said. — AP

22 MAY 2003

SEE FINDS

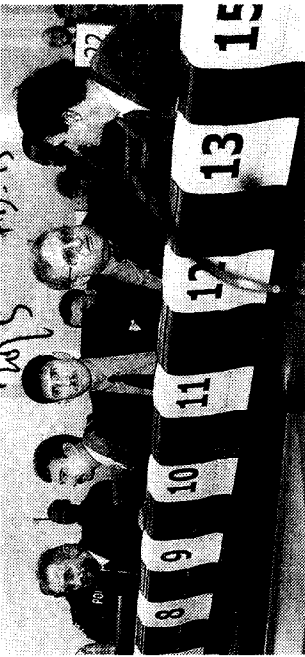
Trial of S. African white group begins

APM CA

PRETORIA (SOUTH AFRICA), MAY 19. Twenty-two white men appeared in court amid tight security on Monday in connection with a plot to kill Nelson Mandela and overthrow the Government. The men face 43 charges including high treason, murder, attempted murder, terrorism and the illegal possession of arms and ammunition.

Roads leading to the courthouse were closed and a police aircraft flew overhead as the accused, most of whom are in police custody, were escorted to court in armoured vehicles.

Dozens of family members of the accused gathered early to claim seats in the public gallery of the court. In what has been described as the biggest security operation for a trial in South Africa, only 120 members of the public are allowed into the court. A group of black protesters danced and shouted anti-



Five far right-wing Afrikaners inside a court in Pretoria, South Africa, recently. The five are part of the group of 22 who face charges of high treason. — AP

leged plan to blow up a car transporting the former South African President, Nelson Mandela, to a public event.

Mr. Mandela foiled the alleged plot by choosing helicopter transport over a motor vehicle. It is alleged that the 22 plotted to kill all blacks or drive them from the country and set up an Afrikaner state.

A twenty-third accused, David Oosthuizen (27), was sentenced to 12 years in prison on Friday in a plea bargain with the prosecution.

Judge Eben Jordan post-poned the case to May 26 for defence lawyers to sort out state-paid lawyers for some of the accused. After decades of racial oppression under the apartheid regime, South Africa had its first multiracial election in 1994. A small group of conservative whites remains opposed to democratic rule.— AP

white slogans "kill the farmer, kill the Boer" outside the courthouse. They dispersed after being warned by police.

Ironically, the first treason trial in the post-apartheid South Africa is being held in the recently restored Palace of Justice where Mandela and others were sentenced to life imprisonment

in 1964. Allegedly members of the extreme right-wing group called "Boeremag" (Farmers Force), the 22 are charged for the murder of Claudia Mokone who was killed in a bomb blast in Soweto in October 2002. They are also charged with attempted murder, alternatively conspiracy to murder for an al-

2 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

10-15
17/5

CONGO / U.N. FLIES IN MORE FORCES

Hundreds flee tribal fighting

Africa

BUNIA (CONGO), MAY 16. The United Nations strengthened its forces in a troubled north-eastern Congolese town on Friday as hundreds of Congolese flocked to a nearby airport hoping to escape tribal fighting in which scores of people have been killed.

The deputy U.N. force commander, Brig. Gen. Roberto Martinelli, in Congo, said more U.N. troops from Uruguay and from other parts of this central African country flew into Bunia.

On Thursday, there were 750 U.N. troops in the troubled town, but they were unable to stem the widespread looting and killing which caused officials to warn of a possible humanitarian disaster in Bunia and Ituri province.

Gen. Martinelli said the force would be strengthened by the end of the month.

"The situation is very dramatic, there's no fighting (Friday) but the town is very tense," the official said as a U.N. truck, escorted by an armoured personnel carrier, ferried dozens of Congolese to the airport.

Other residents pushed wheelbarrows filled with their belongings toward the airport, hoping to get on flights run by aid and missionary groups.

Gen. Martinelli said many of the soldiers were children. "They are very dangerous, there are a lot of young people 10 to 11 years old, they are on drugs, they are not fully controlled by



DISPLACED: Refugees at the U.N. compound in Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo, on Thursday. — AP

their commanders," he said.

Observers missing

Two U.N. military observers deployed in Mongbwalu, a gold mining centre 45 km northwest of Bunia controlled by a faction from the Hema community, have been missing for three days, he said.

The Nigerian and Jordanian observers told U.N. officials in their last communication on Tuesday that the area was very tense and the observers' fate was not known.

The fighting in Bunia between gunmen from the rival Lendu and Hema tribes erupted on May 7 after Uganda withdrew its more than 6,000 troops from the town.

At least 100 people were

killed in the fighting, including scores slain at a Parish church where they had sought refuge. The chaos has made it impossible to determine the overall toll.

The Ugandans left Bunia in the hands of Lendu tribal fighters, a small contingent of U.N. troops from Uruguay and an even smaller Congolese police force.

The police and the U.N. troops have been unable to stem the violence and looting, and a civil administration set up to run Bunia after the Ugandan withdrawal has collapsed.

There are between 25,000 and 28,000 tribal fighters in the region, with thousands of them deployed in and around Bunia.

— AP

17 MAY 2003

SEE FINDO

CONGO / WEEK OF BLOODSHED

Rebels consolidate grip on troubled town

KIGALI (RWANDA), MAY 13. Congolese rebels consolidated their grip on a troubled north-eastern Congolese town on Tuesday, patrolling the streets and shooting in the air to discourage looting, a rebel leader said on Tuesday.

As calm returned after nearly a week of bloodshed, residents identified at least 112 civilians killed in fighting, said Christian Lukusha, representative of Justice Plus, a local human rights group. The rebels seized control of Bunia from rival tribal fighters on Monday.

The Greek Government evacuated 12 nationals from Bunia to neighbouring Uganda on Monday, said Honore Musoko, another official of Justice Plus.

A Congolese Cabinet Minister, trapped in Bunia since the town fell into rebel hands, took refuge at U.N. premises.

The Congolese Human Rights Minister, Ntumba Luaba, said he was on a peace mission to Bunia.

The Union of Congolese Patriots, or UPC, led by members of the Hema community, captured Bunia from tribal rivals, the Lendus on Monday.

The Hema and Lendu fighters have battled for control of Bunia for one week.

The fighting begun a day after neighbouring Uganda completed the withdrawal of its more than 6,000 soldiers from an around Bunia.

Ugandans left the town in the



Congolese refugees fleeing fighting in Bunia arrive in Ntoroko in Uganda on Saturday after crossing Lake Albert separating the two countries. — AP

hands of Lendu tribal fighters, a small contingent of U.N. troops from Uruguay and an even smaller Congolese police force.

"Fighting has ended and my troops are conducting mop up operations ... patrolling the streets and sometimes shooting in the air to stop looting," Thomas Lubanga, head of UPC, said. Aid workers, who left after offices, homes and warehouses were looted, trickled back on Tuesday to help residents who spent several days sheltering at three U.N. premises without ac-

cess to clean water and sanitary facilities, said the U.N. mission in Congo, or MONUC.

The police and the U.N. troops have been ineffective in stemming the violence and looting, and a civil administration set up to run Bunia after the Ugandan withdrawal had collapsed.

There are 625 U.N. troops in Bunia, while there are between 25,000 and 28,000 tribal fighters in the region, with thousands of them deployed in and around Bunia. — AP

14 MAY 2003

THE FINCH

Mugabe faces court case over 'poll fraud'

Africa *10-19*
HARARE, MAY 10. Zimbabwe's Opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, urged the country's High Court on Friday to put the President, Robert Mugabe, on trial for cheating his way to election victory last year.

Mr. Tsvangirai took the unusual step of going to court to force judges to hear his case. His solicitors say he has been ready to take on Mr. Mugabe in court for more than six months.

His legal team filed papers on Friday demanding that the trial go ahead as a matter of urgency.

Political analysts believe Zimbabwe's future — civil unrest or a negotiated settlement leading to new elections — hang on this case.

U.S.
Mr. Tsvangirai claims that the state machinery, including the military police and intelligence agencies, cheated him out of an overwhelming victory in March last year. If the High Court hears the application urgently as requested and grants the injunction, the trial should start seven days later. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2003

↑ ↑ MAY 2003

THE HINDU

A setback to Mugabe Govt.

9/5 Africa 610-15
HARARE, MAY 8. The Government headed by Robert Mugabe was dealt a blow on Wednesday when a section of its new media law was rejected by the Supreme Court here.

The State's solicitors conceded that a section of the legislation was unconstitutional and the Court had no option but to strike down the law which makes it an offence for journalists to unwittingly publish a 'falsehood.'

The ruling is crushing for Jonathan Moyo, Zimbabwe's In-

formation Minister, who has mounted a fierce campaign against the free press and foreign media since his appointment by Mr. Mugabe.

His law was challenged by two journalists from Zimbabwe's only privately owned daily newspaper, *The Daily News*.

They complained that it breached their freedom of expression, a right enshrined in the constitution. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2003

ONE HINDU

9 MAY 2003

Harare court rejects media curbs

Harare, May 7 (Reuters): Zimbabwe's highest court today struck down tough media legislation which made it an offence to publish "falsehoods", after the government conceded the provisions were unconstitutional.

The provisions made the publication of "falsehoods" punishable by a heavy fine or a jail term of up to two years irrespective of the circumstances in which a story had been published.

The Supreme Court ruled that the provisions violated the constitution and were "therefore struck and down and...of no force and effect."

Lawyers for President Robert Mugabe's government had conceded the provisions violated constitutional protections of freedom of expression, and said the government was amending the law, which had been criticised by human rights advocates.

The law known as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act came into effect shortly after Mugabe's controversial re-election in March 2002 which the opposition and Western governments said was marred by fraud.

The court ruled in response to an appeal by two Zimbabwean journalists who were charged last year with publishing a false story. They had reported that

international pressure on Mugabe in order to change the political climate in Zimbabwe.

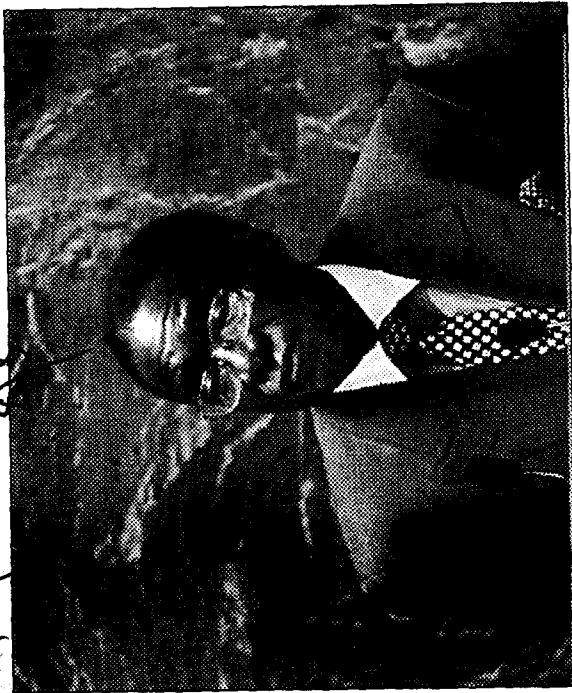
"Until a serious attempt at returning to democratic rule is made there can be no question of Zimbabwe... being readmitted to the councils of the Commonwealth," Australia's Howard told reporters in Blair's Downing Street home after bilateral talks.

Blair added: "There are no grounds as far as we can see for saying that there has been any significant progress at all, indeed if anything the situation has got worse."

"That means we have got to keep up maximum international pressure on the regime."

The Commonwealth group of mainly former British colonies suspended Zimbabwe from its midst for a year in March 2002 and has since extended that ban until at least next December.

The 54-nation body acted after observers said Zimbabwean elections were flawed and in protest at Mugabe's policy of seizing white-owned farms for redistribution to landless Blacks. "The suffering of the people, both Black and White, is inexcusable and appalling and a terrible indictment of somebody who has lost any pretence of governing for the welfare of the people of that country," Howard said.



Robert Mugabe: Big blow

working permanently as journalists in the country.

Britain attack

Britain and Australia attacked Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe today saying there was no prospect of welcoming Zimbabwe back into the Commonwealth until a return to democratic rule was under way.

Prime Ministers Tony Blair and John Howard said they would work to exert maximum

government supporters had headed a woman opposition member in front of her two young children. The story was later proved to be false, and the *Daily News*, which published the report, said it had been misled by the source.

Zimbabwean journalists have filed a number of cases with the Supreme Court challenging various provisions of the media laws, including one which bars foreigners from

Mugabe faces court case over 'poll fraud'

Africa
HD-19

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They complained that it breached their freedom of expression, a right enshrined in the constitution. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2003

Meet to end Zimbabwe crisis

HARARE, MAY 5. Three African Presidents met their Zimbabwean counterpart, Robert Mugabe, on Monday for intense negotiations aimed at ending the political chaos and violence that has crippled the nation for three years.

The Presidents of South Africa, Nigeria and Malawi, Thabo Mbeki, Olusegun Obasanjo and Bakili Muluzi, held closed-door talks with Mr. Mugabe, whose increasingly autocratic rule has been blamed for causing the crisis.

Reporters for some foreign media organisations were refused entry into the State House where the talks took place.

The visiting leaders were also scheduled to hold a separate meeting with Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change.

Speaking to reporters before leaving Malawi, Mr. Muluzi said:

"The visit was intended to encourage courage 'internal dialogue' between different Zimbabwean factions. 'It is not a secret that Zimbabwe is facing very serious economic and political problems and I think it is our responsibility to assist when a neighbour is in a situation like this'."

Mr. Mugabe (79), who led the nation to independence in 1980, narrowly defeated Robert Mugabe's party, ended in a stalemate last year. Mr. Mugabe last year that independent observers said were deeply flawed. The Opposition, along with Britain, the European Union and dropped a court case chal-



The Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe (right), with the President of Malawi, Bakili Muluzi, in Harare, Zimbabwe, on Monday. — AP

lenging the result, conditions the MDC has previously rejected.

The opposition and the main labour federation have shut down most of the economy with two national strikes since mid-March.

Zimbabwe is suffering its worst economic crisis since independence.

Inflation has soared to a record 228 per cent, unemployment is nearly 70 per cent and Zimbabweans face shortages of hard currency, food, petrol and medicine.

More than 200 people have been killed in political violence since 2000 and thousands of others, mostly opposition supporters, have been arrested and tortured, rights groups say. — AP

06 MAY 2003

147 PARIS MEET / FRANCO-U.S. WORKING GROUP SET UP

G-8 leaders focus on biometrics

By Vaiju Naravane

PARIS, MAY 5. The U.S. Attorney-General, John Ashcroft, today became the first high-level American official to visit France since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq got under way. Since Saddam Hussein's regime was overthrown, America has stepped up pressure on France, saying Paris will have to face the consequences of its opposition to the war against Iraq.

Mr. Ashcroft is in Paris for a meeting of the Justice and Interior Ministers from the world's most industrialised nations, a month before the G-8 summit takes place in Evian, France.

He will also address a special meeting in Lyon at the headquarters of the international police organisation — Interpol — on recovering artefacts stolen from Iraqi museums.

Today's preparatory meeting focused on the increasingly important field of biometrics, seen as vital in fighting identity fraud, often used by international criminal gangs and terrorist networks.

Research in biometrics is galloping ahead and security forces will soon be able to use iris scans and other unfalsifiable material to make tamper-proof passports and identity documents.

The French Interior Minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, said he was particularly happy to welcome Mr. Ashcroft to the meeting, another conciliatory gesture from Paris, which was desperately trying to mend fences with Washington.

Mr. Sarkozy also announced the establishment of a Franco-U.S. working group on biometrics. The French said they were seeking answers from the Americans on the fate of six French citizens captured in Af-



The U.S. Attorney-General, John Ashcroft (front row, left), and the Justice and Interior Ministers from the G-8 nations at a summit in Paris on Monday. — AFP

ghanistan in 2001, who are being held at Guantanamo Bay by the U.S. forces.

"We have no idea what the status of these people is — the Frenchmen or the others — and naturally I am going to question John Ashcroft about his intentions," said the French Justice Minister, Dominique Perben.

None of the 650 detainees had been given access to a lawyer or been presented before a judge. "This situation cannot go on," Mr. Perben said. Despite conciliatory

noises from Paris, there is still palpable hostility between France and America. U.S. officials have said the French could contribute to the reconstruction of Iraq but on "coalition terms".

Washington now plans to divide Iraq into four peacekeeping zones that will be controlled by Poland, Britain, the U.S. and a fourth as yet unnamed country.

France and Germany have both been kept out as punishment for their opposition to the war in Iraq.

06 MAY 2003

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Reporters for some foreign media organisations were refused entry into the State House where the talks took place.

The visiting leaders were also scheduled to hold a separate meeting with Morgan Tsvangirai and the United States, has said. The opposition refused to accept the results, saying the vote was rigged and influenced by violence and intimidation.

Speaking to reporters before leaving Malawi, Mr. Muluzi said the visit was intended to encourage "internal dialogue" between different Zimbabwean leaders for recognising Mr. Mugabe's re-election amid state-factions. "It is not a secret that Zimbabwe is facing very serious economic and political problems and I think it is our responsibility to assist when a neighbour is in a situation like that".

Mr. Mugabe (79), who led the nation to independence in 1980, narrowly defeated Mr. Tsvangirai in presidential elections last year. Mr. Mugabe said last month he would only meet with Mr. Tsvangirai if the opposition recognised his re-election with Britain, the European Union and dropped a court case chal-



The Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe (right), with the President of Malawi, Bakili Muluzi, in Harare, Zimbabwe, on Monday. — AP

lenging the result, conditions the MDC has previously rejected.

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Winnie convicted of fraud, faces 15 years in jail

Press Trust of India

DURBAN, April 24. — Mrs Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, ex-wife of former South African President Nelson Mandela, was today found guilty of fraud and theft amounting to nearly a million rands. She faces a maximum of 15 years in jail.

Magistrate Mr Peet Johnson of the Pretoria Regional Court found the leader of the African National Congress Women's League guilty on 43 charges of fraud and 25 of theft.

Her co-accused Addy Moolman, a financial broker, was convicted on 60 charges of fraud and 25 of theft in a trial that started last July

and saw 23 witnesses testifying for the state. Mrs Madikizela-Mandela and Moolman went into the witness box in their own defence.

Mrs Madikizela-Mandela, who is also an ANC MP, and Moolman were found guilty of defrauding the now defunct Sambaou Bank by submitting loan applications on behalf of fictitious members of the ANC Women's League. She will be sentenced within the next day or two and faces a maximum of 15 years in jail. She will be stripped of her seat in Parliament and all her parliamentary privileges and perks after the conviction.

Judge Johnson, while pronouncing the verdict, said the evidence collected by the state was "overwhelming" and that her tes-

timony that that she did not know about the fraud was "totally improbable".

The conviction today is the latest setback to the fiery politician who has faced a series of controversies since she was reunited with her husband Mr Nelson Mandela after his release from prison in early 1990. However, the couple was separated in 1992 and officially divorced in 1996.

Interestingly, she was found guilty in 1991 of kidnapping four youth activists and the murder of a fifth, Stompie Moeketsi Seiepi. But her six-year sentence was suspended after an appeal. After being elected as an ANC MP in 1994, she was appointed the deputy minister of arts and culture by Mr Mandela.

But he fired her a year later after she disobeyed him by going on a trip to Ghana without his permission. She also had a run-in with Parliament after failing to attend parliamentary sittings on a regular basis and was ordered to appear before the ethics committee to answer charges that she had received substantial gifts and donations of cash which she had not disclosed to Parliament.

She had been charged with not disclosing her business interests in a restaurant in Soweto. Mrs Madikizela-Mandela defied the ethics committee and challenged Parliament in court after she was ordered to appear to answer the charges.

Obasanjo re-elected amid rigging charge

LAGOS, (NIGERIA), APRIL 23. In the Nigerian Presidential election, Olusegun Obasanjo, was re-elected by a wide margin, officials announced on Tuesday, even as the Opposition groups rejected the outcome as rigged and threatened mass protests.

Out of more than 42 million votes, Mr. Obasanjo won 62 per cent in the weekend ballot, compared to 32 per cent secured by his rival, former junta leader, Muhammadu Buhari, the Election Commission said. More than 2.5 million votes were declared invalid.

The vote is a test of stability and democracy in Africa's most populous nation.

International monitors have expressed concern about fraud, including ballot-box stuffing and bribery.

In an acceptance speech, Mr. Obasanjo urged his opponents to accept his victory peacefully. "Good politicians should be really good sportsmen, showing magnanimity and humility in victory and gallantry and good-naturedness in defeat," he said. "I'm humbled by the fact that I'm the people's choice," he added, describing the election as "peaceful, free and transparent".

Election-related violence has been sporadic in a country frequently riven by bloodletting. But tensions were running high after Opposition officials claimed the vote was rigged.

Don Etiebet, chairman of Mr.

Africa
Olusegun Obasanjo *40-15*



Political – Obasanjo was elected in 1999, after the collapse of General Sani Abacha's military dictatorship

Religion – Christian *2014*
Education – Mons Officers Cadet School; Royal College of Military Engineering; Indian Army Engineering School
Family – Married to Stella Ajike Abede since 1971; divorced from Oluyemi Akinlaja with whom he had five children

SOURCES: Associated Press; Worldmark Encyclopedia of the Nations; World Leaders **AP**

Buhari's party, stormed into the Election Commission headquarters shortly before the announcement, refusing to endorse the results.

He warned that the Opposition supporters "will act appropriately according to human nature."

"We do not need to tell the people what to do. They will know what to do when their mandate has been trampled upon," he said, without elaborating. Officials in Mr. Buhari's party have warned that the people 'will fight,' and he himself has threatened mass action, a term that in Nigeria generally refers to violent protests. — AP

40-13
249

Obasanjo takes lead in Nigerian poll

LAGOS (NIGERIA), APRIL 21. President Olusegun Obasanjo took a commanding lead in early returns from voting in Nigeria's presidential election, but the



Olusegun Obasanjo

main Opposition party claimed the vote was rigged and called it a "huge joke."

In early results on Monday, Mr. Obasanjo was well ahead of his main challenger, Muhammadu Buhari — a former military ally. With more than 20 million votes counted in 21 states and the federal capital territory, Mr. Obasanjo had 66 per cent, or 13,641,733 ballots, compared to 27 per cent, or 5,623,765 ballots, for Buhari.

The election for President and Governors was a major test of whether democracy has taken root since Mr. Obasanjo was elected four years ago, ending

15 years of brutal military rule.

Nigeria — Africa's most populous nation — has never seen a civilian government successfully hand over power to another. Though it is one of the world's largest oil exporters, it is desperately poor and has a history of coups and unrest.

Mr. Buhari's campaign spokesman, Sam Nda-Isai, said his party was rejecting the results.

"The entire so-called election is a huge joke," Mr. Nda-Isai said. "As far as we are concerned, democracy has failed."

Mr. Buhari and other party leaders are to meet on Tuesday or Wednesday to decide on a course of action, the spokesman said, declining to speculate whether that could involve massive protests as opposition officials — including Mr. Buhari — had earlier warned.

Nigeria's election commission, meanwhile, promised to cancel results in areas with proven cases of fraud.

"As far as we are concerned, (so far) there has been no rigging," Abel Guobadia, the election commission chairman, told reporters late on Sunday, urging those complaining of fraud "not to resort to violence."

Nearly half of Nigeria's 126 million people registered for the ballot in 36 States and the capital. It was unclear how many voted, though officials said turnout was strong. — AP

Obasanjo's moment of truth

569 16/11

FLYING at 30,000 feet with President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria can be a nerve wracking experience. But it has nothing to do with the pilots from the Nigerian Air Force; they are more than competent. It was the man himself, the gruff, ex-general, veteran of Nigeria's terrible civil war when the emerging province of Biafra was ruthlessly crushed. Now poised to win a second term in Nigeria's return to democracy, his campaigning relies much on his natural warmth and good heartedness. But the rough, tough side is also there.

"I will throw you out of this plane", he said in a moment of anger at one of my questions. "That's what we do in Africa with people who need to be punished," he said. "Right now!", he added, to make sure there was no question of the plane landing first. Luckily I have known Obasanjo for over 20 years and count him among one of my good friends. Still we are not buddies. I am a journalist, probing and getting under his skin. He is a politician, trying to build consensus in a bitterly fragmented, tormented society where corruption, poverty and criminality all seethe in great overworked urban agglomerations where tribal or religious differences can escalate a minor quarrel in the market place overcharging into an all out tribal massacre with the heavy-handed, poorly trained Army called in to impose order in its usual ham-fisted, often brutal, way.

Obasanjo can play the "Big Man", as these authoritarian leaders, democratically elected or not, are rightly called in Africa. He told me on this plane journey, just after his first election victory, that he was "going to crack the whip". And I knew instantly exactly what he meant. Once when staying with him on his farm I saw him react to one of his farm workers who had started to argue with him. Obasanjo quickly stooped to pick up a piece of thick steel wire that had dropped to the floor as if to whip him. The man immediately begged for mercy and changed his tune. It was all over in a second, but I realised I now understood how he had risen so quickly to the top of the military hierarchy during the civil war.

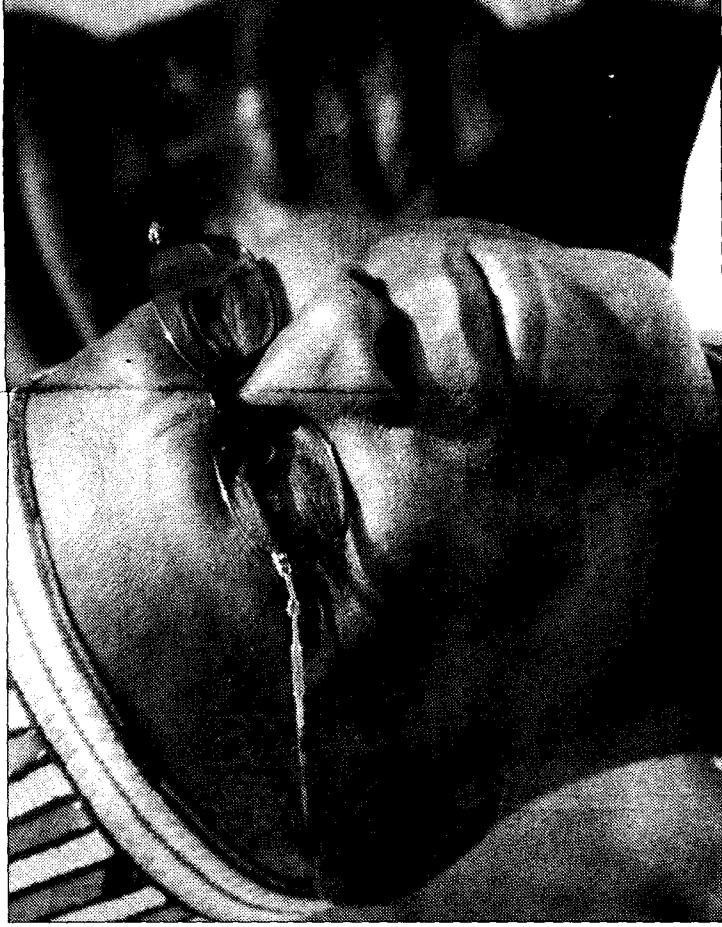
But there is also another side of him, also a tough one. When imprisoned by General Sani

RSC ✓
tatorship from his superior who was assassinated, he had walked away from the presidential palace, turned the country back to democracy, put on a pair of blue jeans and started a chicken and vegetable farm. He wanted to show this oil-rich country that its real future lay on the land where still many more than half its people live.

The first time I went to stay with him he apologised for being five hours late. Driving home from his farm he had come upon a long line of traffic halted by an accident. He went to investigate and found six bodies on the ground. There was a small group of onlookers and two policemen standing idly by. No one was helping. The policemen claimed it was not their responsibility; they were en route to 'other business'. Obasanjo ordered the crowd to help move the bodies to the roadside and commandeered a car to rush one of the dead women who was obviously pregnant to the hospital, in the hope of saving the baby. He then directed traffic for three hours until the police arrived. The next day he learnt that the hospital had refused admission to the woman because there was no police certificate recording the accident. "I should have done the Caesarean myself, by the roadside", was his only comment.

Now Obasanjo appears to be about to win a third term as President. The first time, a quarter a century ago, was as military dictator. Then beginning four years ago as a democratic strong man. Will his re-election solve Nigeria's problems? Can this mixture of warm-heartedness, generous spirit, military no-nonsense, shaded with undertones of violence, pull Nigeria out of its deeply diseased state? I have often talked late at night with Obasanjo about this question. For all his ebullience he is not an optimist. The problems are even worse than he thought before he was elected President. "I never knew the corruption ran so deep. Or that the administration of the power system could appear consciously designed so as not to work."

Still, the Nigerians will re-elect him. They know he at least is incorruptible. They know he wants a God-fearing society where people do not murder and steal and people work and are paid for it. If I were a Nigerian I might not fly with him, but I probably would vote for him.



World view

JONATHAN POWER

At the age of 42, having inherited the dictatorship from his superior who was assassinated, he had walked away from the presidential palace, turned the country back to democracy, put on a pair of blue jeans and started a chicken and vegetable farm. He wanted to show this oil-rich country that its real future lay on the land where still many more than half its people live

Abacha, the dictator who died of a heart attack in the arms of three prostitutes, Obasanjo wrote books on Christianity and spiritual meditation. He also organised a productive farm on prison wasteland, sufficient to give all the prisoners a decent meal every day. He jugged every mor-

ning and became the unofficial counsellor and religious advisor to all who needed his help — from murderers awaiting execution to men broken by torture.
His principles are deeply held and he lives them. At the age of 42, having inherited the dic-

'1,000 dead in Congo ethnic violence'

KIGALI, APRIL 7. At least 1,000 people have been killed in ethnic violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the United Nations has said, one day after the signing of an accord to end over four years of war in the vast Central African country.

The massacres, which took place on Thursday in the northeastern region of Ituri, claimed "at least 1,000 victims", said the U.N. mission in the DRC in a statement yesterday sent to AFP's office in the Rwandan capital Kigali.

It said this information came from "witness accounts" of the massacres, which took place in the parish of Drodo and 14 neighbouring areas.

According to lists compiled by local leaders, 966 people were "summarily executed" in three hours of massacres, said

traces of blood that was still fresh".

The U.N. mission, MONUC, said it would continue its investigations to identify those responsible for the bloodletting.

The DRC Minister for Human Rights, Ntumba Luaba, called the MONUC to help catch the killers.

"MONUC, which has already gathered some information on the massacre, must quickly pursue its investigation so the perpetrators don't remain unpunished," he told AFP in a telephone interview from the capital Kinshasa.

The violence came one day after the warring parties in the Democratic Republic of Congo signed a historic pact on Wednesday to end more than four years of brutal warfare. — AFP



A Hema community family displaced in Bunia, after they left their village attacked by Lendu community people in DR Congo in this September 2002 file photo.

the U.N. mission, which on Saturday sent a team to Drodo and the surrounding areas.

The U.N. mission said it had visited 49 seriously injured vic-

“20 mass graves, identifiable by

8 APR 2003

DEE HINDO

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The power dust may have blown over the Cricket Cup, with England the dust. But the fled by President Robert Mugabe's storm to settle in this southern country.

It may be in Harare or attending an economic job, but he keeps an eye open no matter which part of his country you're in. He's a dirty visage, stares down at you from the walls of every government office

and other establishments. Zimbabwe has been in the news of late for all the wrong reasons — an international outcry over the allegedly rigged elections won narrowly by Zanu (Zimbabwe African National Union) and PF regime, the throttling of democratic institutions, and trampling of human rights, suspension from the Commonwealth as a result, drought and famine caused by the disastrous land reform policies and the drama over the refu-

sal of the English and New Zealand teams to play their World Cup matches in Harare on grounds of security.

The roots of the Zimbabwean crisis go far back into history and boils down to the great divide between the two dominant communities, the Shona and the Ndebele, represented by Zanu and Zapu (Zimbabwe African People's Union). The two warring factions had come together in the long-drawn struggle for independence to oust the heirs of the great robber baron, Cecil Rhodes.

Rhodes' supporters had begun appropriating the farmlands of the Mashonaland region after failing to find gold, and by 1895 the colonialists had seized power and named the country Rhodesia. Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 but the feuding political factions never made peace. In 1999, the Movement for Democratic Change, an offshoot of the trade union movement, was launched to fight corruption and guarantee civil rights. It was defeated in the allegedly rigged polls. Regional leaders such as Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and South African President Thabo Mbeki are now trying to broker peace and bring about a power sharing agreement, a government of national unity so to say, but their efforts have so far not borne any result.

The World Cup has given Mugabe's opponents a great opportunity to highlight the situation. The Zimbabwe Cricket Supporters for Democracy issued full page advertisements in the local and South African press spilling the dope on Zimbabwean democracy — a land reforms programme hijacked by Zanu-PF supporters and mired in corruption — and have asked the people to "wave a red card to tell Mugabe he's out". It said that despite nearly full dams, Zimbabweans are starving to death.

Mugabe has still not abandoned his socialist dreams but his popularity has plummeted. But the man, whose high-security residence is bang opposite the Harare Sports Club's (an institution still steeped in its colonial past) cricket stadium, has refused to let go. Since the opposition has upped the ante, the state has responded in a ham-fisted manner and used legislation

With the floodlights on, Zimbabwe is in the news but for all the wrong reasons, reports MARIO RODRIGUES



ROBERT MUGABE: Is he a man of the people? Or is he leading Zimbabwe towards doom?

like the selectively applied Public Order and Security Act to stifle dissent. Press reports say police brutality is getting worse and opposition party members and independent journalists are being beaten up, tortured, named and raped in police custody.

The government is going ahead with its land acquisitions and has targeted fruit, vegetable, tea and coffee estates in the final leg of the land reforms programme. The reforms have the support of the black majority who resent the white domination of the national economy. But sceptics see the development as a Mugabe ruse to restore his flagging popularity by diverting attention from the corruption in his administration and mismanagement of the economy.

Under the draconian new media laws, several journalists were refused working licences while some provincial newspapers have been shut down for failing to pay hefty deposits for a licence to operate under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Journalists need a licence to operate in Zimbabwe — so did we who came to cover the World Cup — often at a stiff fee. Those who don't have one can operate but they run the risk of being arrested.

Worse, his move of appropriating white farmlands, without putting alternative management systems in place, has forced the collapse of farming and thrown 1.5 million farm-workers out of jobs. More than 100 white farmers have left for Zambia. The USA has warned

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WILLIAM W. HINDS
5-7-73 1893



ROBERT MUGABE: Is he a man of the people? Or is he leading Zimbabwe towards doom?

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that Zimbabwe, once the granary of the region, will suffer a serious shortfall in the staple maize crop because of poor harvests caused by drought and the chaotic land reforms. An international aid worker from Lesotho confirms that hunger is stalking rural areas.

"There has been a downside in the past two years. The situation is bad but not as bad as it is made out to be by the international press," is what a Zimbabwean said. This is the standard refrain of many citizens. But it is hard to see signs of any starvation or deprivation in charming and modern Harare, whose streets are named after revolutionary African leaders of the such as Nelson Mandela, Kwame Nkrumah and Sam Nujoma. At its worst the city resembles a socialist economy in terminal decline rather than a bread basket case.

But the telltale signs of a deteriorating economy are there for all to see — long queues for petrol and food which the police have been reportedly asked to disperse because they create the wrong impression on visitors. Inflation has shot up to 208.1 per cent and prices have spiralled out of control. One US dollar is officially worth 51.49 Zimbabwean dollars, but can actually fetch as much as 1,400 Zimbabwean dollars in the flourishing black market. Even government officials ask if you have money to exchange. The Zimbabwean dollar will

soon be worthless and is predicted to trade at one US dollar to 3,500 by the year end. If you go out shopping or dining at a restaurant you will have to take wads of notes to pay your way through. In a few years' time maybe you will have to take a bank along!

People in Zimbabwe are warm and friendly, and the streets of Harare relatively safe, certainly much safer than Johannesburg where you can get mugged or your car can be looted any time of the day. The security apparatus is visible on the streets but never intrusive or oppressive. Everybody is amazed at the fuss the English cricket team made about the security since it is a non-issue here.

The Indian restaurants in Harare are doing roaring business, especially after the Indian armada visited the town.

Jalpur, the Indian restaurant at the Sunrise Sports Club, in the Gujarat-majority enclave of Ridge View, is throbbing with customers. Spotted there were some Men in Blue — Harbajan 'Bahaji' Singh, Dinesh Mongia and Parthiv Patel sitting at one table and the Karnataka trio at another. They are quite at home here and any suggestion that they are under a security threat will be treated as a joke.

(The author is The Statesman's Mumbai-based Special Representative. He is at present covering the Cricket World Cup in South Africa.)

13 MAR 2003

Paris meet hit by protests

212 HO. 15 Africa
PARIS, FEB. 20. The Franco-African summit, which opened in Paris on Thursday, was overshadowed by protests against the presence of the Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe, and the Ivory Coast President, Laurent Gbagbo's decision to stay away.

The French President, Jacques Chirac, keen to cement his reputation as a key player in diplomacy across Africa, told African leaders on the eve of the summit he was willing to step up military training and equipment to help regional peacekeeping operations, officials said.

The summit is being attended by heads of state and representatives from 52 African states — only Somalia, which has no recognised government, was not invited.

But Mr. Chirac's efforts to win influence across the continent, and not just in France's former African empire, carried the price of protests by rights campaigners against Mr. Mugabe.

The Zimbabwean leader's visit also sparked a diplomatic row between Britain and France over European Union sanctions against Zimbabwe. Mr. Mugabe, who made no comment as he arrived at his Paris hotel on Wednesday, is under fire from Western countries, which have imposed travel and economic sanctions since his re-



The French President, Jacques Chirac (centre right), with African Heads of State in Paris on Wednesday. — AP

election a year ago in what they say was a flawed poll.

He accuses Britain and others of "neo-colonialism" in southern Africa when they criticise, among other issues, the forced transfer of land from white farmers to landless blacks.

France asked the E.U. to allow Mr. Mugabe to travel to the two-day summit and got its way despite objections from Britain, the former colonial power, which has led international criticism of Mr. Mugabe's human rights record.

The British rights activist, Peter Tatchell, staged an anti-Mugabe protest in front of the Justice Ministry, where demonstrators waved banners saying: "Arrest Mugabe for torture".

"It's a disgrace," said Tom Spicer of Zimbabwe's main

position Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), who said he was tortured by Zimbabwean police last year.

"Mugabe should be ostracised from the international community," Mr. Spicer said.

Ten activists from French gay rights group Act Up were arrested in a separate protest in front of Mr. Mugabe's hotel, a police spokesman said. Mr. Mugabe has likened homosexuals to dogs.

The French Cooperation Minister, Pierre-Andre Wiltzer, who deals with overseas aid, justified inviting Mr. Mugabe, saying it would be a platform to engage him on human rights concerns. "When you have things to say, you should say them to each other face to face," he said.

Call for Mugabe's arrest

PARIS, FEB. 19. Several dozen human rights protesters on Wednesday demanded the arrest of the Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe, on torture charges during his contested visit to Paris for a Franco-African summit.

The activists, one holding a banner reading "Mugabe, murderer," said they were angry at France for inviting the African leader despite the European Union banning his travel. Mr. Mugabe flew into France on Wednesday.

Activist Peter Tatchell, who has spent three years trying to bring Mr. Mugabe to trial, said he would file a complaint with a prosecutor to press for his arrest. — AP

Tsvangirai faults Mbeki on Mugabe

HARARE, FEB. 19. Zimbabwe's main Opposition has written to the Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, to criticise South Africa and Nigeria for supporting the President, Robert Mugabe, in the Commonwealth despite alleged rights abuses.

Australia, Nigeria and South Africa belong to a troika committee within the Commonwealth — grouping mostly former British colonies — that is in charge of deciding whether sanctions imposed on Mr. Mugabe should continue.

The South African President, Thabo Mbeki, and his Nigerian counterpart, Olusegun Obasanjo, have advocated lifting the sanctions, leaving Mr. Howard, outnumbered.

"Through this diabolical act of fellowship and solidarity with a murderous dictatorship, Gen. Obasanjo and Mr. Mbeki have now openly joined Mugabe as he continues to wage a relentless war against the people of Zimbabwe," the Opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, told Mr. Howard in the letter, a copy of which was e-mailed to Reuters yesterday.

Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth after Mr. Mugabe's victory in elections that Mr. Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and some Western countries said were rigged. The sanctions will expire on March 19. "Pressure must continue to be piled on Mugabe and his cronies until they realise...the international community will grant them neither the temptation nor opportunity to continue to perpetrate crimes against the people of Zimbabwe," Mr. Tsvangirai said.

Mr. Mugabe has clashed with the West over his seizure of white-owned farms for redistribution to landless blacks, which critics say has led to drastic food shortages. Mr. Mugabe says the shortages are solely a result of drought. — Reuters

THE HINDU

20 FEB 2003

Lift sanctions on Zimbabwe: Nigeria

JOHN CHIAHEMEN

Lagos, Feb. 11 (Reuters): Nigeria is calling for the lifting of Commonwealth sanctions on Zimbabwe and its readmission to the organisation, and has the support of South Africa, a senior Nigerian official said today.

He said President Olusegun Obasanjo had made the call in a letter he was sending to Australian Prime Minister John Howard, head of a special committee on Zimbabwe set up by the Commonwealth, a 54-nation grouping of mainly former British colonies.

Obasanjo had the support of South African President Thabo Mbeki, the official, who asked not to be named, told Reuters.

Australia, South Africa and Nigeria form a "troika" mandated to review the Commonwealth's suspension of Zimbabwe's membership and sanctions imposed on it last year after President Robert Mugabe was re-elected in a vote his main rival and many Western nations say was rigged.

"He (Obasanjo) is calling for

the removal of sanctions, and the end of the suspension more directly," the presidency official said. "He went to Zimbabwe last week and met all sides. He then talked to Mbeki and they decided the best thing is to remove the sanctions."

Howard was due to meet British Prime Minister Tony Blair in London tomorrow.

Nigeria and South Africa had earlier effectively killed off the troika by cancelling a key meeting next month, a senior Nigerian official said today.

"They decided between them that the meeting will not hold. And as this was to be the last meeting of the troika, its mandate is effectively expired," the official said.

Western powers have isolated Mugabe because of the March elections and his controversial policies, including the seizure of many White-owned farms for redistribution to landless Blacks.

The southern African country is gripped by its worst economic crisis since independence from Britain in 1980, with nearly half of the nation's 14 million

people facing starvation.

But both South Africa and Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa's most powerful and influential nations, have been widely seen as sympathetic to Mugabe, one of Africa's longest serving rulers.

They advocate a less confrontational approach to Zimbabwe than Australia and Britain in a dispute that has split the Commonwealth roughly on colour lines.

While Obasanjo has mediated between Britain and Zimbabwe since Mugabe adopted his policy of farm seizures, he has privately accused Britain of failing to honour its commitments to help Zimbabwe finance land reform, Nigerian officials say.

Howard wanted Zimbabwe's suspension extended and had said Harare had done nothing to warrant being readmitted to the body.

Howard said he would write to all the other members of the 54-member Commonwealth to recommend the suspension remains in force until a full meeting of the group in Nigeria in December.

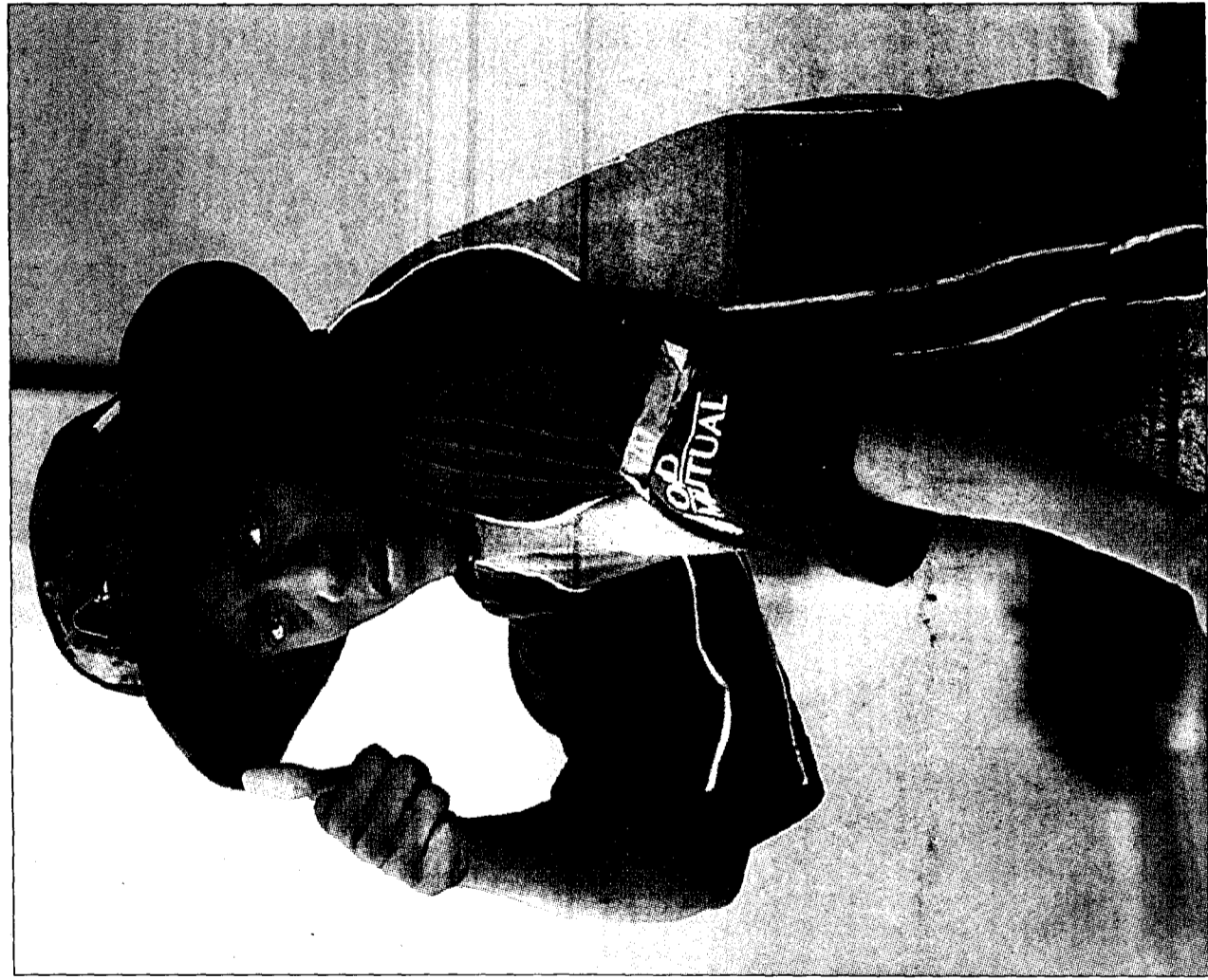
1 2 FEB 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

Players blackmail Mugabe

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Africa



Henry Olonga (above) and Andy Flower (top right) wear black armbands during Zimbabwe's match against Namibia at the Harare Sports Ground. (Reuters)

Johannesburg, Feb. 10: Thirty-five years ago, Muhammad Ali refused to join US forces fighting in Vietnam, saying: "I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong."

It remains the biggest political statement in recent memory by any sportsman.

Today, two Zimbabwean cricketers — Andy Flower and Henry Olonga — wore black armbands as they took the field in their World Cup tie against Namibia, "mourning the death of democracy" in their country.

In a statement released before the match, Flower — Zimbabwe's most accomplished cricketer — and Olonga — the first black to play for the country — said: "We are making a silent plea to those responsible to stop the abuse of human rights in Zimbabwe. We pray that our small action may help to restore sanity and dignity to our nation."

Zimbabwe has been torn by civil strife after President Robert Mugabe, who has ruled the country for over two decades, started what he called land redistribution by taking away the property of white farmers and giving it to landless blacks. Bloodshed and allegations of corruption have tainted the process.

With half of Zimbabwe's 14 million people struggling under food shortages and the main opposition leader facing a possible death sentence if convicted of trying to kill Mugabe, some critics say playing cricket there would imply approval of his rule.

Western leaders have also accused him of rigging the 2002 election, in which he defeated Morgan Tsvangirai, of the Movement for Democratic Change, now thrown into a treason trial.

England and Australia have come under pressure from their governments to boycott fixtures



in Zimbabwe.

England, which was to decide today if it would play against Zimbabwe in capital Harare, seemed to be still hesitating, though an International Cricket Council (ICC) set deadline expired.

The ICC released a document saying England had given "formal notice" that it will boycott its match for security concerns, but England and Wales Cricket Board spokesman Andrew Wallace said the matter was still being discussed. "We have not said that we are refusing to go to Zimbabwe. We asked the ICC to move the match to a safe location outside Zimbabwe."

India is also slated to play Zimbabwe in Harare. It does not share Western concerns about Mugabe who is New Delhi's old friend and fellow member of the Non-Aligned Movement. India may not entirely support the methods used by Mugabe, but it agrees with him that "inequitable distribution" of land is Zimbabwe's main problem.

Flower and Olonga's protest would hurt Mugabe more than threats by other teams not to play in Zimbabwe because until today national players had stayed clear of the political row. It also conquers racial barriers.

"We cannot in good conscience take to the field and ignore the fact that millions of our compatriots are starving, unemployed and oppressed," the duo said.

"We are aware that hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans may even die in the coming months through a combination of starvation and poverty and AIDS. "We have heard a torrent of racist hate speech directed at minority groups."

Today's game against Namibia began with the Harare Sports Club barely a fifth full. Mugabe, a great cricket fan and patron of the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU), was not present.

ZCU chairman Peter Chingoka said he was aware of the players' statement. "We will make a (reaction) statement at an appropriate time," he said.

For declining to go to Vietnam, Muhammad Ali was stripped of his world title and prevented from travelling abroad. He got back his licence only after three years.

At 26, Olonga has years of cricket ahead of him, which he has now put in jeopardy. Apart from the punishment he might face from the Zimbabwe board, the ICC, constantly stressing its non-political status, could intervene with a disrepute charge.

After over 200 one-day appearances and 63 Tests in a 12-year career, Flower is near the end of his playing days and is not expected to turn out in a big event for Zimbabwe again.

At the end of his short innings (39) against Namibia, at a ground nestling right in the shadow of Mugabe's presidential residence, the left-hander made a small gesture to the crowd as he walked back to the pavilion.

It could have been interpreted as a goodbye.

WITH AGENCY REPORTS

Call to build more robust African Union

ADDIS ABABA, FEB. 3. Some 30 heads of state and top government officials assembled in the Ethiopian capital today for the first summit meeting of the fledgling African Union (AU), which last year replaced the Organisation of African Unity.

They were immediately urged to do more to build the foundations of a more robust AU, whose stated purpose is to enhance the economic and political integration of a continent, home to 800 million people, and to forge a united continental voice on the world stage.

In his opening address, the South African President and AU Chairman, Thabo Mbeki, emphasised the importance of the AU's Peace and Security Council and the urgency of setting it up.

"All of us are convinced that this will help us respond more effectively to move the entirety of our continent to a situation of peace and enhanced safety and security for all our peoples," Mr. Mbeki told the summit.

"In this regard, I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the fact the none of



The Libyan President, Moammar Gadhafi (left), talks to the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, during the inauguration of the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa on Monday. — AFP

our member states have ratified the protocol that will enable us to establish the Peace and Security Council," he added.

"I, therefore, urge all of you to move expeditiously to ratify this protocol so that we are able to respond to the demand of the

masses of our people for peace," said Mr. Mbeki.

The AU head also noted that the protocol for setting up a pan-African Parliament had also not been ratified by enough member states to push the project forward. — AFP

THE HINDU

- 4 FEB 2003

Secret deal to facilitate Mugabe's exile abroad

Jan. 13, 2003
The Times, London

HARARE, Jan. 13. — Two of the most senior figures in Zimbabwe's Zanu PF party have offered to deliver President Mugabe's resignation to secure a negotiated settlement of the country's deepening crisis, The Times has learned.

The secret deal put to Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the Opposition Movement for Democratic Change, would also give Mr Mugabe (78) immunity from prosecution and allow him to go into exile abroad.

A government of national unity would run Zimbabwe until new elections were held in two years' time.

Sources connected to the Zanu PF leadership said



Robert Mugabe

that they believed Mr Mugabe had agreed.

Whether the deal will go ahead remains unclear. Col. Lionel Dyck, a respected white former Zimbabwean army officer who has

acted as go-between, put the proposals to Mr Tsvangirai before Christmas but he initially condemned the

plan, apparently fearing a trap. Mr Tsvangirai con-

firmed in an interview with The Times that Mr Emerson Mnangagwa, the Speaker of Parliament and number three in the Zanu PF hierarchy, and General Vitalis Zvinavashe, commander of the armed forces, had assured him that Mr Mugabe would stand down as the first step in the deal.

"Part of the deal would, of course, include Mr Mugabe resigning," said Mr Tsvangirai. "It is the critical element. As far as Mnangagwa and Zvinavashe are concerned, it's part of the deal." Sources said Mr Mnangagwa and General Zvinavashe have already secured assurances from Mr Mugabe.

However, MDC today denied reports it was involved in the plot to exile Mr Mugabe, adds AFP.

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12/11

President's allies win Djibouti polls

DJIBOUTI, JAN. 11. Parties allied with the President have swept Djibouti's first multiparty legislative elections, a vote seen as a test of democracy for this Horn of Africa nation.

The win strengthens the President, Ismael Omar Guelleh, who has been under pressure from foreign donors to reduce the government payroll and reform a patronage system that favours ethnic Somalis from the Issa clan.

The clan makes up about half the country's 700,000 population.

The Interior Minister, Abdulkader Douleh Wais, said on Saturday the bloc of four parties known as the Union for the Presidential Majority, or UMP, won 62.7 per cent of the vote. The four-party Opposition alliance known as the Union for a Democratic Alternative received 37.3 per cent.

The percentage for the UMP in city of Djibouti, where more than half of the country's population lives, was just over 55 per cent.

Mr. Wais said 48 per cent of the country's 178,800 registered voters turned out to vote. It was the biggest percentage the Op-



Ahmed Dini Ahmed, former rebel chief and current leader of the four-party Opposition bloc Union for a Democratic Alternative, casts his vote in Djibouti on Friday. — AP

position has ever won in the tiny nation, which was a French colony until 1977.

The impoverished nation is strategically located at the southern end of the Red Sea. Because of its proximity to Yemen and Somalia, both believed to be possible destinations for al-Qaeda, it has become an important U.S. base in the anti-terrorism campaign. — AP

THE HINDU

12 JAN 2003

We will follow the constitution because that is what I fought for. The reason why some people say Museveni should continue is because they are worried about the country's chequered history. They say Museveni has given us some stability and should stay. The present constitution says not more than two consecutive terms."

This answer by Museveni leaves open the possibility of amending that constitution, but he argues that he is not merely a political careerist: "We were initially a student movement of the 1960s which became militarised. These are highly ideological people who did not go into the army for careerist reasons. The brutal people are distorted ideologically along the way because of Stalinist streaks. We took the line that whatever the end, the means must also be clean. We were totally against assassination. The old coup leaders are dying from alcohol or gout."

The health problem hitting ordinary Ugandans hardest is Aids, estimated to have afflicted 20 per cent of the population a decade ago, though the prevalence of HIV infection has fallen to about 6 per cent, according to studies based on the testing of pregnant women — it remains difficult to convince potential sufferers to be tested. About 80 per cent of those infected are aged between 15 and 45, and there are an estimated two million children with one or both parents who have died from related illnesses.

It is hard to overestimate the impact of this on a society that, for example, has no traditional system of wills and, until recently, no viable village land registry. But international charities and local workers have done extraordinary work to raise consciousness about the disease and assist with the awkward details of succession planning. Museveni deserves credit for establishing an Aids Commission in 1986, when he took power — some other leaders, including Thabo Mbeki in South Africa, have still to come to terms with the extent of the tragedy.

"In 1984 I was listening to the BBC and an Italian professor was being interviewed about Zambia. She asked, is it true that Aids only affects homosexuals, and she said no. I

Man of many moments

Can a President who has grown accustomed to exercising almost unlimited influence ever kick the habit, asks ROBERT THOMSON in the concluding part of his interview with President Museveni of Uganda



thought this was very dangerous, given the habits of our people — it would finish them. I thought that this disease was very dangerous even before the problem became manifest. Then I sent 60 young officers to Cuba for military training; they were tested and 18 of them had the virus."

The cost of medicines remains an issue for the continent, but Museveni insists that drug companies must make a profit from their discoveries: "We should bribe the researchers. Once somebody gets a good product, don't preach Christianity to him. Out of Christian values you give it free. No, we should raise funds globally and ask what were the research and development costs, and what inducement can we give you? Otherwise people will not do research."

His use of the word "bribe" betrays an old socialist heart, as do the past links with Fidel Castro, but he has clear ideas about the virtues, and limits, of market forces. He wants a modern, middle-class Uganda and argues that neither charity nor central planning

will transform the country. "There was a lot of confusion in Africa; you would get people who would talk of African socialism, and they meant sharing at a primitive level. We want a total transformation of society. Along the way we have become liberals because we believe in building a middle-class society. We cannot do this through state enterprises or central planning. You can only do this through market stimuli."

"But market forces are not an end in themselves. They are a means. Is the human being an altruistic individual or a selfish one? Which is the preponderance? Yes, there are a few Mother Teresas and a few Mandelas, people who will work for ideas, but these are a minority, and when you are planning for the group, you are planning for the majority."

But, a little like Gordon Brown, he has a romantic vision of the energetic, small entrepreneur and is wary of the large, sprawling company whose creators have lost control of its fate: "When an enterprise grows I am forced to separate proprietorship from

genes through breeding. I am a cattle owner, so am one of the original geneticists. The problem is not knowing the end result. But there is also the marketing aspect, for instance, cotton; we fear we cannot introduce GM cotton here because if word goes round, Europe will not buy our fabrics. Because there is no consensus in the world about this issue, one must move carefully."

The one issue on which he will not compromise, and which has been the source of unusual tension with donor countries, is defence spending. He argues that the combination of internal insecurity and external threat means that an all-weather, professional military must be created, but many traditional backers worry that money will be diverted from development needs. And there is concern about relations with the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, and with Rwanda, which should be an ally, instead Britain is acting as an intermediary to reduce tensions between old friends who have fallen out.

"We say to our donors, we appreciate your money, but security first. Security is the lowest common factor. Our sister Clare Short (the Secretary of State for International Development) seems to understand this. I think she will convince others in Europe that we are not warmongers. They had arbitrarily said that we must not spend more than 1.9 per cent of GDP. We need a figure of 2.5 per cent for some years, then we can go back to 2 per cent."

"Security is like a sickness. You diagnose the problem, then prescribe the dosage. We have people for whom the gun is the norm. We need to strengthen the State and build the army so that people give up ideas of trouble-making and begin dialogue. You have a cocktail of problems in Uganda."

There is no doubt that Uganda does have a cocktail of problems, and also little doubt that Museveni has been good for his country. But will a leader who took control 16 years ago ever feel that the nation can do without him? And can a President who has grown accustomed to exercising almost unlimited influence ever kick the habit? The only certainty is that there is but one man who knows the answer. — *The Times, London*

France overstepping its limits: Ivorian rebels

By Vaiju Naravane

PARIS, JAN. 2. France is getting increasingly embroiled in what is quickly turning into a civil war in the western African cocoa-producing state of Ivory Coast, a former French colony. Today France "firmly condemned" the bombing of Menakro village in central Ivory Coast by government troops that killed 12 civilians and injured several others.

Paris has sent over 2500 soldiers and huge quantities of military equipment to "protect foreign nationals" and enforce the cease-fire agreement signed between rebel groups and the Government of President Laurent Gbagbo on October 17. A French Foreign Ministry spokesman said "France considers this violation of the October 17 cease-fire inadmissible and will ask the Ivorian authorities for an explanation."

The situation over the past few months has continued to deteriorate with the French getting dragged willy-nilly into the conflict, getting caught between claims and counter-claims made by the rebels and the Government. The Government in Abidjan said the attack on the village targeted soldiers from one of three rebel factions, the MPCJ or Patriotic Movement of the Ivory Coast. "Those killed are not civilians but rebels," an Ivorian Government spokesman said. The Ivorian authorities have also called on Paris to "publicly recognise" the involvement of Liberia and Burkina Faso in



Ivorian youth play soccer as the French soldiers man a checkpoint in Koplingue, northeastern Ivory Coast, on Wednesday. — AP

the crisis. Laurent Gbagbo's Government has accused the rebels of seeking the help of mercenaries, adding that professional soldiers from South Africa, Russia and the Ukraine are fighting alongside the well-armed rebels.

The three rebel factions have accused France of overstepping its mandate as peacekeeper, accusing Paris of siding with the Government. There are over 20,000 French

nationals in Ivory Coast. They are wealthy with business and farming interests. There is growing fear that unabated violence will lead to an exodus of foreigners living in the Ivory Coast. France is hoping to bring a swift end to the crisis, a hope that is fading fast. The arrival of an African peacekeeping force has been delayed and curfew has been extended to January 10.

THE HINDU

5 JAN 2003

A new dawn in Africa still a far cry

KENYA occupies a special place in the English psyche, somewhere between Blandings Castle and King Solomon's Mines. Of all our African possessions it has colonised the Anglo-Saxon imagination most effectively, whether as the upper-class playground of White Mischief or the re-created Eden of Born Free.

So the widespread expressions of hope for Kenya which have followed a peaceful handover of power, achieved through the ballot box after 40 years of one-party rule, are understandable.

But the good news from Nairobi deserves to be qualified. We should maintain a proper realism about the nature of the incoming Government. And a wider awareness of the depth of the continent's problems.

Kenya's new President, Mwai Kibaki, is no African Havel. For most of his political career he was a faithful servant in the Kanu party of Daniel arap Moi, which maintained power by the most ruthless means. A frail 71-year-old who cast his vote from the back seat of his Mercedes, Kibaki presides over a fractious, compromised, coalition.

Many of its leading members, including the new Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, were cronies of Moi who jumped ship at the last moment in the hope of maintaining their grip on power. In the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Kibaki pledged that there would be "no witch-hunts" into past crimes. For many of the architects of the system of corruption, ethnic

division and brutality which the Kenyan people rejected are his partners in power.

The new Kenyan leader resembles, in his frail and ageing state, the enfeebled President of Indonesia, Abdulrahman Wahid, who succeeded the discredited strongman Suharto, but was incapable of bringing unity and progress to his fractured nation.

The presence in Kibaki's ruling coalition of figures so heavily compromised by past crimes is reminiscent of the Romanian Government which succeeded Ceausescu, the self-styled "National Salvation Front", who were simply the old apparatchiks by another name.

The lingering problems which afflicted Indonesia and Romania were specific to each state. But both also find their echo in Kenya. And indeed across Africa. Indonesia suffered, and suffers still, from two chronic ailments. It has an oppressive political system which privileged one ethnic group, the Javanese, over a myriad others. And it is racked by religious strife between radicalised Muslims and other faiths. Romania, while not free from ethnic strife, as the plight of Hungarians and Gypsies within its borders has shown, suffered from another long-term blight. Long after Marxist thought had lost its legitimacy, Marxist practice,

specifically the plundering of the country in the interests of the apparatus, continued.



A Kenyan wears a poster of newly elected president Mwai Kibaki during the swearing in ceremony in Nairobi — AFP

Like Indonesia, almost every sub-Saharan African nation is blighted by internal, ethnically driven, oppression.

In Nigeria power oscillates not between Left and Right, but between the mainly Hausa north or the Ibo and Yoruba of the south. Robert Mugabe may deploy the Marxist language of the anti-colonial struggle to lend his rule legitimacy but he is an ethnic supremacist, a Mashona tribal leader guilty of genocide against the Matabele. Even in South Africa, the ruling ANC draws its support from its Xhosa roots, with the traditional Zulu enemy still politically marginalised.

There is one ideological division which is, however, growing in Africa, just as it is in Indonesia and across the globe. That is the conflict between radical Islamic elements and those, whether Christian, animist or of other faiths, who stand outside the ummah. The Mombasa terrorist attacks last month were a reminder that al-Qaeda is as much an African phenomenon as a Middle Eastern problem. The Mombasa atrocity followed the 1998 suicide bombings of embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, operations linked to the al-Qaeda presence in Somalia and Sudan. The Sudanese Government, itself an Islamist tyranny, has been conducting a war against its own Christian people for years now. In Nigeria, the Muslim north is growing more radical, with Sharia in force and hundreds dead after fundamentalist

riots against the Miss World contest. In the Ivory Coast a vicious civil war has been running since September, fuelled by antagonism between the Muslim north and the predominantly Christian south.

While ethnic strife and Islamic radicalism divide Africa, however, the factor unites most of the continent. The majority of African elites, whether they pay lip-service to Marxism or not, operate as Marxist apparats always have. They treat their nations like revolutionaries in the tsar's palace, pocketing all the choicest treasures and blaming the old oppressor for the continuing, indeed deepening, misery of the people. From Nigeria to Zimbabwe, nations rich in resources have been beggared by their rulers, and all the time the blame is laid at the old colonialists' door. Even in Kenya the West is held responsible for the troubles which blight the nation, with the prospect next year of millions of pounds in reparations being demanded for British actions during the Mau-Mau conflict.

There is no doubt that the colonial period has left Africa with scars. But, as Zimbabwe shows, the scapegoating of the Empire is a means of shifting blame from the African people's current oppressors. The sad truth is that as long as Africa's rulers are allowed to get away with attributing their problems to white mischief, there is little hope that its children will be born free. — *The Times, London*

Almost every sub-Saharan African nation is blighted by internal, ethnically driven, oppression. Even where there is a semblance of democracy, political activity is ethnically, not ideologically, based, writes

MICHAEL GOVE

Even where there is a simulacrum of democracy in Africa, political activity is ethnically, not ideologically, based.

Mwai Kibaki's hold on power is underwritten by his membership of the single largest Kenyan tribe, the Kikuyu.