

# AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL

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### New parties, new plots

President Obasanjo will play a leading role in talks on Africa's development with British and French leaders this week, but his own country is facing one crisis after another and his government's survival is little short of miraculous. Insecurity and poverty need his urgent attention, and elections are less than 18 months away.

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## NIGERIA

### Torrents of trouble

#### Policy failures and political ambitions lie behind the latest tragedies and threaten the government

When British Prime Minister **Tony Blair** visits President **Olusegun Obasanjo** this week, he will find his host facing something like a civil war. Officially, the two leaders will discuss Africa's development plans, the war against terrorism, and **Zimbabwe's** President **Robert Mugabe**. But Nigeria's internal predicament – communal violence, corruption, crime, human rights abuses – is as bad as Zimbabwe's political crisis, although it gets less media coverage. If things were as bad in the Balkans, European newspapers would call it a war.

President Obasanjo has been strongly supported by the West since his inauguration in May 1999 (AC Vol 40 No 12). He was painted as a southerner trusted and supported in the north; a Christian with many Muslim friends; a retired general who could face down rebellious officers; a former political detainee committed to human rights and the outlawing of military rule; a world-class anti-corruption campaigner, committed to wiping out graft. Two and a half years on, Nigeria is still trapped in its grim cycle of poverty, corruption, ethnic violence and political paralysis. The crises of recent months have been so grave that the survival in office of Obasanjo's government seems a minor miracle.

As Blair lands in Nigeria, the country is trying to get over some fresh body blows. On 27 January an explosion of army ammunition at the Ikeja cantonment in Lagos killed more than a thousand people – some blown up, many more drowned in canals and lagoons while trying to flee. As Nigerians debated whether the tragedy was caused by gross military negligence, sabotage, or both, the national police force began its first ever strike. Obasanjo at once declared the strikers saboteurs and mutineers, and deployed troops in the country's most sensitive locations. This fell just short of a declaration of martial law. Ordering in the army to stop a military putsch would be Obasanjo's last line of defence. But the accusation of mutiny ended the protest in three days.

### Malevolent forces

That was just in time for the police's next big job – to quell clashes between Yoruba and Hausa people in Mushin, one of the terrible Lagos slums. The violence is said to have begun when a non-Muslim defecated too close to a mosque. The police rapidly lost control, and troops were again called in to close down the area, putting thousands of residents to flight. By 5 February the official death toll was 50; less formal reports suggested more than 100 dead. The same day the United Nations Regional Information Network reported that gendarmes in neighbouring **Benin** had seized a thousand rounds of ammunition from a vehicle in transit from **Burkina Faso** to Nigeria.

Senior Nigerian officials are talking of malevolent forces conspiring to topple the government. One bizarre call amid the melee in Mushin was that the army should take power again, to guarantee security for the people. This same army slunk ignominiously out of power in mid-1999, after 17 years of grand corruption and economic mismanagement. Insiders say that only a few rogue officers want the army to seize power now, but plenty of opposition politicians, and businesses cut out of political patronage, think the army could help them undermine Obasanjo.

The latest round of slaughter began last October, when soldiers killed more than 200 Tiv civilians in Benue State, in revenge for the killing of 19 soldiers by a Tiv militia. Many Tiv believe that the Defence Minister, retired General **Theophilus Danjuma**, bears responsibility for troops' deployment, and accuse him of siding with his own Jukun people against the Tiv (AC Vol 42 No 22). Tiv are the largest single group in the rank and file of the army, and have produced some highly respected commanders. One such is Major Gen. **Victor Malu**, former Commander of the West African peacekeeping force Ecomog, who was Chief of Army Staff until Obasanjo sacked him last April. In October, Malu's family house was razed to the ground by marauding soldiers. The dispute between him and his political chiefs, Danjuma and Obasanjo, was more than personal. Malu clashed with them on issues such as the hiring of **United States** military trainers, military cuts and reorganisation, and civilian meddling in operational matters.

## New parties, new plots

The chief sponsor of the new party movement is **Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida**, the former military leader who bankrolls the United National Democratic Party (UNDP), run by the veteran Kano politician and oil tycoon **Saleh Jambo**. Babangida routinely insists he has no presidential ambitions for 2003, but has been taking soundings at home and abroad for 18 months.

If President **Olusegun Obasanjo** and his allies delay the registration process for new parties several months more, Babangida could stand on the ticket of the existing All People's Party, which already controls the governorships of several northern states. Neither Babangida nor Jambo has much to say about the mysterious, periodic appearance of large colour posters featuring a beatific Babangida, gazing down on his countrymen to promote his Association for Sustainable Democracy and Good Governance.

The association's name looks like self-parody. Babangida is blamed for annulling the 1993 elections and tipping Nigeria into more political chaos and another corrosive military regime. In 1993 he established an Association for a Better Nigeria to undermine the national elections and delay the return to civil rule. Yet memories are short, especially when hopes for civil rule, let alone democracy, are frustrated.

Friends and colleagues from across the federation and the political spectrum are guests at Babangida's mansion in Minna. His UNDP led the opposition to the Electoral Bill and published a 12-point, detailed criticism of Obasanjo in December. The presidency regards the battle as joined; rejection of the Electoral Bill gave the first round to Babangida. But he still has to get his party registered and launch his presidential campaign. Many non-partisan observers think he is still testing the water. 'He wouldn't run unless he really believed he would win,' said an old colleague.

The tougher things are for Obasanjo, the better they are for Babangida. Few of the President's disasters are mere accidents. Some arise from political machinations, plenty are self-inflicted wounds. When he visited some of the bereaved from the ammunition explosions in Lagos last month, the crowd started barracking him and he told them to 'shut up'. A few days later, almost unprecedentedly, he apologised to the mourners. Obasanjo is not easy to love; he comes across as aloof,

arrogant, and – having done the job before, starting as military leader from 1976-79 – in no need of advice. This manner particularly grates in the north, where self-effacement is respected and the government's sharpest critics are based.

The established northern political elite controlled the last civilian government (1979-83), and resents the power shift to the south. Back in 1999, that shift looked like temporary compensation for southern political grievances. Two and a half years later, Obasanjo and his advisors take a longer view, and seek to restructure the national balance of power.

The main northern forces will be led by Vice President **Atiku Abubakar** and the leaders of the late **Shehu Musa Yar'Adua's** network. Equally resentful of their exclusion are many of the northern soldier-politicians who served in the regimes of Gens. **Muhammadu Buhari**, Babangida and **Sani Abacha**. Their groupings can't agree among themselves, but can mobilise money and opinion against Obasanjo. Another rogue element is the former governor of Kano State, **Abubakar Rimi**, who says he prays for Obasanjo's downfall. Grand opportunist though he is, Rimi can get tens of thousands of voters or demonstrators on to the streets of Kano.

A much quieter and less sectarian northern group is the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) under former Police Chief **Mohammed Dikko Yusufu**. It talks of launching a northern development party, and is trying to galvanise support for practical aims such as tackling the enormous social policy backlog in the north; education, nutrition and health in north-west Nigeria are the worst in the country, more so even than in the oil-producing Niger Delta.

Grinding poverty fuelled the campaign for the *Sharia* criminal code, in the hope of cutting crime and ending poverty. *Sharia* achieves neither, but that does not stop Gen. Buhari urging Muslims to vote only for Muslim candidates who support the extension of *Sharia* law. Buhari has never forgiven Babangida for overthrowing his military regime in August 1985. The much wealthier Babangida refuses to climb on the *Sharia* bandwagon. The many opponents of Obasanjo, Atiku and the PDP agree that the government is losing the plot, but that's about all they have in common.

As a serving officer, Malu was fighting the army's corner. Obasanjo and Danjuma retired 22 years ago and are shocked at its politicisation and decay. They resist increasing the military budget without strict civilian control. They don't want to spend money that could be used productively elsewhere, or to help the generals renew their political and business power. Malu's replacement as Chief of Army Staff, Gen. **Alexander Ogomudia**, is more compliant but has not got rid of the problems.

### Tackling the violence

Morale is desperately low, soldiers are despised by many Nigerians (although politicians run them close), conditions in the barracks are appalling, sometimes (as the Ikeja explosion showed) physically dangerous. Obasanjo needs a well trained, equipped and remunerated army to hold the line against further communal or religious clashes, which could give rise to further instability.

The alternative would have been to retrain and properly equip the police to restore order in the sort of clashes seen recently in Lagos, Kano and Benue. But soldiers like Obasanjo and Danjuma distrust the police, and don't want to rebuild the paramilitary mobile police units (known locally as 'kill and go') deployed by the last civilian government. When mass violence erupts, Obasanjo has had to choose between deploying an ill-equipped police force or an army untrained in crowd control. As violence worsens, the army starts

shooting.

Street violence could derail the 2003 elections. The movement may not be nationally coordinated, but some political groups are clearly instigating violence and attacks on state property to undermine Obasanjo and his ruling People's Democratic Party. Political militias have grown up across the federation. Some are just glorified bodyguards for senior politicians, others are the armed wing of their local political party. At regional level, the Odua People's Congress (OPC) militia in the south-west, and the Bakassi Boys in the south-east, have become political forces in their own right.

The established 'cultural' movement for the Yoruba people of the south-west is the Yoruba Afenifere movement, whose political offspring, the Alliance for Democracy, holds the governorship in several south-western states. The OPC is more openly political, advocating Yoruba separatism or secession. For a while Afenifere kept its distance from the OPC, which had two wings: a more moderate one under Dr. **Frederick Fasehun** and a highly immoderate one under **Ganiyu Adams**. Now the Alliance for Democracy has moved closer to the OPC, which in a few states behaves like the ruling party's militia, fighting criminals as well as political opponents. This further damages police morale since many Lagosians insist the OPC is a better counter to armed robbery.

In the south-east, the Bakassi Boys have won similar political

kudos. They run the protection force behind Governor **Chinwoke Mbadinugu** of Anambra State, who is battling a disgruntled financier of his election campaign, **Emeka Offor**, owner of Chrome Oil. Similarly, under growing pressure from PDP activists, Governor **Orji Uzor Kalu** of Abia State has said he would use his 'own people' to counter the police and army if necessary. In more than half of the 36 states there have been violent confrontations between political groups.

It is worse in the south than the north, even though the enforcers of *Sharia* law have divided mixed Muslim-Christian areas there. The Hisbah, a state-backed Islamic vigilante group in northern Kano State, smash cartons of beer and try to separate male and female bus passengers. In Kano Hisbah vigilantes took sides when Muslims protesting against the bombing of **Afghanistan** clashed with Christian supporters of the 'war on terrorism'. In Lagos last week the OPC was defending Yoruba residents against claimed attacks by Hausa people.

Vigilantes and militias are even less accountable than soldiers or police, in law and in practice. 'We've moved from military rule to militia rule – is that progress?' asked a rueful Lagosian surveying damage after last week's clashes. With elections ahead, unaccountable militias loyal to unpopular governors and parties could jeopardise everyone's security. All politicians feel endangered since the murder of the Federal Attorney General, **Bola Ige**, on 23 December in his Ibadan house (AC Vol 43 No 1). It is not just the government's opponents who believe that Obasanjo has lost his grip on security.

### Rules on new parties

The dangers grow as the political competition heats up. The President's clique tried to sneak through the National Assembly an electoral law designed to stop new parties contesting the national elections in 2003. A clause in the draft legislation stipulated that, before contesting national elections, new parties must first have won 15 per cent of council chairmanships and counsellorships in local elections in the 36 states. The draft would also have switched the date for local elections, initially due before the presidential poll, to some time after the presidential and assembly votes.

This transparent device backfired badly. The presidency and its ally, Senate President **Pius Anyim Pius**, were blamed for trying to sneak the offending clause through the National Assembly, which called for an inquiry and sanctions against guilty officials. For a few weeks Pius Anyim's job seemed in danger, and the Obasanjo government would have presided over the impeachment of three Senate Presidents. After much vote trading, the PDP party managers (led by master fixer **Tony Anenih**, the Minister for Works and Housing) ensured a comfortable vote of confidence in the Senate for their protégé Anyim.

The electoral bill has gone back to the drafting committee, the new version is expected to allow new parties, and the next question is how fast the legislature can pass the new bill. The same Presidency-friendly senators who gave Anyim their vote of confidence could delay the bill and derail the launch plans of the new parties, enthusiasm for which is undimmed.

With less than 18 months before national elections, they need to get registered and established soon, if they are to challenge the PDP's financial and political might. Tragically, the new parties' strongest bargaining chips will be the mayhem and murder seen on Lagos streets in the past few weeks. Tackling insecurity, and challenging the poverty and joblessness it feeds on, would win far more votes for the PDP than any number of slick election devices.

## SOUTH AFRICA

# Watch on the spooks

## The intelligence services look like becoming the President's personal agencies

The resignation of the Inspector General of Intelligence, Dr. **Fazel Randera**, has dealt a blow to the civil oversight of South Africa's intelligence agencies. His departure, hastened by frustration at his role, indicates how the balance of power is becoming skewed towards the executive branch of government.

This trend grew stronger when **Thabo Mbeki** became President in 1999. Parliament's role in overseeing the government has been gradually downgraded, as shown last year when the Standing Committee on Public Accounts was prevented from fully investigating the controversial arms acquisition programme. The President no longer faces weekly questions in parliament. Ministers are required to face the House less often than in **Nelson Mandela's** time, and have sometimes been reluctant to appear before the appropriate committees.

The intelligence services, too, escape scrutiny. The recent establishment of a Presidential Intelligence Support Unit, and the influence of the presidential intelligence budget advisory committee chaired by Deputy President **Jacob Zuma**, have helped to centralise control in the Office of the President. Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI) and the Inspectorate General are meant to keep tabs on the various intelligence agencies, but complain they are out of the loop. Now Randera has resigned and **Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula**, Chairperson of the JSCI, has been promoted, so there are two vacancies at the top.

### Restructuring efforts

As the Inspectorate and the Committee struggled to agree a legislative framework for their powers, budgets and procedures, restructuring took place anyway. A year ago the former Intelligence Minister, **Joe Nhlanhla**, retired because of ill health and was replaced by the young Mbeki loyalist **Lindiwe Sisulu**. Shortly after his election as President, Mbeki had upgraded the Deputy Ministry of Intelligence to a Cabinet post, and last year the new ministry got its first real budget increase since 1994. Sisulu began by ordering a full review of structures and personnel.

The Presidential Intelligence Support Unit was then established under **Welile Nhlapo**, Deputy Director General at Foreign Affairs. The unit is intended to streamline Mbeki's access to intelligence, particularly when he is travelling, and to alert the President to important developments. His former security adviser, **Vusi Mavimbela**, was a useful sounding board, but could not provide information as needed. Mavimbela has since been appointed Director General of the (domestic) National Intelligence Agency (NIA).

The proposed National Communications Centre is meant to centralise and combine the communications resources and needs of all intelligence agencies. The South African Secret Service (SASS) and the NIA each operate communications satellites, a particularly wasteful extravagance.

The Presidential Budgetary Advisory Committee, which includes Finance Minister **Trevor Manuel**, allows for speedy, ad hoc budget allocations for Cabinet-approved projects, and for upgrading and replacing the agencies' equipment. The internal (NIA) and external

## Airport turf wars

**Mashudu Ramano**, chief executive of the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA), claims he is under heavy pressure after terminating the contract of a well-connected private security firm.

ACSA criticised Khuselani Security & Risk Management's performance after several armed robberies and other security breaches at Johannesburg International Airport. ACSA ended the firm's contract last November. The most notable breach was failure to detect a fake bomb six days after the 11 September attacks in the United States. Khuselani has appealed against ACSA's decision and the case is to go to arbitration.

Once it became clear that Khuselani's contract was in peril, Ramano received letters from Police Commissioner **Jackie Selebi** and from a senior executive at the South African Broadcasting Corporation, urging him to reconsider. He was later arrested by border police and accused of being a Shangaan from **Zimbabwe** who was fraudulently claiming South African nationality. Ramano, who is also chairman of Johnnic Publishing, is in fact a minor member of the Venda royal family, **Cyril Ramaphosa's** ethnic group. There was no apology from the police for this bizarre incident.

Khuselani was awarded a 99 million rand (US\$8.5 mn.), three-year contract in June 2000 to take care of security at South Africa's airports. The firm's managing director, **Noel Ngwenya**, is under police investigation for fraud. A former director of defence group Denel, and the Inkatha Freedom Party's unsuccessful nominee for the post of Inspector-General of the intelligence services, he emerged as head of Khuselani when it won the airport contract. The black empowerment company was formerly known as Springbok Patrols, a company with a white board of directors, set up by former security police.

Ramano's chief of aviation security, **Paul O'Sullivan**, has approached the Independent Complaints Directorate, accusing Selebi and Gauteng Police Commissioner **Perumal Naidoo** of trying to intimidate him.

In another incident, Ramano's home was attacked by gunmen, but President **Thabo Mbeki** has urged him to tough it out and not resign. O'Sullivan says he has also been the target of a shooting attempt.

(SASS) intelligence services, the crime intelligence directorate of the SA Police Service, and Defence Intelligence, have at their apex the National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee under **Jeff Maqethuka**. Its job is to collate information and report directly to the presidency.

Both the parliamentary committee and the Inspector General felt they were not fulfilling their oversight mandate, especially since the state intelligence agencies have over the last couple of years been caught in several inept, scandalous or embarrassing operations. In the name of intelligence, operatives have:

- unearthed a widely publicised, and discredited, plot in which the popular and senior African National Congress members **Cyril Ramaphosa**, **Matthews Phosa** and **Tokyo Sexwale** were accused of planning to overthrow the state;
- investigated who was circulating the absurd rumour that President Mbeki was involved in the assassination of former SA Communist Party leader **Chris Hani**;
- had computers and vehicles stolen from NIA headquarters;
- provided wildly inaccurate intelligence to military commanders in 1998 before the dispatch of troops to **Lesotho** (AC Vol 39 No 20), leading to heavy casualties and the sacking of Maseru;
- got caught with surveillance cameras pointed at the **German Embassy** in Pretoria;
- admitted to offering senior political journalists information in exchange for access to operatives.

Neither the Inspector General nor Parliament have much say

about the changing priorities of the intelligence community, preoccupied by economic crime, requiring specialist knowledge and careful oversight. Other priorities include organised crime, international terrorism, and hotspots of 'political' violence such as the taxi industry. Moreover, the spooks are also supposed to keep a close eye on instability in **Zimbabwe**, peacekeeping in **Burundi** and **Congo-Kinshasa**, and sustaining consensus on the New Partnership for African Development.

The **United States'** 'war on terrorism' has brought the upgrading of relations, already cordial, with Western and foreign agencies, several of which have liaison officers in South Africa, subject to formal agreements. Interpol has had a presence in Pretoria for several years, and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation has recently opened an office. The recent capture and extradition of a suspect in the 1998 bombing of the US Embassy in **Tanzania** is held up as evidence of South Africa's co-operative attitude – although all members and sympathisers of the ANC were until recently described as 'terrorists'.

### Randera's brief

Into this opaque world Randera, a medical doctor and former member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, was parachuted 18 months ago. His brief was to introduce accountability, transparency and a respect for human rights consistent with the 'new' South Africa. He had no experience of the intelligence community but, after an arduous process including a series of public interviews, he was confirmed as South Africa's second Inspector General in May 2000 – but not sworn in until June 2001, once legislation had been passed clarifying the duties and responsibilities of his job, amid arguments between agencies notorious for their rivalry and jealous independence.

Randera's predecessor, **Lewis Skweyiya**, resigned over a pay dispute soon after his appointment in 1996, so the intelligence community had no effective oversight for five years. Randera was frustrated by delays in allocating budgets and appointing staff, and by the need to fight for independence, lacking powers or access. In theory, the Inspector General is meant to have better access to the intelligence agencies than the President. In practice, Randera did not issue a single public report suggesting he had completed any investigations, nor deal with any of the embarrassing *faux pas*.

There has been little political violence in South Africa for several years. Urban terror in the Western Cape has been contained. These are positive achievements for the intelligence agencies, but they are still not subject to effective supervision. There is no mechanism for monitoring hundreds of millions of rand of expenditure every year, or for keeping an eye on the network. That prompts delicate questions about how the new South Africa is being forged, as power shifts towards the presidency.

## CÔTE D'IVOIRE

### The barricades again

#### Striking policemen upset the cash-strapped government and fuel other pay demands

Smiling images of political foes at reconciliation talks seemed to have replaced the murder and mayhem of the past two years – until a strike by police brought the roadblocks and night-time gunshots back to Abidjan's streets. Over four late January days, junior

police officers stopped work, barricaded the roads outside their stations, and fired into the air after dark. This revived talk of another coup d'état, and threatened law and order in a city where gunmen regularly hijack cars.

In the past two months, cotton growers, pineapple farmers, primary school teachers and telephone workers have struck. Market women have marched in protest at rising prices. Judges, employees of state television and oil workers all threaten to strike for pay. When the government promised the policemen they would get the pay rises they demanded, the army and *gendarmérie* said they too wanted increases. The cash-strapped government is unlikely to give them all a rise.

The four main political leaders pose for photos, smiling like old school friends, but appear to make little progress on reconciliation. A meeting in Yamoussoukro, the political capital, on 22-23 January ended inconclusively. President **Laurent Gbagbo** said that he was satisfied that they could meet without fighting. Opposition leader **Alassane Dramane Ouattara** said there would be more meetings, but no dates were supplied. Amid the ostentatious camaraderie former President **Henri Konan Bédié** was glum, sitting awkwardly opposite General **Robert Gueï**, who ousted him in a coup in December 1999.

The idea that Ouattara and Gueï may have patched up relations, after their enmity during the military transition, gained credibility at the Yamoussoukro get-together. While Gbagbo and Bédié called Gueï 'General', Ouattara addressed him as 'President' – in Côte d'Ivoire they apply the title to former as well as current presidents. One of Gueï's main demands is that he be recognised (and paid) as a former head of state, and Ouattara says Gbagbo should do so. Gueï, in return, is supporting Ouattara's bid to have his Ivorian nationality recognised; Ouattara was excluded as a presidential candidate in 2000 because, although he used to be prime minister, he was said to have antecedents in **Burkina Faso**.

### The Ouattara question

A National Reconciliation Forum brought together the country's political parties and civil organisations last year, and recommended that the courts confirm Ouattara's Ivorian nationality. At Yamoussoukro, he was asked to submit his request for nationality to a court. But a nationality certificate alone would not qualify him for the presidential elections due in 2005, as the latest constitution specifies that a candidate's father and mother must both be of Ivorian origin. The Yamoussoukro meeting's final communiqué has still not been issued. A draft by an editing committee from the four main parties is being reviewed by their leaders.

A separate dispute could split the once-monolithic *Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire* (PDCI), whose President is Bédié. Its Secretary General, **Laurent Dona Fologo**, has said he will stand for the party presidency at its conference in April. **Lamine Fadika**, a northerner like Fologo, has also declared his candidacy. He was a naval rear-admiral, then Bédié's Energy Minister, and is now Vice-President of the National Assembly.

PDCI ministers in Gbagbo's coalition government are said to side with Fologo, while Bédié has support from many young PDCI activists. The dispute has been largely engineered by Gbagbo, who supports Fologo, having made him President of the consultative *Conseil Economique et Social* last year. If Bédié wins in April he may distance his party from Gbagbo, and even pull it out of government into opposition. If Bédié loses, he could form a breakaway party backed by his fellow Baoulés from central Côte d'Ivoire, and other Akan groups in the south-east, taking

balkanisation one step further.

After the Yamoussoukro meeting, Bédié called on the government to condemn Gueï's 1999 coup d'état, and said Gbagbo should remember that the election he won was flawed, thus neatly implying that his two successors lacked the legitimacy he claims to have enjoyed. Since late 2000 Gueï has lived in his western home village of Gouessesso, guarded by 19 loyal soldiers. His ethnic and political links to **Liberia**, and the strong support he enjoys among his fellow Yacoubas, worry the ruling *Front Populaire Ivoirien*. Villagers in Gueï's region believe that Gbagbo cheated him out of electoral victory in 2000.

### Land reform looms

Their discontent is increased by low coffee prices and growing tensions over land involving immigrant farmers, mainly from Burkina Faso. That could be made worse by a law on land rights, passed by the Ivorian parliament in 1998 but awaiting review by a commission of experts. It would give landowners titles, and allow them to sell land or use it as collateral against a loan. Officials say it would give farmers secure rights for the first time, and the World Bank sees it as an integral part of poverty reduction, but its critics say it will inflame an already volatile situation.

The legislation would bar foreigners from owning land, giving priority to traditional land rights, based on ancestral claims. Many indigenous farmers believe they will be able to reclaim land they say was taken from them by foreigners and migrants from elsewhere in Côte d'Ivoire. Migrants from other regions would be allowed to own land, but non-Ivorians would be limited to 99-year leases. Côte d'Ivoire's founding President, **Félix Houphouët-Boigny**, created a booming agricultural economy in the 1960s and 1970s by encouraging immigrants to settle in western and south-western regions and grow cocoa and coffee. The law would overturn Houphouët's maxim that the land belongs to the cultivator.

The government, having reformed cocoa and coffee marketing, has turned its attention to cotton, whose political significance is that it is grown in the far north, overwhelmingly loyal to Ouattara and his *Rassemblement des Républicains*. Cotton growers struck in December after the government stopped construction of a cotton-gin in the main northern city of Korhogo, saying the union of cotton farming cooperatives had no legal right to build it. The sector was liberalised in 1998, but such details had never been worked out. After talks with farmers' leaders, the Agriculture Minister said that work would continue, and that a commission would thrash out a proper structure.

The government has set minimum cotton and coffee prices for this year above the world market rate. It can use 9 billion CFA francs (US\$12 million) of Stabex money – given by the European Union to compensate for low commodity prices – to support the coffee price of CFA200 per kilo, but will have to dip into its own funds to support the cotton price, as well as placing some of the burden on the ginners.

Pay disputes are already causing discontent in the army. Around 500 conscripts are demanding to be put on full salary when they finish their 18-month military service this month, but the army has said they will carry on being paid as conscripts for a further ten months. They receive around CFA13,000 a month as conscripts, compared to around CFA160,000 for career privates. Another dispute concerns 289 former soldiers who were taken back into the army in 2000 at an initial salary of CFA50,000. Gueï promised they would later be put on regular salaries, and now they are demanding that Gbagbo keep his predecessor's promise.

After two years of recession, the World Bank forecasts growth of 3 per cent in 2002, but it certainly does not feel like that for most Ivorians. The government congratulates itself on having re-established relations with many donors who had cut off aid because of corruption under Bédié or concerns over democracy and human rights under Guei. World Bank aid began again on 30 January, to bring a gradual disbursement of around \$260 mn. for projects previously committed; new Bank aid worth \$240 mn. will bring both budget support and \$40 mn. to fight HIV/AIDS, which infects some 12 per cent of the population.

The International Monetary Fund and the Bank, which froze their previous poverty reduction programme because of corruption and mismanagement, are expected to approve a new one in the first quarter of this year. Approval would pave the way for debt relief deals with the Paris Club of bilateral lenders and the London Club of commercial creditors. A creditors' advisory committee was set up in October 2001 to consider solutions for holders of the country's Brady bond commercial debt, who have not been paid since March 2000. The African Development Bank is still withholding \$150 mn., pending payment of arrears.

Meanwhile the government has been scraping around for money from other sources. It has increased taxes on cocoa exports and pressed cocoa and coffee firms to repatriate export earnings, and even seems to have succeeded in obliging mobile phone companies to pay one-off license fees of CFA40 bn., imposed retroactively. However, the fresh loans may not come quickly enough, and may even fuel further pay demands when the government can no longer claim that its coffers are empty.

## ZAMBIA

# Levy limps in

## Even if the courts confirm his election win, parliament can block the President

As President **Levy Mwanawasa** limped into State House, his month-old government waded into a political quagmire. In the National Assembly, which has not met since his election, opposition parties hold 81 of the 150 seats, and they refuse to help a president who they say was rigged into power – an opinion shared, more diplomatically, by observers from the European Union and the **United States'** Carter Center (AC Vol 42 No 24).

The EU observers issued a strongly worded final statement saying that the election results were 'not safe' and they were not confident that they reflected the wishes of the Zambian people. Some EU states are expected to reduce their aid budgets, and anomalies identified by the observers' report could be used in legal moves by the opposition to challenge the results in some 40 constituencies.

### Not paying his levy

Mwanawasa's Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) is divided over the spoils of the December polls. Several members of its National Executive Committee remain loyal to the former President, **Frederick Chiluba**, and are piqued that the newcomer has not given cabinet jobs to those who put him where he is. The economic front is all gloom. Chiluba's legacy of empty coffers and critically low maize supplies is exacerbated by the shock decision by Anglo American, the country's largest investor, to pull the plug

on the copper mines it recently acquired, and which remain Zambia's mainstay even after years of decline.

While the Chiluba camp tries to undermine him, Mwanawasa has turfed all Chiluba's people out of State House. The security officials have gone, and so have the ex-President's three closest allies, **Richard Sakala** (Special Assistant for Press and Public Relations); **Donald Chanda** (Economics Advisor); and **Eric Silwamba** (Presidential Affairs Minister). They are replaced by former Information Permanent Secretary **Arthur Yoyo**; former Trade and Industry PS **Moses Banda**, considered brilliant but a 'yes-man'; and **Derrick Chitala**, fresh from the political wilderness. A former diplomat, **Jack Kalala**, replaces the veteran **Francis Chalabesa** as Principal Private Secretary. **Rabson Ndhlovu**, the MMD's Lusaka Province Chairman, takes over **Gibson Zimba**'s role as State House Controller.

Mwanawasa took office amid controversy. His first cabinet, announced five days after his low-key inauguration, excludes the main opposition parties – **Anderson Mazoka**'s United Party for National Development (UPND), **Christon Tembo**'s Forum for Democracy and Development, and **Godfrey Miyanda**'s Heritage Party. Mwanawasa says that is because they are challenging the results of the presidential election in court. The opposition leaders say they would not have taken the jobs anyway.

Mwanawasa claims that his is a 'government of laws not men'. The laws were not respected on 25 January, however, when the MMD attempted to elect the Speaker by secret ballot instead of the usual open 'aye' and 'nay' votes. The scheme was masterminded by the Clerk of the National Assembly, **Mwelwa Chibesakunda**, who was implicated, but not formally questioned, last year when two billion kwacha (US\$500,000) earmarked for parliament was diverted to fund the MMD convention. The opposition was angry, and bottles of water were hurled at the MMD front bench.

A favourite target of the missiles was the scheme's supposed architect, Information and Broadcasting Minister **Vernon Mwaanga**. He seems to be hedging his bets in case Mwanawasa falls, and is vulnerable to accusations of alleged dealings in the drug mandrax. Insiders claim that the MMD had been trying to buy up opposition MPs, who could escape their parties' wrath if the ballot for the Speaker's election were secret. In the event, three opposition members defected in an open vote held on 5 February. The MMD candidate, the previous speaker **Amusaa Mwanamwambwa**, was elected by 80 votes to 77, defeating the opposition candidate **Frederick Hapunda**, who had been forced to resign as MMD Chairman in Southern Province after being accused of sympathising with Mazoka.

The three opposition members who defected were **Sipula Kabanje** of the UPND, and **Gladys Nyirongo** and **Patrick Masonda** of the Heritage Party. An independent MP, **Paul Kasongo**, also voted with the MMD.

Some insiders say that Mwanawasa was not aware either of the election-rigging or of the plan for a secret vote. Despite denials, it is believed that at least four disgruntled members of the MMD's National Executive met secretly on 16 January, when the party Chairperson, **Chitalu Sampa**, was visited by party Treasurer **Peter Machungwa** (found guilty in last year's two billion kwacha scandal); **Godden Mandandi** (Tourism Minister), found guilty in the same scam; and **Newstead Zimba** (NEC Elections Chairman), a close ally of Mwaanga. It is said that they wanted Sampa to decline the offered post of Deputy Defence Minister, and he did so, complaining that it was a demotion. Sampa was Chiluba's Minister for Defence and Mines, and Mwanawasa's offer of the Deputy Ministry was

## Down the mine, down the drain

Political troubles were overshadowed on 25 January, when Anglo American announced that it was pulling out of the Copperbelt less than two years after reinvesting there. Copper had been Zambia's main economic hope; the metal accounts for more than 60 per cent of exports and a quarter of gross domestic product.

This may rank as privatisation's biggest African failure. It will also hit the credibility of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other Western agencies pressing governments to sell off state assets.

Anglo says it will close or sell its Konkola, Nchanga and Nampundwe mines within 12 months. It has failed to raise external finance for the massive Konkola Deep Mining Project, the key to its Zambia venture, and blames low copper and cobalt prices. Its pullout, just after Zambia's presidential election, looks like another step away from Africa for the mining giant, which moved its headquarters from Johannesburg to London in 1999.

Officials of the IMF and World Bank dashed to Lusaka; Anglo's decision to quit Zambia is a huge embarrassment for them, and for Britain's Commonwealth Development Corporation, architects of the Lusaka government's privatisation strategy. CDC Financial Services and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation both own 7.5 per cent of Konkola Copper Mines. Anglo holds 50.9 per cent of Zambia Copper Investments, which in turn holds 65 per cent of KCM. The remaining 20 per cent is held by state-owned Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines.

The CDC risks losing more than US\$50 million. Bank and Fund officials know the political risks of a copper collapse, for Zambia and for privatisation all over Africa. The World Bank has sent a team to help the government review its options, but after Anglo's failure it will not be easy to justify taking the project forward. The government has said the mines will not close, but the future of the 9,500 miners is far from clear.

Privatisation did little for the Copperbelt. Local suppliers complain that Anglo took advantage of duty-free quotas to source goods from

**South Africa.** President **Frederick Chiluba's** government tried in vain to persuade KCM to follow ZCCM in arranging its foreign exchange receipts so as to ensure a steady supply of hard currency onto the market (AC Vol 41 No 17).

Reinvesting in Zambia was a dream for the late **Harry Oppenheimer** and for **Jack Holmes**, who worked on the Copperbelt before Anglo's mines were nationalised by former President **Kenneth Kaunda**. Optimists still claim that Konkola Deep, said to have a 30-year life, could attract long-term investors willing to wait for a price rally.

As well as the price collapse, the mines are suffering from 20 years of bad management and under-investment. The quality of the copper is good, but extraction costs are higher than for open-cast mines, and at the current low market price, even low-cost producers have cut output, preferring to leave the copper in the ground until the market revives.

KCM has slashed costs over the past year, while the price fell to a 14-year low of \$1,500 a tonne. Production, at 200,000 tonnes, was 40,000 tonnes less than planned. Anglo says KCM has lost \$108 mn. since the take-over in March 2000. **Simon Thompson**, Chief Executive of the company's base metals unit, adds that without additional financing it would have been out of business within a year.

Chief Executive **Tim Wadson** left earlier than expected, in December; and questions were raised about KCM's management. Development NGOs criticised its environmental plans and its relations with local communities. Lobbyists complained to Britain's Department of Trade and Industry, which polices compliance by British-based companies with new corporate responsibility guidelines for multinationals laid down by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (AC Vol 42 No 14).

**Cameron Pwele**, a former member of the mining union and now a United National Independence Party MP, wants the new parliament to review the privatisation strategy. His constituency, Luanshya, is a ghost town, devastated by the sell-off, and now by KCM's collapse.

meant to placate Chiluba's faction.

The MMD is also feeling regional strains. Power within the party has shifted away from the north to Central Province, home to Mwanawasa, who is Lenje, and a stronghold for Mazoka, a Tonga. (The dominant Tonga, Ila and Lenje groups share a history and identity.) Members from the northern provinces, Luapula, Northern and Copperbelt, met secretly in Kitwe on 17 January, to discuss what is called the 'Mwanawasa influence'. They grumble about Mwanawasa's appointments, naming his Political Advisor, **Mavis Muyunda**; his Principal Private Secretary, **Jack Kalala**; his Senior Private Secretary, **Moses Mteteka**; **Ludwig Sondashi** (Works Minister, a popular independent MP until he rejoined the MMD before the elections); **Mundia Sikatana** (Agriculture); and Chitala.

The opposition rejected an invitation to meet Mwanawasa on 28 January because Derrick Chitala, the Deputy Presidential Affairs Minister, said that the President wanted to talk about the maize and mining crises, not the political and potential constitutional crisis. Amid the intrigue, respect for Mazoka, once tarnished by the tribalist tag, is growing. Many throughout the country think he really won the presidential election. He has refused to jump into bed with Mwanawasa, although he is said to have been secretly offered the beefed-up Vice-President's post.

Mazoka has changed style and gets on better with the other parties in the so-called-united opposition front, which is dominated by the UPND's 49 parliamentary seats. His decision to call off a plan for nationwide civil disobedience avoided an embarrassing possible flop, and removed an pretext for Mwanawasa to crack

down on the opposition. Mazoka insists that in time Mwanawasa will have to accept the opposition's terms – and, given the nation's economic mess, he might even be privately glad he did not make it to State House.

Finance Minister **Emmanuel Kasonde** often works until midnight, preparing a credible budget that has the potential both to keep the donors happy and to clear the political roadblock. The opposition threatens to reject the budget if it does not offer enough resources for education, health and agriculture, and if the presidential slush fund stays. Mwanawasa has not scrapped the slush fund, but claims he will use it less than his predecessor did for politically inspired handouts.

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# Pointers

## UK/AFRICA

### Designer diplomacy

At face value the omens could hardly be worse for Prime Minister **Tony Blair's** West Africa tour from 6-10 February. First stop **Nigeria** has been blighted by an arms dump explosion killing more than 1,000 people, a police strike and communal clashes – all in the past fortnight – and although Blair is travelling with International Development Minister **Clare Short**, no one is expecting large new pledges of aid or debt relief.

His critics say that Blair, like Nigeria's President **Olusegun Obasanjo**, is increasingly interested in foreign affairs at the expense of pressing domestic issues. The agenda contains no tangible targets or ways of assessing the trip's success or failure, and Blair's office describes it as a staging post en route to the Group of Eight summit in Calgary, **Canada**, in June. However, with a closer look, the trip may bear more significance.

The New Partnership for African Development (Nepad), which will be the main focus of Blair's bilateral talks with Obasanjo, **Ghana's** President **John Kufuor**, **Sierra Leone's** President **Ahmad Tejan Kabbah** and **Senegal's** President **Abdoulaye Wade**, is at last getting some political momentum behind it. While Blair is in Africa, **France's** President **Jacques Chirac** is hosting another group of African leaders, to discuss more precise areas of Nepad cooperation and reform on trade and aid. The meeting in Paris on 8 February is expected to bring together the Presidents of Nigeria, **Gabon**, **Kenya**, **Egypt**, **Cameroon**, **Mozambique**, **Senegal**, **Burkina Faso**, **Algeria**, **Mauritius**, **Zambia** and **Ethiopia**, and **South Africa's** deputy president **Jacob Zuma**, as well as Chirac's personal representative for Nepad issues, former International Monetary Fund Managing Director **Michel Camdessus**.

Not only does this strengthen Anglo-French cooperation, it also provides a new opportunity for Britain to move away from the old concepts of politically or nationally-tied aid into a framework designed by African governments themselves. And for now, Britain is one of the few industrialised countries to be increasing its aid budget year on year, though aid as a percentage of gross domestic product is still running at well under half the United Nations' target figure of 0.7 per cent.

Blair's Freetown stopover will be significant: the 1998 row about arms to Sierra Leone (AC Vol 39 No 5) was the first test of **Robin Cook's** proclaimed 'ethical foreign policy'. Then Blair said that at least the good guys had won. Now he will meet President Kabbah ahead of controversial elections due in May. Many in Freetown are uneasy about the conditions for elections, even though the UN has officially declared the civil war to be over. It was the last attempt to hold elections there in February 1996 that precipitated a new round of fighting.

## MOROCCO

### A right royal putsch

King **Mohammed VI's** cousin **Moulay Hicham Ben Abdallah** has taken off for the **United States**, claiming 'police harassment'. He is 37, and second in line of succession after the King's younger brother, **Moulay Rachid**, who is 31. By performing as Morocco's intellectual 'Red Prince', he has persuaded some members of the royal entourage that he aims at power.

He calls for 'a re-founded monarchy' under a royal family grounded in 'popular democracy', and claims that Morocco's domestic security service, the *Direction de Surveillance du Territoire* (DST), holds the King hostage. In **France**, many take Hicham for a monarchist democrat. In Morocco, it is the democrats who worry about his cry for more royal involvement in politics – as in **Saudi Arabia**, where his family has roots.

Hicham claims that the chief of the DST, Colonel **Hamidou Laanigri**, plotted to invite him to lead a coup and create a separate 'emirate' in the disputed Western Sahara. Hicham refused the bait and complained at length to the Interior Minister, **Driss Jettou**, one of the King's closest counsellors (AC Vol 42 No 25).

Laanigri has prospered since he returned from the **United Arab Emirates**, where he ran Shaikh **Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahayan's** Moroccan bodyguard. He has rivalled the *gendarmierie* commander, General **Hosni Benslimane**, as officers jostle for the space left by the sacked Interior Minister, **Driss Basri**. The space Hicham aims to fill is that left by the late King **Hassan II**.

Moroccans complain that the inexperience of Mohammed VI adds to government paralysis. The King himself is popular, but Moulay Rachid and various courtiers are very extravagant. In December Rachid and friends flew to Acapulco in **Mexico**, where they took the Imperial Suite and 24 rooms in the luxury Quinta Real hotel.

Hicham, who gets a large royal stipend, backs a new weekly, *Journal Hebdomadaire*, edited by the opportunistic **Aoubakr Jamaï**. Interior Minister Jettou backs a new daily, *Aujourd'hui Le Maroc*, which has compared Hicham with the late Gen. **Mohamed Oufkir**, killed after a failed coup against Hassan in 1972. So far, the royal squabble is on paper, not a blood sport.

## SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE

### Family fiefs

With parliamentary elections due next month and expectations of an oil boom, a long-simmering political feud finally exploded on 4 February with the resignation of **Patrice Emery Trovoada**, the 30-something Foreign Minister, son of the former President, **Miguel Trovoada**, and leading light of the *Acção Democrática Independente* (ADI).

Trovoada wrote to Prime Minister **Evaristo de Carvalho**, explaining that he could no longer continue in office as he had lost the confidence of

the President, **Fradique de Menezes**, the half-**Portuguese** businessman the ADI helped install in power last July. On a visit to **Gabon** last month, Menezes had publicly accused the Trovoada family of acting as if São Tomé was their personal fiefdom.

'I do not consider myself to be a servant of Miguel Trovoada. Everyone, and especially the Trovoadas, should understand that the strong man, the sole man in charge, is Fradique de Menezes, and it is the people who have decided this.'

In an effort to escape the influence of his patrons, Menezes has set up his own party, the *Movimento Democrático das Forças para Mudança* (MDFM), officially the Democratic Movement for Change but popularly known as the Movement for Fradique de Menezes, to contest the 3 March poll. But the split with the ADI seems set to boost the fortunes of the *Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe* (MLSTP), formerly the Marxist single party, which is already the largest group in parliament.

Victory for the MLSTP would also represent a revival for **Angola**, the most influential foreign power until it was replaced by **Nigeria** in the late 1990s. Nigeria, which in January agreed an innovative Joint Development Zone to exploit oil reserves along a disputed maritime border, has been a close supporter of the Trovoadas and is understood to have provided financial backing to the Menezes election campaign last year.

Trovoada Jr.'s actions are motivated more by personal pique. He hopes to encourage other ministers, including the P.M., to resign, and force the President into an embarrassing climbdown. It is a risky strategy: if it fails, the President will be able to hang on to the ADI and continue to present the family as self-interested wreckers.

## ADB

### Trading places

The African Development Bank's new African Economic Outlook, jointly published with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, inveighs against the usual targets of poor governance, corruption, and bureaucracy, but gloomiest of all is the analysis of trade.

Agriculture is still the key to Africa's economic development. Successive Lomé conventions have, with diminishing success, provided some preferential access to European markets for a few African farmers. Meanwhile the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), with its restrictions, quotas and – above all – subsidies to European producers, remains a powerful and ingenious weapon against African export growth.

African leaders who complain about the export-killing CAP – they include, recently, Presidents **Yoweri Museveni** and **Thabo Mbeki** – do so almost inaudibly. They need friends and money, and don't want to annoy Europe. Aid, at a ten-year low of less than US\$11 billion, is overshadowed by the more than \$300 bn. a year that rich countries (especially the EU) give their farmers. The ADB barely mentions the CAP and its farm subsidies. The report was financed by (surprise!) the EU.