

AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL

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The Congo factor

The Congo intervention has enriched some generals but has drained Harare's Treasury. There's much dispute about how much Congo owes Zimbabwe for military assistance and how it should be repaid after a UN report criticised many of their joint business ventures.

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Hasty engagement

Hotels are going up, diplomatic deals are being brokered and friends of Colonel Gaddafi say he's genuinely reforming the system. Outside the public relations flurry, prospects for economic and political change are less than dazzling.

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Get with the programme

A donors' conference pledged US\$650 million for President Kabbah's government last week after progress on reform and the May elections. Among the biggest worries is how the war in neighbouring Liberia could damage Freetown's recovery.

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Death in Darfur

Like demands for democracy in northern Sudan, the war in Darfur is one of the many issues left off the Machakos peace agenda. As instability rises, so does the number of hangings and amputations.

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ZIMBABWE

The new veterans march home

Corrupt and politicised, President Mugabe's army may be more dangerous at home than it was in the Congo

Trouble looms as the final contingent of Zimbabwean troops in Congo-Kinshasa returns home to a divided and nearly bankrupt country. Despite the veneer of multi-party elections, Zimbabwe is now under militarised rule, where a handful of the political elite makes policy alongside senior military and security officers. Political life is effectively under martial law: dissidents are tortured, opposition voters are attacked and deprived of food aid, critical journalists are prosecuted and also sometimes tortured. Like military rule elsewhere, the militarisation of Zimbabwe has brought few benefits to soldiers in the ranks.

Congo veterans expect rewards: promotion, pay rises and above all, land (AC Vol 43 No 21). Already there have been clashes between veterans and bureaucrats over allocation in the land resettlement programme. President **Robert Mugabe** has repeatedly assured Congo veterans they will have priority in the queue. The veterans' frustration is compounded when they learn that commanders such as Air Marshal **Perence Shiri** and General **Vitalis Zvinvashe** have commandeered several farms each for personal use. Meanwhile, First Lady **Grace Mugabe** has been allocated a 27-bedroom mansion and adjoining farmland for 'duties of state', say local press reports. Even if the vets get their land, there will be little state cash to develop it. In Finance Minister **Herbert Murerwa**'s budget for 2003, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement is fifth in line, with an allocation of Z\$40.5 billion (that is US\$736 million at the official rate of Z\$55=US\$1 or US\$20.2 mn. at the parallel market rate of Z\$2,000=US\$1). Defence is second with a vote of Z\$76.4 bn.

What did you do in the war?

The government still refuses to confirm casualty figures for its Congo operations though over 300 Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) soldiers are thought to have lost their lives. The Congo vets' predecessors – veterans of the 1980s' Mozambique war and the 1970s' liberation war – have had long struggles to get compensation for injuries and disability. Once the vets started demanding their dues more vociferously, opportunists such as the late **Chenjerai 'Hitler' Hunzvi** (a doctor in Poland for most of the liberation war) joined and struck a deal with the leaders of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front. The payouts to his organisation, much of which didn't reach genuine veterans, precipitated the current economic crisis.

The war veterans' crisis started in 1997 with revelations in the independent press that senior officers such as Shiri and politicians such as Education Minister **Joyce Mujuru** claimed substantial benefits from the veterans' fund. According to the records, almost 50 per cent of the ZDF's High Command claimed serious physical disability although showing no outward sign of such injuries. Lower down the pecking order, wounded soldiers were sidelined.

The privatisation and pauperisation of the Zimbabwean military is widely blamed on the High Command, which is accused of benefiting unduly from land resettlement and the smuggling of Congolese diamonds through Zimbabwe. The griping is getting louder, we hear, with the return of so many troops – almost a third of total troop strength – to Zimbabwe in the midst of economic collapse. Mugabe's government sees protection of the security forces – military, police and intelligence services – from economic realities as a priority. Military and police officers have routinely given hefty pay rises before elections. Even less favoured public servants are being given two increases a year.

None of this can compensate for inflation, currently running at 144 per cent but expected to rise to 200 per cent by the end of 2003. To make matters worse, the US\$360 million fuel supply credit from Colonel **Moammar el Gaddafi**'s government has been withdrawn, partly because of growing arrears on payments and the lack of suitable assets that Mugabe was willing to offer to **Libya** as an alternative form of repayment. Yet few other fuel suppliers are willing to be as generous as Libya, given that Zimbabwe now owes US\$1.3 bn. in arrears on its foreign payments (AC Vol 43 No 21).

Economic decline, not military aggression, is the biggest threat facing the ZDF. There are serious shortages of funds for the military payroll, let alone for equipment. The ZDF comes a poor third in southern Africa – in terms of size and equipment – to **South Africa**'s and **Angola**'s forces. Zimbabwe is outclassed and outspent: for much of the 1990s, Luanda's military spending averaged over US\$1 bn.

The Congo factor

All the foreign armies sent to the **Congo-Kinshasa** war – **Rwanda's** **Uganda's** and **Zimbabwe's** – have deteriorated as a result. The ZDF deployment has been a turning point for Zimbabwe's military and their return home could worsen relations with their political masters.

Some ZDF special forces will remain on security duties in Kinshasa, Mbuji Mayi and Lubumbashi as the ground is prepared for the deployment of specially trained guards by a private military company owned by senior ZDF officers. It was meant to work alongside a private Congolese firm, Cogas, but disputes have arisen about how the two can combine operations and levels of remuneration.

A much bigger question is how Zimbabwe can secure repayment of the war debts that it claims Congo owes it for military assistance since August 1998. Now that most ZDF troops have left, the need to keep Harare sweet may not seem as pressing to Kinshasa. Both governments are considering restructuring their Zimbabwe-backed joint venture diamond and cobalt mining operations. The overwhelming need for the Zimbabwe government is short-term revenue to meet its worsening foreign exchange crisis. As an institution, the Zimbabwean military has been badly damaged by the Congo intervention, though many senior officers have personally profited.

The development of an informal rough diamond exchange in Harare is almost entirely due to the efforts of some ZDF senior officers and their business partners. Harare is an easier place for both buyers and sellers than Mbuji Mayi and because the rough diamond trade is illegal in Zimbabwe, there's no question of paying duties or export taxes. Traders need the collusion of ZDF security officers and their business associates, to avoid Zimbabwe customs coming in and going out.

As most of the diamonds come from Mbuji Mayi or Tshikapa (with some from Kisangani, **Angola** and **Sierra Leone**) the collusion of Congolese authorities is important, too. Security consultants OSS, investigating diamond thefts at the Congolese state company *Minière de Bakwanga*, said that Congolese managers had actively conspired in the theft of Miba's diamond production or were negligent in failing to act against it. Late last month, Miba President **Jean-Charles Okoto** was suspended from duty pending a full investigation. Okoto's close associate and key liaison with

the ZDF, National Security Minister **Mwenzé Kongolo**, was also suspended from his post last week.

The ZDF proved militarily effective in Congo in defensive and containment operations but it's said to rankle Mugabe that his prized army was unable to defeat the Rwandan army decisively. Mugabe is becoming one of the most extreme advocates of a strategy to destroy what he refers to as 'the Tutsi-Hima empire' represented by the ruling elites in Rwanda and **Burundi**.

This growing obsession and the initially close alliance that Mugabe forged with the late President **Laurent-Désiré Kabila** in Congo laid the basis for ZDF training of Rwandan (*Armée de Libération de la Rwanda*, Alir) and Burundian (such as the *Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie*) opposition forces and some joint operations with them. Understandably, most ZDF officers deny all links with such groups (Alir is on the **United States'** terrorist list). Aware of the implications, in international law, of Zimbabwean politicians or senior officers backing armed groups linked to Rwandan *génocidaires*, ZDF officers are coy about these operations.

However, ZDF sources have described special operations in Burundi in the past involving small groups of Zimbabwe special forces crossing Lake Tanganyika in inflatable boats and setting up logistics for FDD attacks on Burundi government installations. These began after August 1998 under the ZDF's commander on Congo's eastern front, Brigadier **Charles Gumo**, who was killed in action. They were run by the ZDF's Commando Group, an amalgam of Zimbabwe's Special Air Services, Commando Regiment and Parachute Regiment.

It was a key part of the ZDF's proxy war strategy in the Congo. The ZDF wanted to avoid a head-on conflict with rebel forces in the east and their Ugandan and Rwandan sponsors. So it trained and supplied rebel forces such as Alir and the FDD, and latterly the Congolese nationalist forces, Mayi-Mayi. At times, the ZDF troops trained Alir and FDD fighters alongside *Forces Armées Congolaises* in the Congolese government base at Kamina. At the height of this programme, a 2,000-strong contingent of Zimbabwe military police was used to police those training camps.

(mostly spent on procurement rather than pay). South Africa has just committed itself to buying arms worth some \$6 bn. over ten years.

In Zimbabwe, defence spending of Z\$76.4 bn. (US\$38.2 mn. at the market rate) budgeted for 2003 is a little more than a tenth of budgeted defence spending of Z\$16.2 bn. (circa US\$300 mn.) in 2001; in 1998, official defence spending was about US\$330 mn., much of it on new capital equipment. Of the Z\$76.4 bn. for defence in 2003, wages for the Zimbabwe National Army take up Z\$31 bn. and for the Air Force of Zimbabwe, Z\$5 bn. – almost half the total allocation. Most economists believe that salary bill will be doubled by the end of 2003 but few can see where the money will come from.

Even allowing for clandestine mechanisms and bilateral arrangements with Kinshasa to fund the ZDF intervention, the budget figures show a dramatic drop in defence spending over the past five years as Zimbabwe's national income has shrunk by about a third. Faced with such stringency, the ZDF will put in place its restructuring plans as fast as possible. These are said to include sharp cuts in recruitment and the disbanding or merger of several units.

The ZDF (overall commander, Gen. Zvinavashe) has an official authorised strength of 45,000 but there are estimated to be no more than 36,000 troops currently serving: about 32,000 in the ZNA, commanded by Lieutenant Gen. **Constantine Chiwenga**, and 4,000 in the AFZ, under Shiri. All three commanding officers have been deeply enmeshed in Congo, with Zvinavashe and Shiri openly involved in business

operations. Those two were due for retirement but are unlikely now to go before Mugabe does. In particular, Shiri has a close business relationship with the Mugabe family, rooted in the Congo minerals trade but also centered on local procurement and building contracts.

Resentment at the conspicuous prosperity of the senior officers is growing. For example, other officers are asking where Zvinavashe found the funds to build an impressive private school just outside Harare, a move which doesn't sit well with the government's declared socialist credentials or the current decline of state education.

Although senior officers overwhelmingly support ZANU-PF, many middle-ranking and junior officers prefer the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. The coming military reorganisation and job losses will not increase the government's standing lower down the ranks. The reorganisation, originally scheduled for the late 1990s, was delayed because of the Congo operation. The Defence Ministry, now under former Security Minister **Sidney Sekeramayi**, has already redistributed members of the 6th Brigade, an infantry formation that was never properly constituted.

A brigade headquarters and six battalions have so far been disbanded. The last phase of the reorganisation should see three more battalions go, resulting in five brigade headquarters, all with two attached battalions and support units such as engineers available to them on request. The aim is to reduce the Parachute Group, Commando Group and Presidential Guard into regimental-size formations. Ultimately,

the aim is for the elite Presidential Guard to consist of two battalions.

These changes aren't proving popular in the ranks, which will suffer the brunt of the cuts. They also resent the formation of politicised paramilitary units by the government which are seen as using cash which would have gone to the mainstream military. Yet the marriage between the ZANU leadership and the ZDF High Command is as strong as ever. For many senior officers, parliamentary Speaker and Mugabe-confidant **Emmerson Mnangagwa** is the preferred successor, despite his unpopularity in ZANU and with the electorate at large. Human rights organisations hold Shiri and Mnangagwa responsible for the Five Brigade's massacres in Matabeleland in 1983. Although Shiri and Mnangagwa are disliked, much popular support remains for the ZDF, with its resonance as the liberation army. Partly because of this and in a bid to woo army votes, the opposition MDC rarely criticises the ZDF openly.

Paratroopers and paramilitary

ZANU cadres dismiss talk of the politicisation of the ZDF because (as in **Namibia**, Angola and Mozambique) the national army started life as the military wing of the liberation movement. Yet the ZDF is a hybrid. It took many of its structures and doctrines from the Rhodesian Defence Force, which in turn was heavily influenced by the **British** army, whose training affiliate BMATT played a key role in military training after Independence. The **United States'** and **Chinese** military also influenced organisation and drill. For example, the mechanised brigade is organised along the lines of the US Cavalry. Chinese artillery has largely replaced that from post-World War II Britain.

The most politicised paramilitary units, ZANU's Youth Brigades, are outside the ZDF command, although there has been collaboration and joint deployment. There are at least 5,000 Youth Brigaders, most of them trained at the Mount Darwin camp. Initially, they were paid Z\$100 a day to start the entry course, which mainly consists of political indoctrination (that the MDC's covert aim is to return the country to British colonial rule). Those who score good marks in the exams graduate to the next stage, which involves uniforms, military drills and unarmed combat training (some arms training may come later). Then they are deployed on farms and in townships, and their pay is increased to Z\$1,000 a day. Small logistical camps for the Youth Brigades were opened across the country, each with about 30-50 members.

Since the March presidential election, when the Brigades were used to intimidate voters, the government has little use for them. It can't afford to pay them their comparatively good salaries and has been disbanding the camps. The same goes for the so-called war veterans' units, which operated alongside the Brigades. Such politicised paramilitary units have caused tensions with the conventional army.

Rivalries are also building up between the more professional officers and their politically connected and upwardly mobile counterparts. Several political favourites – ZANU connections and regime loyalty are the usual arbiters – have been promoted to senior rank and post without passing the required examinations or having the necessary experiences. Such officers also get preferential access to equipment, the more lucrative deployments and other commercial opportunities. It appears they are being coached to take over the military commercial empires built by their commanders. Most middle-ranking officers are still being promoted on merit and resent the *nomenklatura* being built up by the commanders.

This stage of Zimbabwe's deployment in Congo appears to have finished with the withdrawal of most troops. Now the ZDF has to come to terms with a changing regional and domestic situation against a backdrop of rapidly shrinking resources at home. That is laying the basis for the next round of problems for the Mugabe government.

Bitter experience has taught it to take its disgruntled soldiers seriously – especially when they are battlehardened.

LIBYA

Hasty engagement

Friends and aspiring friends rush to embrace him but Gadaffi is in no hurry

A big new hotel and high-rise housing blocks are going up in Tripoli. Libya says it wants to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Resolution of the dispute over the 1988 Lockerbie aircraft bombing is in prospect, followed by the return of **United States'** oil companies. Western business executives and opinion-formers are already flocking in. Officially, Libya stands on the edge of President **George W. Bush's** government's 'axis of evil' but its international supporters see evidence that Colonel **Moammar el Gadaffi's** *Jamahiriyah* ('state of the masses') is changing fast.

The new-look Libya is embodied by **Mohamed Seif el Islam el Gadaffi**, 30, eldest son of the Leader's second wife, **Safia el Brassai**. He is sloughing off a playboy reputation to be courted by **Britain**, **France** and other governments eager to hook up with the rising generation of power-brokers. Gadaffi's glamorous and feisty daughter **Aïcha**, 26, attracts attention. Even the volatile junior Gadaffi, **El Saadi**, gets a sympathetic press. A *Financial Times* interview with him this month did not mention Saadi's promotion of thuggish youth groups such as the 'Gadaffi Brigade' (AC Vol 41 No 21). Instead, it focused on Libyan Football Federation President Saadi's admiration of Liverpool striker **Michael Owen** and on his ambitions to buy in to the club. The Gadaffi family has already bought, via the Libyan Arab Foreign Investment Company (Lafico), a substantial stake in **Italian** club Juventus from their old friends, the **Agnelli** family.

In Seif hands

The regime denies dynastic ambitions as found in most Arab states but radical changes planned in the constitution would create a new executive head of state. This could be filled by the urbane and ambitious Seif, with his father remaining 'Revolutionary Leader', above day-to-day government but policy from 'his tent at Sirte'.

Experts and senior members of the Gadaffi circle are discussing formalising the transition from revolutionary state to one where policy is determined by the national interest and the need to integrate into the global economy (AC Vol 43 No 19). The idea is said to be backed by **Ahmed Gadaff Eddam**, the Leader's powerful cousin, and the urbane intelligence chief **Moussa Kousa**, a great survivor.

The pair work on key dossiers, such as improving relations with France. French Foreign Minister **Dominique de Villepin** visited Gadaffi's tent on 18 October, following up a one-to-one meeting with him in Tripoli soon after becoming Minister last summer. Libya's friends in the new French government include De Villepin's ally, Senator **André Dulait**.

Some old-guard stalwarts are quietly being pushed away from power. Gadaffi's hardline cousin **Ahmed Ibrahim** is now Ambassador to **Chad** and his former right-hand man, **Abdallah Senoussi**, indicted in France for his alleged role in bombing an aeroplane from French airline UTA in 1989, has been under house arrest and may have been sidelined for good. Relative liberals, such as **Abdelhafidh Zlitni**, boss of the National Oil Corporation (NOC), have been moved into key economic roles. Lafico's former head, **Mohamed Ali Elhumej**,

Unfinished business

Libya has considerable unfinished business to resolve with the West if it hopes to reintegrate into the global economy and avoid further retribution for past misdemeanours.

- **Lockerbie compensation:** Efforts to resolve the crisis definitively revolve around a 'trilateral' political process, involving Libya, **Britain** and **United States**, and an economic settlement, focused on a compensation deal for the American PanAm flight 103 families, a very powerful lobby. Questions remain over whether Libya will accept responsibility; the wording of the settlement is a big and complex issue. A Libyan business group led by veteran banker **Mohammed Abdel Jawad** is raising billions of dollars of compensation, in a bid to end sanctions for good.

- **Lockerbie 'smoking gun':** Gaoled Libyan security agent **Abdelbasset Ali al Meghrahi**'s defence team will appeal soon to the Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission: they may revive claims that other countries were involved, notably 'axis of evil' member **Iran** and candidate member **Syria**. If proven, it would give this appeal global significance. The defence is to argue that the Libyan agents were small fry (though Al Meghrahi, in **Malta**, was important to Libya's sanctions-busting effort) with payments by Iran to **Ahmed Jibril**'s Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command pointing to the major players involved.

- **Yvonne Fletcher** and UK relations: Bilateral relations are much improved and new Ambassador **Anthony Layden**, fresh from **Morocco** with which British trade has surged, is expected to push commercial links. However, reconciliation is needed after the fatal shooting of WPC Fletcher from the Libyan Embassy in 1984, along with several other events. Tripoli argues that this pales into insignificance in the light of ex-**MI5** officer **David Shaylor**'s revelations that British intelligence plotted with Libyan Islamists to assassinate **Moammar el Gadaffi**. Foreign and Commonwealth Office and other UK officials are divided over how far rapprochement should go but 'doves' seem in the ascendant. London wants to restore longer term Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) cover; this is agreed pending Libyan repayment of a relatively small sum for past debts, which seems blocked, an experience shared by

other European export credit agencies.

- **Weapons of mass destruction:** Libya should soon sign key international WMD conventions, helping it avoid becoming a 'war against terror' target (AC Vol 43 No 22). Views conflict. Britain and others are concerned about Libya's WMD potential, as is US Assistant Secretary of State for Proliferation Issues **John Bolton**. The USA has complained to Belgrade that **Yugoslav** firms have been helping Libya develop 'long-range cruise missiles capable of reaching targets in **Israel**'. **Italian** security sources say reports of concern about a missile threat to Italy are overstated. And US intelligence is surprisingly relaxed – unlike **Iraq** or *Al Qaida*, the CIA feels it has good intelligence about Libyan projects.

- **African affairs:** Gadaffi's willingness to rein in and/or provide intelligence on former allies from the Irish Republican Army to **Filipino** Islamist groups has bought support. Dropping **Liberia**'s **Charles Taylor** and the planned troop withdrawal from **Central African Republic** will ease concern in the West's Africa departments but some of Gadaffi's other friendships are problematic, notably with **Zimbabwe**'s **Robert Mugabe**.

- **Bulgarian doctors:** Libya's overall record has improved sharply as junior Gadaffis gain influence but the detention of six Bulgarian medics and a Palestinian since February 1999 for allegedly purposely giving 393 Libyan children HIV/AIDS highlights continued judicial and human rights questions. The medics face execution and seek a saviour, such as the intervention of **Mohamed Seif el Islam**. On 3 November, Bulgarian Doctors' Union chairman **Andrei Kehayov** and Libyan General Medical Council head **Ibrahim el Sharif** signed an agreement for Bulgarian doctors to continue working in the *Jamahiriya*.

- **Business trends:** The quiet application to join the World Trade Organisation shows a desire to integrate but Libya is resisting joining the European Union's main regional tool for economic integration, the European-Mediterranean Partnership; Gadaffi's official reason is opposition to the EU's association agreement with Israel. WTO and EMP membership imply opening up trade and increasing transparency – a severe shift in Libyan business practices, which have made the Gadaffi clan and ruling elite rich.

chairs a new Advisory Board for Investment, overseeing investment companies including Lafico itself (now headed by Economics Professor **Khaled Zentuti**), the Libyan Arab Foreign Bank and Tamoil. Another former Lafico boss, **Mohamed Siala**, is deputy head of the General People's Commission for African Unity, with which Lafico is supposed to build economic networks south of the Sahara.

The economy is by no means ready to join the WTO but a decision – awaited for years, finally taken in January – to devalue the dinar confirmed the government's commitment to current account convertibility under the International Monetary Fund's Article VIII. Business people receive mixed signals, though. To fill the stadium for the over-priced Juventus-Inter Milan Italian Super Cup in August, Saadi persuaded some 60 local companies to buy up blocks of tickets. His father took a dim view of this 'squandering of public money' and in September, to widespread mirth, the hapless executives received short gaol terms. They have now been released.

Constitutional change could come far more slowly than advocates of rapid reform would wish. Gadaffi Senior still enjoys his job; in a busy October, he met the 'Miss Net World' beauty contestants in Tripoli (a British victory), tried to lean on visiting Italian Premier **Silvio Berlusconi** and threatened to leave the League of Arab States, a threat later withdrawn after pleas from, among other Arab chiefs, League Secretary General and **Egyptian** ex-Foreign Minister **Amr Moussa**. 'Gadaffi likes excitement', noted one veteran African politician.

Change may be in the air but it is not always on the ground. Regime old-timers remain in key positions and links are being consolidated across the generations. In early October, a son of Gadaffi's advisor **Kouildi el Hameidi** married Aicha Gadaffi; one of Hameidi's daughters is already married to Saadi. Gadaffi's confidant **Ali Tereiki** still runs the all-important Africa policy. **Abdel Rahman Mohamed Shalgham**, Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation, is responsible for other regions.

Kousa's intelligence network includes such veterans of Libya's revolutionary years as former security chief **Youssef el Debri**, who recently visited Paris to prepare for talks with French external and internal security, the *Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure* (DGSE) and the *Direction de Surveillance du Territoire* (DST). Years of sanctions and the 1986 US air raids on Tripoli and Benghazi have persuaded most Libyans that compromise is essential. Officials are working hard to stop Gadaffi joining **Iraqi** President **Saddam Hussein** on the evil axis.

Officials and businessmen negotiating compensation for the Lockerbie families are frank as to why they may pay out several billion dollars: without admitting full responsibility for the murders, Libya reckons huge payments now will be cheaper than years more under US-led sanctions (see Box).

Gadaffi follows events in the West attentively. Visitors to his tent may get a commentary – in English, if the Leader's in the mood – of

events shown on his CNN screens. When **Mike O'Brien**, a British Foreign and Commonwealth Office junior minister, visited in August (with Washington's approval), he was quizzed at length about Premier **Tony Blair**. After years of conflict with Western governments, Libya has indulged in some bridge-building intelligence-sharing since last year's terrorist attacks on the USA.

The bad old days were recalled in early November, at a trial in London which ended with the gaoling for six months of British former MI5 intelligence officer **David Shayler**, who had sold classified documents to the press and revealed that in the mid-1990s, British intelligence tried to use Libyan Islamists to liquidate Gadaffi. The judge restricted reporting of the trial and also prevented the defendant from raising the issue of Western intelligence's links to Libya's *Al Jamaa al Islamiya al Muqatila* (Islamic Fighting Group, IFG).

Western governments toyed with underground Islamist groups such as the IFG, one of whose members, **Anas al Sbai**, has since September 2001 been high on the US Central Intelligence Agency's wanted list, under his alias Anas al Liby. Until May 2000, he lived in Manchester, UK, with political asylum (like many Islamist activists).

Libyan security forces seem to have crushed the IFG within the country. The movement's exiles feel uncomfortable after widespread allegations of close relations with **Usama bin Laden**; several hundred Libyans fought in **Afghanistan** in the 1980s, when *Al Qaida* was indirectly supported by the USA. Libya was the first country to apply to Interpol for Usama's extradition, as a party to the murder in 1994 of a **German** intelligence operative, **Silvan Becker**, and his wife.

The *Jamahiriyah* has rarely seemed calmer, despite occasional, unconfirmed reports of violence, sometimes involving soldiers mutinying. Yet there is acute pressure for jobs from the predominantly youthful population; the government spends heavily on education but there is a severe shortage of qualified workers and few vacancies at the wages Libyans expect. Gadaffi's open-door policy towards Africans from further south has tempted in huge numbers of black expatriates, some looking for jobs and a home, others using the *Jamahiriyah* as a staging post to Europe – a major bone of contention with Italy and other European Union members. Periodic riots, expulsions and even massacres have not stopped this. Tripoli sources suggest there are now some 1.5 million black Africans among Libya's population of less than 6 mn.

Drop the dead donkey

Gadaffi has apparently dropped troublesome allies such as **Liberian** President **Charles Taylor** and Western observers say he has been helpful in the **Rwanda/Congo-Kinshasa** peace deal. US Secretary of State **Colin Powell** has praised Gadaffi's 'constructive' role in the Joint Egyptian-Libyan Initiative for **Sudan** (many Sudanese have been less enthusiastic). Gadaffi's support has kept President **Ange-Félix Patassé** in power in **Central African Republic** and, even more controversially, helped to underwrite President **Robert Mugabe** in **Zimbabwe** – financially through loans and oil grants, and by seconding security personnel. The Mugabe link complicates rapprochement with the UK; new Ambassador **Anthony Michael Layden**, a Scots Arabist of 56, will try to persuade Gadaffi to change tack.

Libya is marketing itself as a major player in sub-Saharan Africa, promoting Lafico as a potential partner in many countries and sectors. This has already attracted heavy-hitters such as a **Saudi Arabian** billionaire, Prince **Al Waleed bin Talal bin Abdelaziz** (AC Vol 41 No 16). Libya sees itself as a major oil provider to Africa, while rival producers focus on the West and Asia.

Not everyone plays ball. Obstacles to Gadaffi's African vision include the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Despite

frantic lobbying, he has been outmanoeuvred by **South African** President **Thabo Mbeki** and **Algerian** President **Abdelaziz Bouteflika**, who head the key NePAD group of **Algeria**, **Nigeria**, **Senegal** and **South Africa**. So he is focusing on the African Union. Bouteflika's visit to Tripoli in late October may have been meant to calm Gadaffi's anger at failing to get on the NePAD Implementation Committee – and to cool Arab League tempers. African diplomats talk freely of their efforts to prevent Libya and Sudan from playing the lead in NePAD and frightening off Western nations. Some things don't change.

SIERRA LEONE

Get with the programme

Generous reconstruction aid comes with unprecedented donor micro-management

Donors meeting in Paris on 13-14 November pledged US\$650 million in aid over four years but that wasn't the meeting's main purpose. Two days of talks with a big government delegation led by Vice-President **Solomon Berewa** produced a detailed programme of development goals for 2003-04; donor representatives will meet the government every two months in Freetown to discuss progress.

Western donors led by **Britain** made clear to President **Ahmad Tejan Kabbah** before the May elections that if he wanted continued support in his second term, he would have to live up to their expectations (AC Vol 43 No 11). Besides not wanting to waste their money, donors seemed fired by a real enthusiasm for the task.

The 5.6 mn. Sierra Leoneans are currently the target of unusual levels of international support. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (Unamsil), with 17,600 peacekeeping soldiers, is the largest UN operation in Africa; some 4,600 troops will leave in phases over the next eight months and if all goes well, there will be only about 2,000 of them by the end of 2004. An additional 170 foreign police officers will train local security forces to take over some of the departing peacekeepers' duties; 2,000 more police are to be recruited by the end of 2004. Next comes development aid. The aim of the ten-point programme is to tackle diverse needs in one integrated approach, rather than through disparate programmes.

The government has drawn up a National Recovery Strategy for 2002-03, costed at \$212.5 mn., with UN Development Programme help. It concentrates on restoring agriculture, rebuilding roads, providing safe drinking water and primary schools.

The Paris gathering was chaired by the new World Bank Country Director for Sierra Leone, **Ghana** and **Liberia**, **Mats Karlsson**. Britain currently gives £120 mn. (\$190 mn.) a year in development aid, through its Department for International Development (DfID). Other major donors who made pledges included the European Commission, **Germany**, the UN, World Bank, the African Development Bank and Islamic Development Bank.

Economic rehabilitation has moved fast. The International Monetary Fund approved a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility in September 2001, paving the way for a Paris Club debt relief deal that October. In March came wider debt relief under the IMF and World Bank's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative.

With peace restored to Freetown, gross domestic product rose by 3.8 per cent in 2000 and 5.4 per cent in 2001. Inflation has steadied from an average of 34 per cent in 1999 to some 2.2 per cent in 2001, and the leone, which fell sharply in the late 1990s, has stabilised at around 2,100 to the US dollar for the past three years. This year's GDP growth

is expected to be at 6-7 per cent and inflation at zero. A Privatisation Commission will be operational by year-end, with a list of 24 state enterprises seeking investment.

Disarmament and demobilisation of ex-combatants was completed at the end of January and reintegration of some 56,000 fighters is two-thirds complete. The programme will probably take another year to finish but a funding gap of \$10 mn. is now expected to be filled. There are worries that big money from donors could distort local commercial life, pushing up consumer demand, rents and wages.

A bigger concern is that the huge effort to rebuild Sierra Leone takes little account of the capacity for mischief-making of neighbouring Liberia. A point raised often by Sierra Leoneans at the meeting was that to be lasting, peace would have to be region-wide.

Other goals include reviving local government, including the restoration of paramount chiefs and, where necessary, elections for new chiefs. District councils were suspended in 1972 under the late President **Siaka Stevens** and restored in 2000; new ones will be elected early next year. Better policing and the work of the Anti-Corruption Commission have highlighted weaknesses in the judicial system, which is in line for capacity-building assistance.

There is plenty to deter investors. Roads are dreadful, Freetown is choked by traffic jams, fixed telephone lines and internet connections are rudimentary, though there are two efficient cellular telephone service providers. The wait at Lungi International Airport to get to Freetown can be almost as long as the flight, as the ferry is slow and the two helicopters operating a shuttle are often hopelessly overstretched. Despite Dfid's assistance in reviving the economy and attracting investment, Britain's Foreign and Commonwealth Office still officially advises against travel to Sierra Leone except on essential business and then not outside the capital.

More than half the population is under 15 and has known almost nothing but war. Thousands of young people are uneducated, traumatised, used only to violence and power. Turning them into productive citizens will take more than a demobilisation programme, but some will be absorbed by the 600,000 person/days of labour the National Recovery Strategy estimates are needed for road repairs in 2003. The rate of HIV infection is reported just below the crucial five per cent point, from which it normally starts to increase exponentially.

Farming first

The main priority for agriculture will be reviving food production. The government aims to restore rice production to its 1991 level by the end of 2004 but is also keen to invigorate the cotton and textiles sector. Sierra Leonean textiles do not yet enjoy preferential access to **United States'** markets under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act but Trade Minister **Kadi Sesay** says they will do by the end of the year.

The revival of mining could provide revenue to support growth in the whole economy. Government targets include raising official diamond exports to at least \$60 mn. by the end of 2003, compared to \$1.5 mn. in 1999 and a projected \$40 mn. in 2002. Talks are underway on funding the rehabilitation of the Sierra Rutile mine, with the support of the US government's Overseas Private Investment Corporation. The mine is owned by mining magnate **Jean-Raymond Boule**, who in May 2001 acquired **Australia's** Consolidated Rutile's 50 per cent stake. Once a major foreign currency earner for Sierra Leone, it closed down in 1995 after rebels seized it.

Some of the keenest investors are expatriate Sierra Leoneans. A group of bankers led by **Joe Demby** came home in 2000 to found Tiwai Capital Partners and its associated information technology services company, Tiwai Memory Masters. Demand is such that the IT firm is notching up 150 per cent year-on-year growth, while the

banking operation is executing client mandates worth \$20 mn.

Cement company Leocem, a subsidiary of **Germany's** Heidelberg Cement, is installing another parallel production line to meet demand forecast to rise from about 170,000 tonnes now to some 230,000 tn. in 2005. **French-owned** Panguma Sawmills, which produced timber and prefabricated building parts until the war forced it to suspend activities in 1997, plans to start work again soon.

One likely user of its products will be Sonaco International Real Estate Services, established by London-based accountant **Arthur Johnson**, which offers to build houses for expatriate Sierra Leoneans seeking a 'home at home'. Johnson is targeting the up to 500,000 Sierra Leoneans living in Britain, Europe and the USA, dealing with banks, architects and builders on their behalf. Another local firm, Lachman Pharmaceuticals, which used to make drugs under licence from SmithKline Beecham and now produces its own brand products, would like to revive its exports and take advantage of the Mano River Union free trade area.

Some Sierra Leoneans at the Paris meeting complained there was too much emphasis abroad on the problem of corruption, observing that they, unlike their neighbours, were at least talking about it and trying to tackle it. Sesay says she believes Sierra Leone is one of the region's most open countries on this issue.

The plan drawn up with donors includes revised public procurement procedures and a target of bringing 50 per cent of cases lodged by the Anti-Corruption Commission to court by the end of 2003. 'We have admitted that we do have a problem and we are trying to handle that problem by talking about it openly,' says **Neneh Dabo**, the Commission's Director for Prevention and Education.

Some of Sierra Leone's current growth reflects a rebound from the catastrophic levels of recent years but it is accompanied by commitments by donors and diaspora alike. The credibility of international aid is at stake. If this much effort cannot sort out Sierra Leone, what is the point of even trying to help **Congo-Kinshasa** or **Sudan**?

SUDAN

Death in Darfur

Despite the Machakos peace talks, government atrocities continue in Darfur

As the National Islamic Front government and Sudan People's Liberation Army reached a 'measure of understanding on the texts on Structures of Government and revenue sharing' at Machakos, **Kenya**, on 18 November, Amnesty International was preparing yet another appeal over 'Imminent Executions/Imminent Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment' of five more people in Sudan's Far West, Darfur. It epitomised some major Sudanese criticisms of the Machakos 'peace process': its failure to acknowledge northern opposition to the government or recognise that government's continuing manipulation of 'structures of government and revenue sharing' in the north itself (AC Vol 43 Nos 15 & 16). As Machakos ended, theoretically to restart on 6 January, the two parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding. Its aim of a 'comprehensive resolution to the Sudan conflict' looked remote when viewed from Darfur.

Amnesty's 19 November 'Urgent Action' concerned 'five men at imminent risk of amputation and execution'. In 1998, they were convicted, without legal representation, of armed robbery, and sentenced to cross-amputation (right hand, left foot) then death by hanging. The Constitutional Court has just rejected their appeals, a judgment only

President **Omer Hassan Ahmed el Beshir** can overturn. The robbery, of a bank in South Darfur capital Nyala, is one of many recent such crimes in the vast region bordering **Central African Republic, Chad and Libya**. Also proliferating are torture, and death and amputation sentences (14 men were hanged in Shalla Prison, in North Darfur capital El Fasher this May alone) especially since the NIF imposed Emergency Courts (aka Special Courts) on Darfur in May 2001. This February, **Abok Alfa Akok**, 18, a pregnant Christian Dinka who said she had been raped, received 75 lashes for adultery – instead of her original sentence of being stoned to death.

Darfur, where 30 years ago the greatest danger was wild animals, is torn by conflict. Triggered largely by competition for water and land amid dire desertification, especially with the appalling drought and famine of the early 1980s, conflict rages. It often (though not always) pits pastoralist Arabic-speakers against subsistence farmers whose first language is more local. This is an old story: what has turned it into tragedy is Khartoum's dismantling of traditional leadership structures and use of divide-and-rule tactics – so successful in the south and among the northern opposition – to fan the flames of resource competition and ethnic rivalry.

Regional devastation

People from the largest of Darfur's many tribes, the Fur, have now attacked police and army units they accuse of supporting the Arab militias devastating the region. Government arming of Arab tribes began in 1985 under **Fadlallah Burma Nasir**, from the then Transitional Military Council and later **El Sadig el Mahdi**'s junior Defence Minister. He is also credited with arming '*Murahileen*' against southerners, Arab militias which then rekindled the slave trade with NIF support. Now, with a prospective peace accord for the south (if not actual peace), leaders of Darfur's settled tribes accuse Khartoum not simply of arming pastoralists but of orchestrating ethnic cleansing similar to that unleashed in the Nuba Mountains a decade ago and in southern oil areas since. In response, admit local leaders, people such as the Fur, Messalit and Zaghawa (Zakawa) are forming alliances and buying arms to protect themselves. The Zaghawa live in Chad, too; they were once allied with Arab fellow-pastoralists but drought and politics have changed things.

Reports from the region say attacks on villages appear increasingly coordinated, sometimes by simultaneous raids on communities many miles apart. No longer random grabs for land, they involve the wanton destruction, often by masked horsemen, of everything that makes life possible – homes, livestock, food stores, belongings, trees. In a few months, scores of villages have been burned to the ground and some 500 unarmed civilians killed. Attacks on travellers are common. The overtly official side involves scores of educated Fur, Messalit and others arrested and a sharp increase in hangings, amputations and stonings to death – *Sharia* penalties (*huddud*) that are widely perceived by traditionally easy-going and anti-NIF Darfurians as instruments of terror. Scorched earth terror is common in south Sudan.

In July, Darfur leaders – including National Democratic Alliance leaders **Ahmed Ibrahim Diraige** and **Sharif Harir** – issued a 'Call for Freedom' to Darfur peoples, settled or nomadic, to stand together. In August, as the government persisted in blaming the violence on 'tribal conflicts' exacerbated by arms flows from Chad and Libya, Fur villagers attacked police and army posts in Golou and Tur in the 3,088 metre Jebel Marra massif, Darfur's fertile central belt. Opposition sources say the villagers killed a dozen security men and seized arms earlier confiscated from them. They say this attack was provoked by the police and army's failure to respond to Arab attacks, compounded by official tenacity in disarming villagers trying to pursue their

assailants. Meanwhile, militias attacked Messalit villages in Mastari, south of El Geneina. Khartoum says villagers have formed a 'Darfur Liberation Front'.

When Shoba village (the Fur Sultanate's 18th century capital) was attacked and burned for the second time in April, government forces in Kebkabiya, 15 kilometres away, stayed in their barracks during a six-hour rampage by Arab militia who killed 17 civilians, burned over 600 homes and killed or mutilated some 1,000 livestock. After the attack, they disarmed villagers attempting pursuit and detained some of those who had reported the attack.

After the Golou and Tur attacks, Khartoum agreed to a security conference in Nyertete chaired by the Fur Sultan, **Hussein Ayoub Ali Dinar**. It was widely perceived as an attempt to contain popular anger while Machakos mediators and NIF negotiators were portraying Sudan's war as a north-south conflict and it backfired. The arrest beforehand of 70 Fur, including lawyers, teachers, sheikhs and *shartai* (chiefs), inflamed passions; some remain behind bars over three months later. An official conference report accused the government of actively supporting the Arab militias.

In September, Northern Darfur Governor **Ibrahim Suleiman** and Southern Darfur Governor **Salah Ali el Ghali** (both retired generals) declared Jebel Marra area closed 'for security reasons'. 'We consider any targeting of government forces as a rebellion', said Salah on 29 September. On 24 October, the NIF allowed a rare protest rally in Khartoum organised by the government-approved 'Popular Association for the Development of Darfur'. Two weeks later, Vice-President **Ali Osman Mohamed Taha** visited Darfur with Finance Minister **Zubeir Ahmed el Hassan** and met top officials, including Governor Ibrahim, a former Defence Minister. The men from Khartoum promised development, including hundreds of schools and the first 150 km. of the long promised 'Salvation Road' to Khartoum.

Within days, Arab raiders attacked and burned three villages in Ngama area. Then, says the Sudan Federal Party led by Darfur ex-Governor Diraige, gunmen ambushed an army bus on the Nyala-Zalingei road, killing three soldiers.

Khartoum worries that disaffection may spread to the many Darfur troops, especially if the Machakos process fails to expand to other areas. Riots erupted at Fasher University on 12 November. That same day, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Sudan, **German** lawyer and former Interior Minister **Gerhard Baum**, called on Khartoum 'to abolish the Special Courts'. He told the UN General Assembly he had met, in Darfur, Rezeigat Arab prisoners sentenced to death without being told why. All were shackled, he said, and 'Due to the heat, the shackles had to be wrapped in paper and/or plastic to avoid contact with the skin'.

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Pointers

CONGO-KINSHASA

Kabila reacts

President **Joseph Kabila** has again outplayed his regional rivals, **Uganda's** President **Yoweri Museveni** and **Rwanda's** General **Paul Kagame**, in the diplomatic arena. Less than a month after the publication of the United Nations Report on Illegal Exploitation of Resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo (AC Vol 43 No 21), Kabila has suspended six key government officials and replaced six more. He has also instructed the *Procureur-Général's* office to investigate links between the six suspended ministers and the mining agreements under UN scrutiny. Museveni and Kagame, whose officials receive the toughest condemnation by the UN Report, are still to react to its findings.

Kabila's move is popular among *Kinois*. An opinion poll by the Kinshasa-based Berci consultancy group found that 88 per cent of those questioned supported the suspension of the six officials and 75 per cent wanted Kabila to take tougher action still. A local human rights group, 'Voix des sans Voix' (Voice of the Voiceless) has sponsored a play to get across the main points of the UN Report to a wider audience. Catholic, Protestant and Muslim leaders have lauded Kabila's prompt reaction to the UN Report.

Museveni said last week that he had not yet read the Report and would take no decision until he had done so. His brother **Salim Saleh** and army Chief of Staff **James Kazini** are both accused of plundering Congo. Kagame referred questioners to the government website where the Report is denounced as biased. 'It lacks credibility and would not even merit a response'. President Kagame did concede that he would talk to the UN and establish what action, if any, might be taken.

Uganda and Rwanda face growing international criticism for their armies' operations in eastern Congo; only **Britain** and **South Africa** have tried to moderate the international censure. Diplomats in Kampala are particularly critical of Museveni's planned increase in defence spending this year, despite claims that his government's diplomacy has brought peace with its neighbours.

FRANC ZONE

Whiter than white

Stung by criticism that radical Islamists and criminal gangs have been allowed to establish networks on their territory, West and Central African governments and the CFA Franc Zone authorities are acting to curb the illegal transfer of

funds. The eight countries of the *Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine* (UEMOA) adopted a draft law aimed at preventing money laundering and financing terrorist activities on 19 September. The six-member *Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale* (CEMAC) did the same on 30 October. The **Comoros** are due to adopt similar legislation by the end of 2002.

The Franc Zone is vulnerable because it offers a convertible currency linked to the euro and easy bank transfers to the Euro Zone, while sometimes lacking the necessary oversight provisions. Western intelligence services have said Islamist groups linked to *Al Qaida* and **Lebanon's Hizbollah** have raised funds for transfer to the Middle East from several countries in the region.

The new measures have been two years in preparation with help from the *Banque de France* but the legislation gained added urgency from the crackdown on international terrorism after the 11 September attacks in the **United States** (AC Vol 42 No 19). The legal framework, which conforms to the recommendations of the inter-governmental Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering, aims to outlaw use of the Franc Zone's financial structures to move funds of illicit origin and will enable the implementation of UN Security Council orders freezing the funds of individuals or groups involved in terrorism.

UEMOA's efforts to combat money laundering are coordinated with the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas). The Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa, overseen by **Senegal's Mamadou Lamine Fofana**, was set up in 2000.

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE

Price of silence

Under pressure over his human rights record, President **Denis Sassou Nguesso** on 18 November announced a one-month amnesty for Ninja rebels in the Pool Region to surrender and return to civilian life (AC Vol 43 No 17). A new peace plan from Pool-based opposition leader and ex-Premier **André Milongo** with government support offers Sassou a chance to defuse the situation and improve his standing. But there are questions over government sincerity. Justice Minister **Jean-Martin Mbemba** now admits both government forces and Ninjas committed atrocities in Pool, heartland of Lari support for exiled politician **Bernard Kolélas**.

Judge **Patrice Nzouala** has begun a fresh investigation into the Beach Affair, the disappearance of over 350 refugees, mainly young Lari men, who arrived at Brazzaville ferry dock from Kinshasa in May 1999. Relatives backed by human rights organisations brought a case this

year in **France** against Sassou and other senior officials. Last month, investigating judges at Meaux, near Paris, questioned **Gérard Bitsindou**, former head of Sassou's private office. They have also interviewed the Armed Forces Inspector General, General **Norbert Dabira**, though Brazzaville stopped him returning to France for further interrogation.

Sassou consulted his Paris lawyers in September but his friend President **Jacques Chirac** warned publicly that Paris could not intervene. Sassou, **Chad's** President **Idriss Déby** and **Gabon's** President **Omar Bongo** have dropped legal action against **François-Xavier Verschaeve**, whose book *Noir Silence* called Sassou a dictator and human rights abuser.

France and the **United States** want Congo back in the international mainstream – not easy amid reports of security forces' brutality in Pool and suspicions that some soldiers colluded with Ninjas to justify a wider crackdown. The latest International Monetary Fund mission highlighted missing oil revenues. Sassou's amnesty contains no offer of political reconciliation as demanded by Milongo's plan and the families of the Beach 'disappeared' were offered compensation before enquiries have really got under way.

UK/OIL

Work with sanctions

'Business people keen to circumvent sanctions' should indeed, as we predicted, flock to a British government sponsored oil conference called 'Working with sanctions' (AC Vol 43 No 22). 'We've had lots of phone calls', said the man from Trade Partners UK, as the foreign business section of the Department of Trade and Industry is now known. Imagine *Africa Confidential's* surprise when he added: 'Do you know who's organising it? People seem to think it's us but I can't find anyone who knows anything about it'.

Also at a loss, it seems, was one of the aspiring beneficiaries of the jamboree, **Sudan's** National Islamic Front government. 'Do you know where this is happening and who's organising it?' asked the caller from Sudan's London Embassy. This is the friendliest overture AC has had from Khartoum for over a decade. It was also odd, since organisers **Simon Gore Consulting** have been trying to encourage investment in Sudanese oil. 'Many States and companies are discovering that existing sanction regimes... are being used more effectively against them,' says Gore's conference brochure. In fact, in Sudan's case, rather than sanctions, it is the mountain of documentation amassed on ethnic cleansing and other government human rights atrocities that has at last begun to deter investors. It may take more than a conference to get round that one.