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Presidential accounts

President Clinton's administration wants to crack down on major US private banks through which it is alleged corrupt foreign officials have laundered stolen money. On 10 November a US Senate Committee heard how one private bank had managed millions of dollars for certain African rulers.

MOROCCO

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Broom sweeps Basri

King Mohammed VI has sacked Driss Basri, the security chief he inherited from his late father. Basri, given a day to clear his desk, was replaced by Ahmed el Midaoui, a security official he had fired two years before. Far-reaching changes underline Mohammed's domination of domestic politics.

ZAMBIA I

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Chiluba and after

President Chiluba has had a good six months. He brokered a peace deal in Congo-K, cemented relations with South Africa by hosting Thabo Mbeki's first trip abroad and has probably sold off Zambia's best copper mines. But MMD colleagues worry Chiluba may feel entitled to a third (unconstitutional) term.

ZAMBIA II

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Gunmen at the gate

Four unknown gunmen shot dead Major Wezi Kaunda, son of Zambia's ex-President. Two people have so far been arrested. The Kaunda family has called in Scotland Yard. Wezi had a lot of enemies and conspiracy theories abound. Most suspect a political rather than a criminal motive.

POINTERS

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Côte d'Ivoire, Libya-Congo-K and Sudan

COMMONWEALTH

Postponing the new order

Commonwealth heads have suspended Pakistan's military regime but balked at tougher action against others - until the next summit

Efforts to advance good governance and human rights ended in a Commonwealth fudge at the Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Durban, **South Africa** on 12-15 November. Calls for radical action against member governments which suppress opposition movements, steal state funds and gag journalists ended in a 'high-level review' of the Commonwealth, to advise 'how best it could respond to the challenges of the new century.' The review committee, to report to the next CHOGM in Canberra in 2001, balances modernisers (**Australia** and **Britain**, favouring tougher measures on governance), non-interventionists (**Tanzania**, **Trinidad and Tobago**), and nationalists (**India**, **Singapore** and **Zimbabwe**).

The committee will consider what to do about arbitrary and corrupt member governments, and consider expanding the organisation's economic assistance and coordination role. Officials deny there are plans to move some Secretariat offices from London to South Africa, but some states still feel that Whitehall's influence inhibits autonomous growth. The review committee accommodates the calls of British Prime Minister **Tony Blair** for the Commonwealth 'to reform or become irrelevant' - and those errant states which want to postpone more political scrutiny.

Much will depend on the new Secretary General, **New Zealand's** Foreign Minister, **Don McKinnon**, 'elected by acclamation' on the summit's first day. We hear some 40 countries backed him, while 14 backed the highly experienced but less well-known **Bangladeshi** diplomat, **Farroq Sobhan**. McKinnon takes over when **Emeka Anyaoku** of **Nigeria** leaves next April. If McKinnon shouts too loudly for political accountability, he will be quickly told by African and Asian leaders that he doesn't understand political realities in developing states.

The Mbeki-McKinnon partnership

New Zealand is a small, prosperous, multi-racial country which has pushed through painful economic reforms, skilfully sold by McKinnon at home and abroad. McKinnon will also be aided by an innovation, whereby the Durban summit's Chairman, South African President **Thabo Mbeki**, will be an active, high level representative of the Commonwealth until the 2001 summit. He can stand up at the United Nations General Assembly, mediate in disputes among members and advance Commonwealth initiatives. The McKinnon-Mbeki partnership could, if it works, add weight to calls for constitutional reform, political tolerance and fairer elections: South Africa and New Zealand both have liberal constitutions. Mbeki's personal friendship with **Algerian** President **Abdelaziz Bouteflika**, current Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, should improve Commonwealth-OAU coordination.

But some members were frustrated by the summit's failure to agree tougher procedures for monitoring good governance. The old Commonwealth (Britain and **Canada** particularly) was joined by African states, such as **Botswana** and **Ghana**, in arguing for giving the Commonwealth more 'political credibility'. Outgoing Secretary General Anyaoku - ousted from Nigeria's foreign ministry by a military coup in 1983 - managed to exclude military governments from full Commonwealth membership; censuring elected civilian governments is much more contentious. Obvious targets of censure for human rights abuses and corruption - **Kenya**, **Sri Lanka**, **Zambia** (whose President **Frederick Chiluba** left early for 'personal reasons') and **Zimbabwe** - vigorously defended their sovereignty against foreign meddling. **Uganda's** President **Yoweri Museveni**, whose government has been robustly criticised in a new report by New York-based Human Rights Watch, told *Africa Confidential* that he supported scrutiny and would happily entertain monitors in Kampala but that some of his colleagues 'weren't quite ready.'

So the Durban summit rejected proposals for a Commonwealth good governance commissioner, backed by a unit to monitor members' adherence to the principles they adopted in Harare in 1991. There will be no trigger mechanism, other than a military takeover, to call bad governments automatically to account. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) grouping eight

foreign ministers had agreed tougher proposals in New York on 1 October, outlining three main infringements which should trigger a scrutiny: postponing elections beyond the constitutional life of a government; banning or impeding opposition groups; and systematic or widespread violation of human rights. Government leaders in Durban watered these ideas down: members would be scrutinised by CMAG only on the recommendation of the Secretary General or another member state.

McKinnon shows little desire to confront such veteran bruisers as Zimbabwe's **Robert Mugabe** and Kenya's **Daniel arap Moi**. For his first year or so, McKinnon is likely to focus on less contentious issues such as administrative restructuring, lobbying for more debt relief and coordinating trade policies.

Asian values

The coup in **Pakistan**, a clear breach of the Harare principles, caused much agonising in the closed ministerial sessions. **Malaysia's** Foreign Minister **Syed Hamid Albar** led the defence of General **Pervez Musharraf's** takeover, citing both 'Asian values' and the threat of Islamist militancy. Syed Hamid stood in for Prime Minister **Mahathir Mohamed**, a staunch defender of 'Asian values' whose chances in next month's national elections are enhanced by the continued imprisonment, on allegedly trumped-up charges, of former Deputy Prime Minister **Anwar Ibrahim**, a Muslim leader.

Mahathir is an ally of Mugabe and advocates a revived African-Asian bloc in international negotiations. An alternative African-Asian bloc emerged when both India's Prime Minister **Atal Behari Vajpayee** and Nigeria's President **Olusegun Obasanjo** called for maximum measures against Pakistan, short of immediate expulsion. India likes anything that weakens Pakistan; and Nigeria felt that military usurpers should be treated as sternly as the late Gen. **Sani Abacha**, whose execution of writer-activist **Ken Saro-Wiwa** and eight others on the opening day of the 1995 Commonwealth summit (AC Vol 36 No 23) prompted the formation of CMAG.

Nigeria's readmission to the Commonwealth and the presence of Obasanjo, whom Abacha gaoled, was hailed as a victory for Commonwealth intervention. It was - up to a point. Had Abacha not suddenly died in June 1998, helped perhaps by toxins and dissident officers, he might have continued to defy the Commonwealth's - and almost everyone else's - strictures on human rights and corruption for another five years.

In two states under Commonwealth scrutiny, **Sierra Leone** and the **Gambia**, things have worked out differently. Nearly five months after the signing of the Lomé peace accord between President **Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's** government and Corporal **Foday Sankoh's** Revolutionary United Front, none of the agreed 6,000 UN peacekeepers have been deployed; and Sankoh's rebels still control Sierra Leone's main diamond fields, shipping the proceeds to **Liberia**. Sankoh, who was to be made chairman of the state-owned diamond mining corporation, has openly flouted Kabbah's presidential authority.

Some fear that President **Charles Taylor** of Liberia will back Sankoh's rebels in a new assault on the relatively unscathed diamond fields in Tonga, further south beside the Liberian border, triggering new clashes between the RUF and the Kamajor civil defence groups close to deputy Defence Minister **Hinga Norman**. The longer the wrangles about peacekeeping persist at the UN, the more dangerous the threat appears. The Commonwealth role is limited to technical assistance to the Kabbah government, plus the Secretary General's 'good offices' to keep the peace accord alive. Kabbah wants more

Commonwealth involvement, to boost his flagging credibility.

Interfering in internal affairs

President **Yahya Jammeh** resents any Commonwealth intrusion into his Gambian mini-state. He seized power in 1994, brutalised the opposition and rigged a 'victory' in elections two years later. Nobody in the Commonwealth takes him very seriously or minds interfering in Gambia's internal affairs, so his attempts to remove Gambia from the CMAG list were roundly rebuffed. Jammeh was told the Commonwealth would not stop criticising his government unless it repealed Decree 89, which bans specific political parties and politicians: he replied that 'his people' would not allow him to repeal this decree 'even in two million years'. The Commonwealth's power is limited, even against a mini-state.

The summitters made more progress on economic matters. With the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' meeting and the Commonwealth Business Forum, the delegates did some horse-trading ahead of the World Trade Organisation talks in Seattle at the end of this month and agreed a new range of investment and trade-promotion measures. They also considered a hard-hitting anti-corruption report from Ghana's respected former Finance Minister **Kwesi Botchwey** and set up a business-minded working group to help implement his recommendations and persuade governments to sign up to anti-graft practices and principles.

The summit's Fancourt Declaration attempted to combine industrial world imperatives of globalisation and developing world imperatives of people-centered development. Its list of good intentions committed poor countries to pursue 'pro-poor' policies, rich countries to support more debt relief and aid and - perhaps most importantly - the abolition of all barriers to developing countries' exports.

Having seen the European Union drag out free trade negotiations with South Africa for more than five years, Chairman Mbeki knew all about rich-to-poor trade negotiations; his assertion that the Durban summit laid the basis for a Commonwealth understanding on WTO issues should be taken seriously. How the Commonwealth's richest states line up in Seattle alongside its poorer members will test the grand aspirations of equity and responsibility voiced at Durban.

USA/AFRICA

Presidential accounts

Between the banks and the ruling families, Africa's money runs out

President **Bill Clinton's** government wants to crack down on the private-banking departments of some major US banks through which, it is alleged, corrupt foreign officials have laundered stolen money. The initiative was announced, on 10 November, as the US Senate's Special Investigations Committee heard testimony about how Citibank's private-bank department had managed tens of millions of dollars for **Gabon's** President **Omar Bongo** and the sons of **Nigeria's** late military ruler, General **Sani Abacha** (AC Vol 40 No 22).

The US move, along with a bribe-payers index issued by the anti-corruption lobby Transparency International, is also pushing European banks to tighten controls on suspect funds. **French**

officials have asked the International Monetary Fund for tough measures against money-laundering and corrupt payments. The **Swiss** authorities have already opened up some accounts, and Swiss banks have had to disclose information about account-holders such as **Mali's Moussa Traoré**, Nigeria's Abacha and family, Gabon's Bongo and family, and **Zaire's late Mobutu Sese Seko**. The big private-banking department at *Union des Banques Suisse* handles accounts for members of the family of **Kenyan** President **Daniel arap Moi**.

The IMF has recently suspended balance-of-payments support to Gabon and Kenya until they explain hundreds of millions of dollars worth of extra-budgetary spending. **Raymond Barker**, a financial specialist at the Brookings Institution, told the US Senate hearings on 9-10 November that private banks were helping to hide stolen funds and undermining economic reforms pushed by the World Bank and IMF.

Officials in President **Olusegun Obasanjo's** government, notably National Security Advisor Gen. **Aliyu Mohammed Gusau**, have asked for Western cooperation in tracing funds allegedly stolen by the Abacha regime. The debt-cancellation lobby also wants Western governments to help track down stolen funds. American law, on the trail of drug-trafficking, terrorism or fraud, already requires banks to exercise 'due diligence' in determining the source of funds. Now Senator **Carl Levin**, a Democrat, has introduced a bill (co-sponsored by Republican Senator **Arlen Specter**) to require US banks to verify that their clients' wealth doesn't come from theft of state funds or similar fraud, and to make it a crime for them to handle money obtained by 'corruption or fraud by or against a foreign government...'. 'Public corruption and money laundering can affect trade flows and ultimately undermine financial stability,' said **Stuart Eizenstat**, US Deputy Treasury Secretary, who argues that such crimes have become 'national security matters'.

Breaking the rules

A report from the Senate's Committee on Investigations alleged that Citibank's private-banking department breached the existing rules in handling millions of dollars for President Bongo and Gen. Abacha's family. Bongo (according to Citibank officials) launched his private accounts with US\$52 million transferred from Citibank **Bahrain** in 1985, and later moved at least \$130 mn. through two private accounts held by shell corporations (Tendin and Leontine), and a third special account called 'OS'. This 'OS' account was created with a \$5 mn. deposit in late 1995 to receive payments from oil companies, and power of attorney was given to Bongo's oil and investment advisor, **Samuel Dossou-Aoret**. About this time a new IMF loan agreement with Gabon imposed stricter accounting for oil revenues.

Bongo used those accounts as collateral for loans of up to \$50 mn. between 1989 and 1996. The private bank also converted \$1.6 mn. into cash for use by the Bongo family during a visit to New York; cashed a \$69,000 cheque for Bongo's daughter and wired the sum to her in Gabon, avoiding the three-week delay on cheques presented in Libreville; and issued \$100,000 in cash to a third party who, the bank was told, would deliver it to the President's son. Bongo's accounts earned the bank more than \$1 mn. a year, net. Information about them was restricted to senior Citibank personnel, and they were handled by **Alain Ober**, a dual French-US citizen who managed all the African accounts in Citibank's New York office.

In 1996 and 1997 regulators at the Federal Reserve Bank and the

Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC), started asking where Bongo's money was coming from. Ober said some was 'donated' by the French government or its state-owned oil company Elf-Aquitaine and that the rest came from about 8.5 per cent (about US\$110 mn.) of Gabon's national budget reserved for the presidency. The OCC accepted these explanations in June 1997, just after the French press had run stories about a criminal investigation into alleged bribery by Elf-Aquitaine in Gabon. Ober told Senate investigators that he discounted these reports after checking with Gabonese sources. 'No, I did not ask Bongo directly,' he testified at the Senate hearings. 'It felt very awkward to ask that kind of information from a head of state.'

Public figures, private accounts

In late 1998 the Swiss authorities froze several Bongo accounts in Swiss banks, and Citibank faced embarrassment over private accounts held by **Raul Salinas** (brother of former **Mexican** President **Carlos Salinas**) and **Asif Ali Zardari** (husband of former **Pakistani** Prime Minister **Benazir Bhutto**). The bank began a review of accounts held by public figures. **Christopher Rogers**, a top Citibank official in Johannesburg, opposed closing Bongo's accounts, warning: 'The impact on marketing in Francophone Africa will be serious.' But in January the then head of Citibank's private bank, **Saukat Aziz** (now Pakistan's Finance Minister), decided to close Bongo's accounts. The funds are now being transferred to other (unnamed) banks.

IMF and World Bank officials, who have been working to improve public accountability, rejected Ober's claim that Bongo received \$110 mn. of the Gabon budget for his personal use in 1995 and similar sums in 1996 and 1997. They said this was 'plainly contrary' to Gabon's budget policy. They didn't comment on where the funds placed in Bongo's network of secret Swiss accounts and shell companies might have come from, or even why such mechanisms were necessary if these were legitimate commercial earnings. But Fund economists said the Gabonese government's extra-budgetary payments of more than \$60 mn. in 1997 had prompted the IMF to suspend loan disbursements in October 1998. Neither the Fund nor the Bank is paying out funds to Gabon, which owes more than \$3.5 billion in external debt, until accountants Deloitte & Touche complete an audit of government revenues.

Gabon's state funds will not be investigated there without political upheaval. In Nigeria the upheaval has happened, and Obasanjo's newly elected government is scrutinising funds held by Gen. Abacha's sons **Mohammed** and **Ibrahim**. They first opened accounts with Citibank's private bank in London in 1988; in 1992 the New York accounts were established under Ober's management and, like Bongo's, with special names (Chinquinto, Gelsobella, Navarrio), plus, in 1995, an additional shell corporation, Morgan Procurement. More than \$110 mn. flowed through these accounts until they were frozen by court order this year. From 1992 to 1994, the monthly balances generally stayed under \$2 mn.; in early 1995 they jumped to \$35 mn. and dropped again to less than \$1 mn. by 1996. The New York accounts were rarely used after Ibrahim's death in a plane crash in January 1996, but the London accounts had risen to \$60 mn. by 1998.

Ober testified at the hearing that the two sons were introduced to him by the London office as 'Ibrahim and Mohamed Sani ... [who] in contrast to other Nigerians we have dealt with, [are] unflinchingly charming, polite and, above all, reliable...'. He said he had no idea that they were related to Gen. Abacha until Ibrahim's death. 'I was embarrassed and appalled,' he testified, 'and then we set up the

process to close the account.' But after Ibrahim's death another son, **Abba**, was added to the accounts.

According to Senate staff, Ober 'asked no questions about \$47 mn. passing through the New York accounts in six months. He never discussed with his supervisors press reports that one of the account-holders was caught with \$100 mn. in cash, amid allegations of corruption.' When the Nigerian government investigated Abacha's family finances after his death in June 1998, the sons asked that \$39 mn. from the London accounts be moved to another bank; to speed up the transaction the private bank loaned them the money. Ober and Citigroup co-chairman **John Reed** told the Senate panel that the loan was part of the bank's 'exit strategy'.

But in March 1999, before Citibank could close these Abacha accounts, the High Court in London ordered the freezing of all accounts relating to the Abacha family, pending the outcome of a suit launched by **Nessim Gaon**'s Swiss-based Noga corporation and President Obasanjo's government to recover funds lost in an allegedly fraudulent \$2.5 bn. debt-swap deal involving Nigeria's non-functioning Ajaokuta steel-works.

MOROCCO

Broom sweeps Basri

The new King sacked his security chief - and may even have a new Sahara policy

King **Mohammed VI** affirmed his new authority with the summary dismissal of **Driss Basri**, the late King's veteran Minister of State for the Interior. Four months after the death of King **Hassan II**, Basri went to the office on 9 November for a normal working session. There he was abruptly thanked for his services by the young monarch, and told to clear his office by evening. Basri had been bluntly relieved of his duties and replaced by **Ahmed el Midaoui**, a security official he had fired two years before.

The resulting changes could prove profound, underlining Mohammed's domination of domestic politics - and bringing down Basri's massive security apparatus. This included powerful computer and listening systems, the police, about 30,000 *Moghaznis* (auxiliary forces) and more than 60 governors of the cities and the 16 provinces created by his own administrative reforms, one of which was designed to incorporate the disputed Western Sahara into the kingdom.

New security chief Midaoui, aged 51, from Taounate, is a low-profile technocrat who served at the heart of Basri's empire. In 1993 he was made head of the *Direction Générale de Sûreté Nationale* (DGSN), a security organisation, but when Basri sacked him from this job in 1997 he was given no other. He has apparently been told he must function as part of the government team led by Prime Minister **Abderrahmane el Youssoufi**, whose senior aides say that, for the first time, the ageing socialist Premier can lead a government with power. Basri's sacking shocked and titillated Moroccans, bolstering Mohammed's status as 'the people's king'. It follows weeks of regional tours by Mohammed to areas such as the under-privileged, drug-producing, fractious north, which his father avoided. But Mohammed is still his father's son: he delegates power to ease political pressures, while placing his own people where it really matters.

As Basri went, the director of Mohammed's private office, **Fouad Ali el Himma** (aged 37), was made Secretary of State (number two) in the Interior Ministry, where he will be perfectly placed to represent his royal master's wishes. He was among the King's classmates; so were **Mohammed Rachdi Chraïbi**, the new head of the King's office, and palace spokesman **Hassan Aourid**. The palace school took the brightest pupils from all backgrounds and all regions to be educated with the royal princes. Basri used to wax lyrical about this system, as an example of how to unite Moroccans of all classes. Now it has created a generation to replace his. King Hassan's old advisers are either dead, like **Ahmed Redha Guedira**, or incapacitated, like **Moulay Ahmed Alaoui**.

Unlike past interior ministers, including the late Generals **Mohammed Oufkir** and **Ahmed Dlimi** in the 1970s, Basri's passing was serene; he has gone home to Settat to indulge his passion for golf. However, as a foretaste of changing times, he recently lost his position as President of the Moroccan Golf Association. Among other signs of change were the sacking of senior officials, including **Ahmed Azmi**, in charge of liaison with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (Minurso), and the transfer of the domestic security agency, the *Direction de Surveillance du Territoire* (DST), from the Interior Ministry to the army under a gendarmerie officer, Lieutenant Colonel **Hamidou Laanigri**. The military establishment, often sidelined by Hassan after the 1971-72 coup plots, is one beneficiary. Gendarmerie commander Gen. **Benslimane**, counter-intelligence chief Gen. **Kadiri**, security chief Gen. **Hafid Benhachem**, and the veteran southern region (Saharan) commander Gen. **Abdelaziz Bennani**, all enjoy unaccustomed public attention.

Markets respond favourably

Basri's departure was popular among the middle and working classes, who want less political repression - already in retreat in Hassan's last years - and a fairer deal for government supporters. Catching the national mood was satirist **Ahmed Sanoussi**, known as Bziz, who after 12 years was unbanned from performing in October (AC Vol 40 No 22). He told one interviewer that 'What Moroccan people expect from His Majesty King Mohammed is to dismantle all Basri's corruption networks and manipulators of elections to ensure a real state of law and respect of human rights to build strong institutions through constitutional reform and transparent elections.' Markets also responded favourably, even though in the conservative kingdom all change is met with some trepidation.

Basri's departure may give more room to radical Islamist groups - notably the banned *Al Adl wal Ihsane* (Justice and Charity), Morocco's biggest Islamist party, whose leader Sheikh **Abdessalame Yassine** has been under house arrest in Sale since 1989. It may also make space for more accommodating Islamist parties, such as the *Mouvement Populaire Constitutionnel et Démocratique* (MPCD), a moribund nationalist party until 1996, when (apparently with Basri's approval) it was infiltrated by members of **Abdelilah Benkirane**'s *Attajdid wal Islah* (Renewal and Reform) movement, and subsequently won nine seats in parliament.

On the Western Sahara question, Basri held the hard line. Last year at the Houston talks with the Polisario Front one of King Hassan's ageing aides, Foreign Affairs Minister **Abdellatif Filali**, had seemed set to make concessions. Basri stopped that: Filali was

replaced by **Mohammed Ben Aïssa** and Basri took over Sahara policy. There was rioting in the territory in September/October (which some accused him of orchestrating), and a demonstration in Rabat on 3 November by some 250 students from the Sahara against police violence there. Police tried to keep the students within Mohammed V University but eventually allowed them to march towards the parliament building, shouting anti-Basri slogans.

Risky vote

Recent demonstrations in Rabat and El Ayoun, the Saharawi capital, have focused on the heavy-handed policing of the October riots, which were about living conditions and communal tensions. Not inspired by the Polisario Front, they have been welcomed by the Saharawi liberation movement, which fears the UN may never succeed in sponsoring an independence referendum in the territory.

Many think Morocco would lose a fair vote and nobody knows whether King Mohammed will take that risk. The King reacted to the October troubles by offering to fund an unemployment initiative in the territory (AC Vol 40 No 22) and announcing that a new body for Western Sahara, including local representatives chosen in 'fair and transparent' elections, would serve as a 'Royal Consultative Council'. This was presented to the territory by a high-level delegation consisting of Ben Aïssa, Religious Affairs Minister **Abdelkebir Alaoui M'Daghri**, Justice Minister **Omar Azziman** and Finance Minister **Fathallah Oualalou**. It looked like a new initiative by Rabat to keep the Sahara Moroccan.

Alarmed, Polisario proclaimed an unarmed *intifada* (uprising) to remind people of the Palestinian resistance. Polisario wants to prove it remains a credible force within the territory, as well as in the camps in the **Algerian** desert, its base since Moroccan forces took over in 1975. **Mohamed Abdelaziz**, Polisario's leader, sees a UN-sponsored referendum as his best chance of becoming president of a real country and needs to raise the pressure to stop the voting plans losing momentum. Certainly, UN Secretary General **Kofi Annan** has made the most determined attempts by the UN to push the referendum through. Nevertheless, the deadline for a referendum has been put back again, from July to end-December 2000.

The East Timor factor

No UN Security Council member wants to destabilise Morocco's new regime - even **China**, whose President, **Jiang Zemin**, visited Rabat in late October. Until the sacking of Basri, diplomatic wisdom reckoned that Rabat would simply stall the referendum by raising new objections to voter registration. Rabat may be developing a new strategy now but its shape is unclear. Abdelaziz observed that 'the **Spanish** government should take up its responsibilities with regard to the Saharan people as the **Portuguese** government did with [East] Timor.' Its precisely the confusing Timor precedent which helps persuade Western governments not to risk a referendum.

In domestic affairs, Premier Youssoufi's government has drifted in recent months, amid public calls for a reshuffle to bring in new blood. With Basri gone, activists are now calling for inquiries into past human rights abuses, corruption and patronage networks, and the kingdom's big money-spinner, the drug trade which makes Morocco the largest supplier in the lucrative European cannabis market. The government will not want to rock the boat too far. And nor will Mohammed, the would-be modern ruler who wants to manage a fast-changing political system while preserving the structures which, like Basri in his day, have served the Alaouite monarchy well.

ZAMBIA I

Chiluba and after

The President, tempted by another term, would face rivals within his own party

President **Frederick Chiluba** has had a surprisingly good six months. He brokered a seemingly impossible peace deal for the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, signed in July and now under serious threat. He played host, in October, to **Thabo Mbeki**, on the **South African** President's first state visit abroad. He has probably sold off (albeit cheaply) Zambia's best copper mines, which just might start foreign investment flowing again. And his ruling Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) easily won two recent by-elections in Western province. 'I never knew power was so sweet', he admitted after his election in 1991. Like others before him, he may feel he deserves a third presidential term.

But standing again would involve a tricky reading of Zambia's constitution. To exclude ex-President **Kenneth Kaunda**, who ruled the country for 27 years, mostly as a one-party state, the constitution was amended in 1996 to prevent a president from serving more than two terms. The tiny loophole is that the two-term rule took effect in 1996, so might not apply to Chiluba's previous term, a lawyers' quibble which would be hugely controversial at home and abroad.

He has publicly stated his intention to step down in 2001, and frequently praises those African leaders who have made way for elected successors, citing the late **Julius Nyerere** of **Tanzania**, **Quett Masire** of **Botswana**, and of course, **Nelson Mandela**. In a Reuters interview this year he appeared to rule out any attempt at a third term, and the point was taken by Mbeki at a state banquet in his honour. Mbeki spoke of a private conversation between the two presidents. 'I asked him', he told his fellow-guests, 'whether the newspaper reports that he was not going to stand again were true. He confirmed to me that they were.' The diners, most of them MMD supporters, applauded rapturously. An attempt by Chiluba to stand again could both damage Zambia's renewed friendship with South Africa and be unpopular with his own party. Chiluba's improved regional credibility owes almost everything to his collaboration with South Africa in the Congo peace talks.

Flourishing corruption, dubious human rights

In 1991, Chiluba was in the first wave of democratically elected, business-orientated African rulers, but his tenure is widely described as disappointing. Corruption has flourished, privatisation has brought few benefits except to a narrow business elite, the human rights record has been dubious and Zambians have grown poorer. Within the MMD only the brave stand up to the President, a complicated and prickly personality. Around him is a group of political hard men whose rough political style has effectively crushed any opposition. 'He has no real friends', said one source, but he has used the skills honed as a trade union leader to sideline or sack his rivals, playing one minister off against another, and adeptly using the state-run media against his opponents. Those who leave the party to criticise from the sidelines may find their businesses squeezed to the point of bankruptcy.

Chiluba runs the party at all levels. Before the recent election for the mayor of Lusaka, MMD councillors were summoned to State

House, to be told which of the several party candidates for mayor and deputy-mayor the President favoured. The others duly stood down. One councillor commented, ruefully, that Zambia is 'a guided democracy'. Despite the personal enrichment of prominent MMD members, implicated in everything from gun-running to drug dealing, Chiluba has maintained the party's dominance. Its tough liberalisation policies have not pleased the electorate but organised opposition is weak.

UNIP divided

Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party is a spent force: people say that KK 'had his chance' during 27 years in power. Bitter party divisions - possibly exacerbated by MMD intervention - have been heightened by the murder of Dr Kaunda's son and political heir, Major **Wezi Kaunda** (See next Feature). The other opposition parties tried to form a coalition behind a credible presidential candidate by forming the **Zambian Alliance Party (ZAP)**, but it has been dogged by squabbles over positions and personalities. 'They all want to be president,' somebody remarked.

Chiluba's public refusal to try for another term is greeted with scepticism. Insiders, though, think he is ready to go, maybe because the party might resist an attempt to stay on, maybe because he wants to establish a precedent of democratic succession. The MMD will select its candidate at a national convention in late 2000 or early 2001, and undeclared candidates and regions are already trying to build support.

After nine years in office, Chiluba will dominate the selection process. His effusive praise of Nyerere suggests he may try to retain power after retirement, as the ruling party's eminence grise. Nyerere's death left open the role of African peacemaker. If Chiluba wants a second career as chief broker in regional conflicts - a job for which his political skills as a tough fixer and dealmaker could be fitting - he must hope that the precarious Congo-Kinshasa peace deal will hold.

Whose turn next?

There is no shortage of alternative candidates, some of them already manoeuvring discreetly. Ethnic background is important; both Kaunda and Chiluba are Bemba, from the North, and other regions claim it is their turn:

● **Lieutenant General Christon Tembo**: now Vice-President. Imprisoned in the 1980s for involvement in an alleged coup plot against Kaunda, he was freed after an amnesty and immediately joined the MMD. When it took power he became Minister of Tourism, then of Foreign Affairs, then Vice-President. He is from Eastern province, with a parliamentary constituency in Lusaka. Seen as a 'nice guy, with a short attention span', who falls asleep in meetings.

● **Brigadier Gen. Godfrey Miyanda**: Education Minister. He was in then-Zaire, when named in connection with a coup plot against Kaunda, who had him brought back in chains. After gaol he survived as a taxi-driver and squash instructor. Joined the MMD, served as its National Secretary, became Minister without Portfolio then Vice-President - until he fell out of favour and was demoted in favour of Tembo. A born-again Christian from Eastern province, whose army nickname was 'Rasputin'.

● **Vincent Malambo**: Minister for Legal Affairs. He has kept his aspirations quiet but friends say he covets the presidency. One of Chiluba's trusted legal advisors, he was in charge of the

controversial amendments to the constitution in 1996, and in 1997 defended Chiluba, who was taken to court to prove his Zambian citizenship. His main rival from the powerful Southern province, **Bennie Mwiinga**, died recently. He is a low-key consensus-builder, lacking grassroots support.

● **Eric Silwamba**: Minister for Presidential Affairs, has fallen out with his former associate Malambo, the other half of the defence team in Chiluba's citizenship case. From Northern province, he was an effective backbencher, taking the government to task over several issues. After two stints as a deputy minister he rose to the cabinet and was put in charge of Zambia's mediation efforts in Congo. Colleagues are jealous of his reputation as Chiluba's handpicked successor and he is seen as a bit of a teacher's pet. 'Too pompous', said one insider.

● **Michael Sata**: Minister without Portfolio and MMD National Secretary. He was called 'King Cobra' during the Kaunda years, when he was UNIP District Governor of Lusaka and mesmerised his political opponents. After reading **Machiavelli** he is reported to have said, 'Who's this amateur?' Defected to MMD a few months before the 1991 election, and was accused of political opportunism. A crowd-pulling orator, called by some 'a brilliant tactician', by others 'a buffoon, a mischief-maker'. From Northern province, he could give others a run for their money.

● **Emmanuel Kasonde**: Chairman of the Zambian Revenue Authority and an elder statesman of MMD. First Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance under Kaunda, then Minister of Finance in the first MMD government in 1991, he was sacked in 1993, with several other ministers favoured by donors. He stood for leader of the National Party, but lost and rejoined the MMD after 1996 and was appointed chairman of the Revenue Authority. A 'pure Bemba', he is regarded as honest and liked by donors - but may be yesterday's man.

The kingmakers

Powerful non-candidates will influence the selection. The Minister for Environment, **Ben Mwila**, is a millionaire businessman, long associated with Chiluba, who calls him 'uncle' - but an orchestrated campaign in the state-run media detailing some financial embarrassments seems to annul his presidential ambitions. **Vernon Mwaanga** served as ambassador to the United Nations and as Minister of Foreign Affairs. His career collapsed after repeated allegations that his ministry had permitted and even facilitated drug smuggling. Mwaanga dismissed the allegations as unfounded and malicious but resigned under pressure from donors. But as parliamentary chief whip he will be among the kingmakers.

ZAMBIA II

Gunmen at the gate

KK's aspiring politician son, Wezi, was murdered. On whose orders?

Four unknown gunmen at the gate of his house fired four shots and then disappeared. After a few hours in intensive care at the government hospital, he was pronounced dead. Major **Wezi Kaunda**, son of Zambia's former President **Kenneth Kaunda**, was brutally murdered on 4 November. Two people have so far been arrested; one of them said that he was ready to talk but only to the

United Nations or to the **United States** Embassy in Lusaka. The Kaunda family has called in Scotland Yard. There are plenty of conspiracy theories.

Faction fighting

At the time of the murder, the United National Independence Party (UNIP) was split into a pro-Kaunda faction led by the party Vice-President, Chief **Inyambo Yeta**, and a 'rebel' anti-Kaunda faction led by UNIP Secretary General **Sebastian Zulu**. Zulu accused KK of grooming his son for the party presidency; along with senior members, including the party Chairman, General **Malimba Masheke**, he has accused KK of misusing party funds. He says that Wezi, using his Hi Tech Trading Company, diverted to an unknown destination more than 50 vehicles and 5,000 bicycles, which had been donated for the 1966 elections by an unnamed foreign sympathiser. Wezi, in return, called the Zulu faction 'moles', used by the ruling Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) to destabilise UNIP.

In January this year, the Lusaka District party chairmanship fell vacant and Wezi went for it. The anti-Kaunda faction claimed angrily that Wezi had been imposed thanks to his father's influence and that he was hoping to jump up into the party leadership when KK retired. On election day, some political activists secretly approached Lusaka Province Chairman **Peter Lishika** and promised him a lot of money to back Wezi's opponent. Lishika refused and told Kaunda of the plot against his son. Wezi was then triumphantly elected.

Two months later, Lishika - who had been missing for five days - was found dead. It was alleged that he had last been seen alive with Wezi and that Wezi had killed him to open the way to the Lusaka Province chairmanship. However, Wezi declined to stand for the post and KK, in his capacity as UNIP President, opened an investigation by senior party members and a priest: its findings have not been made public. UNIP's Administrative Secretary **Basil Kabwe** says the investigators 'pulled out after getting very frightening information linking some bigwigs within the party', pointing at some people working against the Kaunda family. In this version, Lishika was killed for informing Kaunda. The police are still investigating.

Suspension and counter-suspension

In April 1998, KK was in detention, having been accused of involvement in a failed military coup in October 1997 (AC Vol 38 No 22). A member of the Zulu faction, the UNIP Vice-Chairman for Labour, **William Wilima**, accused Wezi of creating a parallel central committee that was getting its orders from KK's prison. Wezi reacted sharply, saying that some senior members were state agents planted in UNIP. Kabwe claimed that they had met President Chiluba without permission from the Central Committee and also claimed that a second meeting had been hosted and chaired by **Xaviour Chungu**, the Director General of the much-feared Zambia Secret Intelligence Services.

Zulu wrote to suspend Wezi and Kabwe from the party. KK wrote from prison to suspend Zulu. On his release in June 1998, KK hinted in his first speech that UNIP had been infiltrated by the government and called for a national council to be convened in order to 'sort out the agents'. He also said he would retire from politics. The Zulu faction opposed the holding of a national council and again insinuated that Kaunda was trying to impose Wezi as party president.

Because funds were short, though, the national council did not meet until 10 October of this year and Secretary General Zulu did not attend. Only KK's intervention stopped cadres from beating up the anti-KK party Chairman, Masheke. Members called for an extraordinary congress to 'flush out moles'. KK accepted the resolution, dissolved the Central Committee and suggested that the congress be held in December. Zulu, backed by Masheke, announced that at the congress he would stand against KK for the presidency.

Wezi was aiming to become Secretary General, but did not publicise his ambition. His enemies claimed the Kaundas wanted control of the party in order to benefit from UNIP-owned companies; the Zulu faction had proposed to sell off some UNIP companies to raise funds for the 2001 general election; the pro-Kaunda members were against that idea.

Task force

Wezi had plenty of enemies outside of UNIP, too. As Lusaka District Chairman, he had formed his own youth wing, which became notorious under the name of the 'task force'. In government and UNIP circles, there were rumours that he was training guerrillas in neighbouring **Angola**, for use against the legitimate government. Early last year, armed police raided houses belonging to task force members, looking for ammunition which Wezi had allegedly acquired for them. They found nothing. Wezi's house was watched by government agents and his telephone was bugged; he complained several times to the police but without response.

At Wezi's funeral the task force beat up reporters and officials of UNIP's Zulu faction. Mbangu was badly beaten and members of the ruling MMD who visited Wezi's house were chased away. No government official or Zulu faction member was present at the church or the burial.

Even before Wezi became a party official, in 1992, he and other UNIP members were charged with plotting against the MMD government. The High Court found him not guilty and released him.

In 1997, when trying to cross into **Zimbabwe** with his family shortly after the failed October coup, his passport was confiscated without explanation; he had been warned several times for 'alarming the nation'.

KK himself has survived three assassination attempts. The motive behind Wezi's killing remains secret as do the perpetrators. Everyone seems to agree that politics was involved. The government was wary of him and some in his own party feared he would be his father's successor. Indeed, he faced numerous enemies.

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Pointers

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Bédié's flashpoint

Crisis has come in the struggle by President **Henri Konan Bédié** to exclude from next year's presidential election the recently retired Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, **Alassane Dramane Ouattara**. Bédié claims Ouattara was born in what is now **Burkina Faso** and is ineligible. On 12 November, key leaders and party activists of ADO's *Rassemblement des Républicains* were goaled on riot charges after a dubious trial.

They include RDR Secretary General and key strategist **Henriette Diabaté**, influential trades unionist **Yaya Fofana** and nine others. The sentence was two years and fines that could cripple ADO's campaign finances. He says his colleagues are 'political prisoners' and claims they were nowhere near the rioting. The birth certificate that could prove him Ivorian has again been annulled; magistrate **Epiphane Zoro Ballo** who issued it has resigned; and ADO has been charged with forgery and could be arrested if he goes to Abidjan. Party representative **Abdou Touré** has asked him to stay away.

Ouattara rivals veteran opponent **Laurent Gbagbo** (*Front Patriotique Ivoirien*) in opinion polls. The government seems to have panicked and has attracted outrage from, among many others, **James Rubin**, **United States** State Department Spokesperson. *Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire* bigwigs tell the outside world to mind its own business. **French** diplomats in Abidjan feel undercut by the slanging match. Yet on 17 November, French Cooperation Minister **Charles Josselin** told Abidjan that unless the alleged persecution of RDR members ceases, all lines of credit will close and cooperation will be suspended.

Bédié's technocrat Premier, **Daniel Kablan Duncan**, keeps quiet: he wants IMF loans and policies, and foreign investment. **Senegalese** President **Abdou Diouf**, also facing re-election next year, is a Bédié-ally. But **Mali's Alpha Oumar Konaré** is furious: Malians are among the victims of xenophobic violence against immigrants, including some 12,000 Burkinabé. Burkina's President, **Blaise Compaoré**, in Abidjan for the funeral of his Ivorian father-in-law on 13 November, had private talks with Bédié. The two were already not best friends. Northern centres including Ferkessédougou and Korhogo (the heart of Muslim Dioula networks underpinning the RDR) are practically under martial law. It is rumoured (and of course denied) that outgoing IMF Managing Director **Michel Camdessus** has lobbied on Ouattara's behalf. Coincidentally, a Fund mission to Abidjan during the crisis delivered withering verdicts on corruption and mismanagement, so Finance Minister **N'Goran Niamien** is wondering how to borrow some quick cash to

pay public sector salaries.

ADO's French legal team, led by the high-profile **Jacques Vergès** says it will fight: they may know too much about Côte d'Ivoire for Bédié's comfort. French Prime Minister **Lionel Jospin** and his *Parti Socialiste* had been trying to keep good relations with Bédié, as French influence falters elsewhere. But fellow Socialist **Laurent Fabius**, a former French Premier who now leads the *Assemblée Nationale*, expressed 'very serious anxiety'. Others, including ex-Premier **Michel Rocard**, have been vainly trying to forge compromises. The row embarrasses France and gravely damages Côte d'Ivoire.

LIBYA/CONGO-K

Diamonds for guns

A five-man Libyan 'business delegation' visited Kinshasa last month to express Colonel **Moammar el Gadaffi's** 'desire to invest in the diamond sector', said local press reports. The Libyans, who met **Albert Luhabwe**, the DRC's Deputy Finance Minister, and Deputy Central Bank Governor **Nestor Diambwana**, explained that their purpose was to gain information about the diamond sector as the prelude to possible investment, although they did not explain precisely what they had in mind.

According to sources close to the visit, the real purpose was to negotiate a diamonds-for-guns deal. Gadaffi's Libya is awash with **Soviet** bloc-origin light weaponry but presently faces a cash squeeze stemming from the recent weakness of oil prices. The Libyans hope to turn their guns into cash, via Kinshasa's diamonds. No wonder that the Kinshasa daily *Le Potentiel* reported that 'the identity and official duties (of the five Libyans) have not been revealed to us' and commented that the paper's 'sources spoke especially about the Libyans' intention to invest in diamonds, without explaining how'.

SUDAN

A gambit too far

The National Islamic Front's bid to smash the opposition while convincing outsiders it seeks reconciliation has provoked the normally taciturn **Saudi Arabian** government into denying reports that it had offered to host talks between the NIF and opposition in Mecca.

On 11 November, the Saudi-owned daily *Al Sharq al Awsat* (close to the royal family and government) said 'informed sources' in Saudi had denied that the initiative was Riyadh's - Sudanese Foreign Minister **Mustafa Osman Ismael** having announced that Riyadh had proposed the meeting. It also noted **Hassan el Turabi's** involvement.

Then the Saudi Defence Minister, Prince **Sultan bin Abdel Aziz al Saud**, denied any moves by Riyadh. In the 1989 Taif Agreement,

when Saudi brought together **Lebanese** factions, he pointedly noted, 'the Lebanese brothers all agreed, before coming to the Kingdom, to reach a settlement of their problems'.

Sultan said Saudi was ready to help - as long as this didn't interfere with the '**Libyan-Egyptian** initiative' (AC Vol 40 No 19) or that of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development. Khartoum's proposal inevitably interferes with both, just as the Libyan-Egyptian initiative overtakes IGAD. Those trying to supersede IGAD now label it a '**United States** initiative': it would not go down well internationally to stress that it's in fact overseen by **Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda**.

Khartoum is also trying, with some success, to fuel opposition disarray. The suggestion that the meeting should be in Mecca is typically NIF, wrong-footing everyone, including the putative Saudi hosts. The vast majority of Southerners are not Muslims and non-Muslims are not allowed in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Thus the NIF was excluding not only its Southern opponents but also its allies, including Southern Coordination Council head **Riek Machar** and Transport Minister **Lam Akol**, Secretary of its latest peace committee. The Sudan Communist Party might also have a problem attending. Some suspect Khartoum intends to depict itself as more religiously tolerant than Saudi.

In another negotiating gambit from Khartoum, Lieutenant General **Omer el Beshir** asked **South African** President **Thabo Mbeki** to broker a meeting with Ugandan President **Yoweri Museveni** during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Durban on 12-15 November.

Mbeki conveyed the request to a sceptical Museveni, who told *Africa Confidential*: 'As the President of my country, I have a duty to pursue negotiations through any channels.' Yet by the closing day of the Commonwealth conference, Beshir had sent a message to Museveni that he had fallen sick and wouldn't be coming. 'This is the second time this has happened. I think we shall have to ignore such requests in future', said Museveni, noting that he had taken the meeting seriously only because the message had come through Mbeki, whom he regarded as a credible channel. Meanwhile, **Mustafa Osman** announced President Beshir had a 'prior engagement'.

This all follows an October trip to Khartoum by Pretoria's Deputy Foreign Minister, **Aziz Pahad**, with a group of diplomats and business people. It was the most serious diplomatic contact since 1994, when the African National Congress-led government came to power. Pretoria soon cancelled the arms deals the apartheid government had negotiated with the NIF and tilted its foreign policy strongly towards its old allies in Uganda. That, we are told, remains Pretoria's foreign policy position, though some in the Department of Foreign Affairs (like European governments) are prepared to test Khartoum's latest round of negotiating bids.