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# WPF REPORTS

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number 33

## *Africa's Discontent*

COPING WITH HUMAN  
AND NATURAL DISASTERS

ROBERT I. ROTBERG

## THE WORLD PEACE FOUNDATION

The World Peace Foundation was created in 1910 by the imagination and fortune of Edwin Ginn, the Boston publisher, to encourage international peace and cooperation. The Foundation seeks to advance the cause of world peace through study, analysis, and the advocacy of wise action. As an operating, not a grant-giving foundation, it provides financial support only for projects which it has initiated itself.

Edwin Ginn shared the hope of many of his contemporaries that permanent peace could be achieved. That dream was denied by the outbreak of World War I, but the Foundation has continued ever since to attempt to overcome obstacles to international peace and cooperation, drawing for its funding on the endowment bequeathed by the founder. In its early years, the Foundation focused its attention on building the peacekeeping capacity of the League of Nations, and then on the development of world order through the United Nations. The Foundation established and nurtured the premier scholarly journal in its field, *International Organization*.

Since 1993, the Foundation has examined the causes and cures of intrastate conflict. The peace of the world in these decades has been disturbed primarily by outbreaks of vicious ethnic, religious, linguistic, and intercommunal antagonism within divided countries. The episodes of brutal ethnic cleansing that convulsed Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo are but the best known and most devastating of a rash of such attempts to oust rivals across the globe. Few places are immune from some variant of this internecine warfare, whether the immediate battles are over religion, language, appearance, or color differences. Thus, the Foundation is active in and studies the problems of Cyprus, Sri Lanka, and the Sudan, and has worked in and studied the prospects for democracy in Burma and Haiti. It has sponsored research on the role of non-governmental organizations in preventing conflict in ethnically divided societies. It has engaged in feasibility studies regarding the reduction of conflict in Africa by the creation of African crisis response forces. It has analyzed the use of preventive diplomacy in resolving ethnic and other intercommunal conflicts. Its work on truth commissions demonstrates how that method of post-conflict justice-seeking can help prevent future internal conflicts. The Foundation has examined how the United Nations should manage its peace building responsibilities.

Intercommunal conflict often becomes civil war and, in some cases, leads to failed states. The Foundation has actively researched the causes of state failure, and how best to reinvigorate and manage the resuscitation of wounded states.

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Part of the task of the Foundation is to resolve conflicts as well as to study them. The Foundation's work in Congo, Cyprus, Burma, Sri Lanka, Haiti, the Sudan, Zimbabwe, and all of Africa has resolution of conflict as its goal. It has sponsored a detailed study of negotiating the end of deadly conflict within and between states. It is also engaged in an analysis of the successes and failures of African leadership.

# **AFRICA'S DISCONTENT:**

**COPING WITH HUMAN AND NATURAL DISASTERS**

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**WORLD PEACE FOUNDATION  
WPF PROGRAM ON INTRASTATE CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION,  
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## I. Introduction

The inhabitants of tropical Africa in 2003 demand higher levels of performance from their governments than they could, or dared to do, in the 1970s and 1980s, a decade or two after independence from colonial rule. Nowadays they suffer despots reluctantly, as in Zimbabwe, deny them unconstitutional third terms, as in Malawi and Zambia (but not in Togo), gleefully vote for more promising rulers, as in Ghana and Kenya, or insist almost everywhere on improved governing and government.

Not every sub-Saharan African nation is a democracy, even nominally, but, a decade after the end of the Cold War, the only ideology capable of arousing indigenous enthusiasm is the message of participation, accompanied by an effective rule of law, and a solid adherence to basic freedoms and fundamental human rights.

Sub-Saharan Africa is rich in aspiration and globalized in its expectations of modernity, if economically mostly still poor and struggling. Much of sub-Saharan Africa, indeed, is far poorer per capita than it was in 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990, largely because of the depredations of its rulers, chronic mismanagement, long periods of instability, civil war, policies which benefited elites and deprived the masses, escalating corruption, and unnecessary discrimination by leading classes against fellow citizens.

In *Ending Autocracy, Enabling Democracy: The Tribulations of Southern Africa, 1960–2000* (2002), I wrote about southern Africa's successes and failures, and about how the ennobling anti-colonial and post-colonial expectations of the 1960s in independent Africa were undermined, postponed,

diverted, and, ultimately, destroyed by the venal ambitions of many early leaders, and by the zero-sum competition between politicians and soldiers for power and riches. The concluding chapter of that book suggested that the future of modern Africa depended upon ensuring good governance and sustainable and equitable per capita economic growth, and ending civil strife. It provided prescriptive elaborations of those three critical determinants for southern Africa, and also for the remainder of sub-Saharan Africa.

The greatest part of *Ending Autocracy, Enabling Democracy* focused on southern Africa. But, over the same years, western and eastern Africans suffered many similar vicissitudes and disappointments. Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania, among others, experienced the downward spiral of expectations, integrity, and prosperity. Even the far-flung Seychelles suffered mercenary invasions, coups d'état, and heated ideological battles over socialism and capitalism. Today's West and East Africa are much bruised products of sub-Saharan Africa's internal and externally-influenced problems during the Cold War. As a result, the more hopeful West and East Africa of the twenty-first century cannot be understood without an appreciation of its very mixed post-colonial past.

With all of the caveats expressed in the first chapter of *Ending Autocracy, Enabling Democracy*, this report attempts in a limited way to provide perspective on the present by offering contemporary analyses of western and eastern Africa during the depths of the cold war, when much of Africa was attempting to come to terms with the world, and with its own trajectory of independence. It opens with a brief, contrasting section on three promising early African would-be successes—

Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania. The report closes with a discussion of Africa's continuing challenges.

*Ending Autocracy, Enabling Democracy* was originally written to cover all of sub-Saharan Africa. The dictates of modern publishing ultimately restricted the book to southern Africa, thus excluding a chapter on the decolonization process in West and East Africa and two chapters on western and eastern Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. A short section of the original decolonization chapter and the later two chapters are published in this special report, as parts 2, 3, and 4. The opinion articles included in those parts are reprinted with only lexical corrections. The original articles appeared primarily in the *Boston Globe*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Newsday*, and *New York Times*.

## II. The Freedom Saga

Ghana became West Africa's first independent post-colonial state in 1957, when Kwame Nkrumah, a charismatic, American-educated, modern style, freedom fighter became president. With his accession to power, indigenous Africa had finally begun to emerge from the years of foreign rule. Nkrumah rightly envisaged a role both as Ghana's leader and as the head of a new, developing, and triumphant Africa. For five years, before independence, he had served as prime minister within a colonial quasi-democratic framework. Shortly after independence, however, Nkrumah and his government began to abridge fundamental freedoms and abuse the human rights of Ghanaians. Democratic and prudent fiscal practices more and more were honored in the breach.

Nkrumah was a worry, I wrote at the time, and not only because his visionary

ambitions threatened as many rival leaders as they excited others. His anti-democratic actions within Ghana were threatening to undermine the legitimacy of Africa's remaining liberation struggle. His rhetoric and behavior certainly provided excuses to apartheid South Africa and to racist whites in Rhodesia and Kenya. That the first leader of emergent Africa was betraying participatory governmental practices might retard the continued decolonization of Africa. Moreover, if outsiders looked closely they could detect economic malpractice, rampant corruption, labor and student unrest, and a rash of questionable practices in the five-year old African vanguard state. Nkrumah's Soviet-style Convention People's Party (CPP) allocated employment opportunities only to party adherents. It indoctrinated young Ghanaians and attempted to inculcate the concept of Nkrumah's infallibility. Photographs of *Osageyfo* ("the redeemer") were everywhere.

Opponents, including some of the country's older nationalists, had been arrested. Criticism was forbidden. Nkrumah was promising to lock up dissidents for twenty years. On the economic front, Nkrumah had dissipated the ample reserves that had been bequeathed to Ghana by the departing British rulers. Large, Soviet-style construction projects had replaced the careful cultivation and marketing of cocoa, Ghana's main export. Nkrumah had besmirched the good name of Ghana, I wrote. It had become a full-blown "dictatorship." ("Ghana and "The Redeemer," *New Republic*, 7 May 1962.)

Simultaneously, Nkrumah energetically sponsored and funded anti-colonial political parties and freedom movements in many anglophone, francophone, and lusophone dependencies. He also attempted to create and to lead a United States of Africa, his and other efforts leading eventually to the crea-



tion of the much less united and formidable Organization of African Unity. There were many positive reasons to support unity, not least the more equitable sharing of natural resource wealth across Africa, and the joining of small, unviable states into a larger whole. A larger unity would provide a home for the scattered, leftover colonial statelets, such as Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Lesotho, Rwanda, and Togo, which were not easily viable on their own. A larger unity might also reduce explosive quarrels between neighbors. But unity would not be realized, I rued. There was too much bad blood between the most forceful of the leaders, too much envy and jealousy, a distrust between francophone and anglophone groups, and a wariness of the more radical socialists. (“African Unity,” *New Republic*, 19 February 1962; “Another Step to African Unity,” *New Republic*, 12 March 1962.)

Across the continent, the road to independence was paved with positive expectations. Prominent nationalist leaders were following a very different road to freedom. Nkrumah’s excesses were not theirs. In Tanganyika (later Tanzania), British-educated Julius Nyerere had smoothly, and more rapidly than anticipated, gained independence for his former trust territory at a time when neighboring Kenya was still coping with white settler resentment and the aftermath of the Mau Mau insurgency. (Offshore, Zanzibar, with ethnic unrest, socialist pretensions, and many unresolved conflicts within the body politic of its miniscule island territory, was shortly to follow Tanganyika to independence. Zanzibar and Tanganyika later merged to form Tanzania.) (“The Political Outlook in Zanzibar,” *Africa Report*, October 1961. For Kenya, see “Another Congo in Kenya?” *New Republic*, 27 November 1961.)

The Tanganyika African National Union, led by the reasonable and moderate-seeming

Nyerere, had moved toward independence with little internal opposition. Nyerere even managed to persuade white and Asian settlers that black rule was inevitable, and in their interests. Tanganyika’s prospects were constrained, however, for it was very poor, and wholly dependent economically on the vagaries of international demand for sisal, coffee, and cotton. If Nyerere were to make a success of independence, and to show what East Africans could accomplish under home rule, he needed massive help. Nyerere told Tanganyikans that they would not prosper without hard work. He did not then use socialist rhetoric, or appear to be a leader who would favor some of the same tactics that Nkrumah had employed. (“Birth of a Nation,” *New Republic*, 25 December 1961.)

A few months into his leadership of the new nation, Nyerere strengthened his own hand with the donors, and energized his country’s quest for harmonious development, by resigning the prime ministership temporarily in order to preach unity and non-racialism, and thus to promote bottom-up nation-building throughout the farthest reaches of his embryonic state. I praised Nyerere’s statesmanship, but particularly lauded his realization that only by going out into the field for a few months could he prevent Africanist tendencies among his most energetic followers from destroying the deliberate and measured quality of Tanganyikan political and economic development. Nyerere could see beyond the near-term; he sought to persuade his constituents to do likewise.

In that manner, Nyerere demonstrated his early appreciation (later abandoned) of how democracy and improved living standards could best be strengthened amid the uncertainties and weaknesses of post-colonial rule. His was the voice of patience amid a crescendo of a Cold War-driven clamor for

advantage and affirmative action. It was a voice soon to be drowned out by the noises of non-alignment, borrowing for expected growth, and Afro-socialism. Tanzania, as Nyerere much later admitted, suffered greatly under his benevolent-meaning leadership. He became autocratic, if gently, and reduced incentives for growth by adopting a variety of muddled non-market disincentives. Under his guidance, Tanzania de-developed at a rapid rate. There were very few hints, however, of Nyerere's potential for Nkrumah-like misrule as early as 1962. ("Moderation in Africa," *New Republic*, 5 February 1962.)

At that time, Nyerere's abundant good leadership skills, his persuasiveness, and a careful analysis of Britain's options in neighboring Kenya, finally convinced Britain to tilt its support away from angry and suspicious white settlers toward Jomo Kenyatta, the colony's premier freedom fighter, and to agree to establish a united Kenya. In its first free election in 1963, Kenyatta's party triumphed, thus making "another Congo" and the resurgence of ethnic politics less likely. Kenyatta, two years after being released from years of detention, was set to become prime minister. However, his own party was divided between forces led by the left-leaning Oginga Odinga and the young, ambitious Tom Mboya (later assassinated). Kenyatta, I warned, had

to hold his followers together despite the daily strains of governmental responsibility and, simultaneously, to retain the confidence of the white farmers and businessmen who were the mainsprings of Kenya's economy. Kenyatta needed rapidly to create a stable political climate in order to stem the outflow of capital and personnel, and to attract new foreign investment. This was a steep order to which Kenyatta, I wrote confidently but prematurely, was equal. ("Kenya: Landslide for Kenyatta," *New Republic*, 8 June 1963.)

The promise of the early moments of independence in East Africa was soon overtaken by some of the same leadership excesses and antagonisms to participatory governance that had been demonstrated previously in Ghana and other new nations in West Africa. Tanganyika and Zanzibar, like the West Africans, even experienced attempted and realized coups d'état. Both parts of middle Africa experimented during these and subsequent years with radically transformative political and economic answers to the challenges of underdevelopment. None succeeded; many leaders instead served their constituents poorly as the heady, euphoric era of independence became the long slog of attempted governance. Africa was soon to know tough times.

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**Birth of a Nation***New Republic* (25 December 1961)

Now fully independent, Tanganyika becomes the newest Western hope in Africa. Power has been transferred surprisingly swiftly. Only in 1954, when Julius Nyerere returned home from Edinburgh University, where he received his degree in history and economics, did modern African nationalism reach Tanganyika. Nyerere rapidly welded 8.6 million Africans into a responsive political body and calmed the fears of 20,000 whites and 103,000 Asians. Though an undeviating nationalist, he has appeared reasonable and moderate throughout; his politics were, and are, the politics of possibility. Democratic institutions seem respected, even though there is no significant opposition to Nyerere's dominant Tanganyika African National Union (TANU).

The new nation is poor. Germany, when she occupied it from 1884-1916, was more interested in immediate profit than long-range development. The British, who administered Tanganyika, first as a Mandate under the old League of Nations and then as a Trust Territory under the UN, invested considerable sums in economic projects; but Tanganyika is still mainly dependent upon the vagaries of world demand for sisal, coffee and cotton.

Prime Minister Nyerere has not sought to mislead his constituents; he has assured them that economic progress depends on the coupling of freedom and hard work—*uhuru na kazi*. It depends too on foreign capital. Early this year Mr. Nyerere stormed to London when Britain reneged on a promised developmental loan. Had the money not appeared he would have found it elsewhere; for the Prime Minister of the youngest African nation knows that some of his impatient colleagues would dearly love a good excuse to link arms with Nkrumah and Nasser, and thumb their noses at the West. Partly to placate these younger enthusiasts, Nyerere has already moved to establish diplomatic relations with Peking.

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**Moderation in Africa***New Republic* (5 February 1962)

Jomo Kenyatta, leader of the Kenya African National Union, says that whites should be forced to address Africans as *bwana*, or “master/sir.” This has never been the view of Julius Nyerere, who guided neighboring Tanganyika to independence last December after 77 years as a colony, mandate and trust territory. With Nyerere as Prime Minister, Tanganyika offered hope that moderate racial policies might yet prevail in East Africa. But last week the 40-year-old ex-teacher suddenly resigned, appointed the relatively unknown Rahidi Kawawa in his place, reshuffled the Cabinet and returned full-time to the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU)—the party he founded in 1954. Ostensibly, Nyerere is retiring temporarily in order to concentrate on grassroots party organization. He wants Tanganyika to set an example of non-racialism for Africa. And so, he will tour the villages and tell his followers to treat the 22,000 white Tanganyikans and the 105,000 Asians and Arabs (who are particularly vulnerable) with charity.

But his resignation also reflects rising internal tensions. Younger TANU leaders want to flex their national muscles and to assert their independence of all manner of foreign dominance.

They want to Africanize the civil service much faster than Nyerere thinks wise. They want to develop their poor country of 9.5 million people much more rapidly than most Western economists think practicable. In reshuffling the cabinet Nyerere therefore had to drop Sir Ernest Vasey, his hand-picked finance minister (an expatriate who could not qualify for local citizenship). Oscar Kambona, the most impatient of Nyerere's juniors, likewise was transferred from the ministry of education to the ministry of home affairs (internal security and immigration).

The new Prime Minister is younger (32) than Nyerere and superficially connected as a trade unionist with the more radical wing of TANU, but his loyalty to Nyerere is unquestionable. For the last seven months he has run the Prime Minister's office as minister-without-portfolio, and his policies are not expected to differ much from his predecessor's. Moreover, Nyerere will not be far from the locus of power during Kawana's stewardship. Many expect him to return to the capitol soon, probably as president of a Republic of Tanganyika (it now recognizes Queen Elizabeth II as its sovereign). As in the case of U Nu and Tenku Abdul, a step back may mean two steps forward. With added support he should be able to hold the line for non-racial policies. If he fails, so fails the cause of racial co-existence in Africa. If he succeeds, he would become an even more persuasive choice for East Africa's first federal Prime Minister.

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### **Ghana and "The Redeemer"**

*New Republic* (7 May 1962)

President Kwame Nkrumah is determined to make Ghana—five years old last month—the economic showpiece of independent tropical Africa. Only by so doing can he retain the political leadership of Pan-Africa and the veneration of the continent's newer nationalists. Yet a worsening economy, continued corruption and labor unrest have marred Ghana's looks.

With Nkrumah's blessing, the dominant Convention People's Party (founded by him in 1949) has steadily extended its influence throughout the country. An individual must support the party if he wishes to work on a farm, in a factory, or hold a white-collar position. The CPP indoctrinates the youth and attempts to inculcate the concept of Nkrumah's infallibility. Pictures and films of the *Osageyfo* ("the redeemer"), as the President is known, are everywhere. Those who oppose his rule—and the few who do are mostly confined to the ineffectual intelligentsia—are detained without trial. There was a spate of arrests late last year (including Dr. Joseph Danquah, the *doyen* of Ghana's older nationalists, and Joe Appiah, a lawyer and the late Sir Stafford Cripps' son-in-law), and in a March 29 speech the *Osageyfo* made his dislike of criticism even plainer. He promised to amend the Preventative Detention Act so that detainees could be held without trial for 20 years if they were rearrested (for suspected "subversion" or "abusing their freedom") after being released from a five-year political imprisonment without trial (the present practice).

The University of Ghana, where students have grown increasingly hostile to Nkrumah's undemocratic regime, has been warned to mind its manners. Last year a number of critics, both African and European, were forced to resign from academic and administrative positions. Nkrumah became chancellor of the university and installed his loyal trouble-shooter, Nana Dr. Kobina Nketsia IV (a young Oxford-trained anthropologist) to be temporary vice-chancellor.

Prodded by Geoffrey Bing, a left-wing Briton who has been Ghana's attorney-general, the University hired Allen Nunn May, the British atomic physicist and sometime spy for the Soviet Union, to teach physics, and installed a Polish professor as head of the economics faculty. More recently, Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien, of Eire and Katanga, has become vice-chancellor, with administrative responsibility for the university. His academic policies are not evident yet, but Nkrumah continues to watch carefully over his shoulder.

Ghana's economic plight is a source of constant worry. Ample reserves, built up under the British, have been dissipated on the trappings of modernity. The world demand for cocoa, on which Ghana depends, has been less favorable in recent years, and there are no prospects of major improvement. A massive U.S. loan for the Volta Dam project—which will produce electricity to convert bauxite into aluminum—has helped to resuscitate Ghana's gasping pound. But the completed dam is a long way off.

On the Pan-African front, Nkrumah now officially regards federation as a reasonable step toward his projected United States of Africa (a dream which emanates from his university days in Pennsylvania). Heretofore the federation espoused by the moderate Monrovia and Brazzaville blocs has been anathema to Nkrumah. Even so, as he has moved to conciliate his rivals in tropical Africa on the ideological plane, some of his actions at home—however reasonable in the eyes of most Ghanaian nationalists—have hurt his reputation abroad and strengthened his critics. The good name of Ghana is besmirched by prolonged detention without trial, by the permanent stifling of opposition, by the heavy-handed treatment of critics, and by the creation of a full-blown apparatus of state control which can only be labeled dictatorship.

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### **Kenya: Landslide for Kenyatta**

*New Republic* (8 June 1963)

The overwhelming victory of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) in Kenya's territorial elections last week has made a resurgence of divisive tribalism or "another Congo" less likely. The voters unexpectedly rejected the thinly-disguised tribal or regional appeal of the Kenya African Democratic Party (KADU) and the African People's Party (APP). As a result, the once-hated Jomo Kenyatta has become the first African prime minister of the self-governing British colony of Kenya less than 24 months after being released from nine years in political detention. He will now work with the British to lead Kenya to full independence within a year's time.

Kenyatta and his fellow KANU officials campaigned without any concessions to regionalism. Supported strongly by the electorate, they now intend to establish a centralized form of government. The present blueprint calls for a modified parliamentary system with a House of Representatives capable of legislating for the entire colony. But House actions can be obstructed by the less popularly based upper Chamber, and the federal government must share some of its power with the seven regional assemblies. These regions, like American states, have powers reserved to them under the constitution. Thus, unless Kenyatta and his KANU government have the patience to wrest power away from the regions by laborious constitutional methods, the immediate struggle for power in Kenya may resemble a rougher version of the American controversy over states' rights.

Kenyatta's party is itself divided. The ambition of Kenyatta's ablest lieutenant, Tom Mboya, is generally distrusted in the highest party councils. His open rivalry with Oginga Odinga, a leftist, is a further source of serious dissension. Whether or not Kenyatta can continue to hold his party together in the face of the daily strains of governmental responsibility is, therefore, the key question. If not, he fears that he will be unable to retain the confidence of those European civil servants and farmers who, at least temporarily, are the mainspring of the Kenya economy. To stem the outflow of capital and personnel and to stimulate the inflow of fresh investment capital, he knows that a favorable, stable climate must be created rapidly.

Kenyatta has another problem. His party has vowed never to yield an inch of Kenya. It has refused to permit the Somali, who inhabit a large, arid region along Kenya's northeast frontier, to join themselves and their lands to the neighboring Somali Republic. The Kenya Somali refuse to be dominated by the black Bantu-speaking peoples who comprise most of KANU's following and demand the right of self-determination. The Somali Republic has severed diplomatic relations with Great Britain over the issue and has threatened to back forcibly the irredentism of the Kenya Somali.

### III. Democracy, Tyranny, and Development

Africa plunged to its nadir in the 1970s, a decade after independence. What could be done to alleviate the difficulties that beset so many of the countries of black Africa? How could prospects for growth, so inviting in the 1960s, be restored? What remedies were available? What should and could be done?

Most of black Africa's disappointing tumble had been precipitated by the hand of man. Well-intentioned leaders such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania or Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia had deprived whole countries of their prospects for growth; vicious dictators like Macias Nguema of Equatorial Guinea, Jean-Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Empire (later, the Central African Republic), Mobutu Sese Soko of Zaire, and Idi Amin of Uganda had robbed a generation of its freedom and livelihood. A series of generals had overthrown elected officials and hijacked nations to satisfy overweening ambitions or sheer greed. Whichever kind of leader had been responsible, the resulting chaos, reduced standards of living, and loss of global legitimacy had mired many of the unfortunate states of Africa in a swamp of failure. Why had so many Africans been reduced to post-colonial fates worse at least economically than the foreign suzerainties that they had so enthusiastically cast away?

Uganda was a case in point. At independence in 1962 it boasted the best educated population in East Africa, a strong tradition of responsible Christianity and Islam, and an absence of obvious tension across color or ethnic lines. Its coffee- and cotton-based economy was robust. Colonial rule had not been traumatic, and persuading Britain to

leave had hardly been difficult, compared to Kenya or Zambia. Yet, by 1972, Uganda was no longer a bastion of democratic civility. Instead, it was fighting with Tanzania, rapidly arming its soldiers, and brutally attacking its own citizens.

Apolo Milton Obote, Uganda's first president, was from the north. Fearful of southern retaliatory actions against his pro-northern regime, he rapidly promoted northerners to key positions in the army. One was Sergeant Idi Amin, "an untutored soldier's soldier." He seemed a safe choice to command Obote's defense corps. In 1971, the bluff, happy-go-lucky Amin, by then a general, forcibly ousted Obote. Amin soon displayed paranoid tendencies and unleashed a wrenching reign of terror, killing opponents and uninvolved civilians in their hundreds, pushing 40,000 Asians into exile, and compelling thousands of elite, middle-class Ugandans to flee in fear. A chief justice was beheaded, a former cabinet minister dismembered, and the rector of the state university murdered.

Once comparatively wealthy, Uganda was soon impoverished by Amin's aberrant actions. The Asians had lubricated much of the country's economic machinery, and they were gone. So were African professionals, many from the south. Western governments could not then easily intercede to limit Amin's mayhem. At least, there was little disposition to do so, and little desire on the part of the United States or Britain to involve themselves in yet another of Africa's untidy "messes." Like Ghana and Nigeria in the 1960s, I suggested much too optimistically, Uganda, hitherto an oasis of comparative sense in Africa, would soon cleanse itself of its home-grown dictator. ("What Went Wrong in Uganda?" *Newsday*, 7 November 1972.)

I vastly underestimated the brutalities of which African dictators were capable, and the inability of demoralized and de-humanized civilians to respond effectively. Amin's regular purges of the army, and his sudden frenzies of killings, kept Ugandans terrified. About 160,000 of his countrymen had lost their lives by the end of the 1970s. By 1978, Uganda's plight could be compared to the killing fields of Pol Pot's Cambodia. Medical and educational care, once the best in East Africa, had been reduced to a rudimentary level. Shops were bare. Except for the ruling military cadre, life in that year's Uganda was "mean, brutish, and dangerous." Yet, the accident of high world coffee prices permitted Amin to purchase guns and bullets, and pay his soldiers. Coffee accounted for 87 percent of Uganda's exports, and Amin had taken control of all sales, shipping the beans by air to London and Djibouti. From those cities, Amin's coffee was purchased by U.S. manufacturers (30 percent of the total), Britain (22 percent), France, Germany, and Japan. I suggested a boycott. Even more effective would be a British cancellation of all landing rights for airplanes flying from and to Uganda. Thus could Amin be persuaded, I surmised, to restore human rights and cease killing Ugandans mercilessly. Moreover, since using sanctions to alter a regime's policies was still a controversial and unproven tactic, the relatively straightforward case of Amin's Uganda would prove a good test of the method. ("Why Not Boycott Amin?" *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 January 1978.)

Maybe so. A more telling technique, as it transpired, was for Nyerere's Tanzanian army to invade Uganda in 1979, easily overwhelming Amin's disordered legions. Enough was enough, Nyerere decided after Uganda had sent soldiers across its border into Tanzania. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) had

previously been paralyzed into inaction by the "sovereign immunity" of Uganda, even under a harsh despot. The OAU's dysfunctional quality had become apparent to all by the early 1980s, as democrats struggled with autocrats for control. ("The Deferred Dream of African Unity," *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 December 1982.) The OAU aside, Africa as a whole had refused to confront the Ugandan problem, as it had failed to do in several similar cases of authoritarianism run amok. So it took the Tanzanians to relieve their neighbor of a dictator's excesses. Regaining Uganda's democratic momentum was another story, and more difficult. It was to take most of the ensuing three decades.

Natural disasters joined human failings in limiting many of the fond expectations of the new Africans. In the early 1970s, the rains failed for four successive years across a broad belt of sub-Saharan Africa, from Mauritania and Senegal to Mali, Burkina Faso, parts of Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Chad. Waterholes disappeared and river inlets dried up. Mauritanian nomads punctured the humps of their camels to obtain water. Between 5 million and 13 million people were at risk. They were to lose 40 to 80 percent of all livestock (cattle, sheep, and goats). Wildlife perished, too. Marginal light soils, overgrazed, became sand.

This massive drought and the accompanying famine had been under-reported and under-appreciated until too late. The Food and Agriculture Organization's early-warning system sounded no alarms. The affected francophone countries cooperated poorly. Many of them were ruled by agriculturalists who were little moved by the plight mostly of pastoralist minorities. Local indifference as well as international inattention worsened the effects of climatic changes. Only in late 1973, months into the crisis, did American



and British food aid finally arrive. ("Death in the Sun," *Newsday*, 2 September 1973.)

These long periods of drought, followed in some areas by too much rain and great floods, had not been uncommon in colonial Africa. But in the modern era, the vast numbers of people farming and grazing more intensively than ever before compounded the risks of utilizing marginal or vulnerable land. In the early 1980s, it failed to rain once more in West Africa, and the peoples of cocoa-growing Ghana and its neighbors suffered the kind of privations that had earlier been known only in the Sahel. In particular, once well-managed and prosperous, the capacity of Ghana's government to deliver political goods had deteriorated so far by 1982 that the country could no longer feed itself. African countries like Ghana were unable to undo "a decade of decisions" depriving indigenous farmers of proper incentives and swelling the cities with economic migrants who demanded non-existent jobs and services.

Far across the continent, the Sudan was in equally desperate straits. The Horn of Africa was enduring a drought-induced famine of proportions akin to the West African one in the early 1980s, with similarly harsh results. Again, it went unnoticed until local photojournalists managed to provide images for Western television. Then help began to arrive, belatedly.

Farther south, in Kenya, the long and short rains of 1983 and 1984 never arrived. Wheat and maize crops failed. Pastoralists lost their cattle, and the meat and milk on which they depended. Along the state's southern marches I found emaciated women and children lining up to receive emergency food packs. The Maasai, like tens of thousands of other herdsmen, had lost their green pastures and were following their few remaining cattle across "a seared landscape turned dusty brown." Like Samburu

and Turkana graziers to the north, the Maasai had almost nothing. Relief workers were attempting to keep the Maasai alive, while the Kenyan government, for its part, was doing relatively little.

President Daniel arap Moi had succeeded Jomo Kenyatta in 1978 and been elected in his own right in 1983, but without opposition parties being permitted. ("The Role of Voters in Africa," *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 October 1983.) He and his administration had demonstrated little interest in supporting peoples on the country's periphery, however drought stricken. Moi and his "visibly corrupt" cronies controlled critical sectors of the economy, and did not always act in the public interest. Indeed, they obstructed the flow of grain and other foodstuffs across district boundaries. As the U.S. shipped relief supplies of wheat and maize, it was also compelled by the nature of the post-Kenyatta regime in Kenya to rethink what then was a strategic alliance with a fragile, endangered, and increasingly authoritarian country. ("Kenya's Political and Economic Crisis," *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 November 1984; "Drought in South Kenya Brings Hunger to Maasai," *Boston Globe*, 4 December 1984.)

Not many African states were still holding competitive elections. Several, such as Tanzania and Malawi, were in the midst of pretending that banning opposition party politics was somehow appropriate for Africans. In 1983, Nigeria, the continent's most populous polity, therefore was an important, albeit brief, exception, candidates effectively contesting national, provincial, and municipal level positions throughout the vast country. Despite riots in some of the states, and the privileging of some areas and candidates over others, the ballot battle affirmed participatory democracy. The Kenyan election of the same year, by contrast, was held within a single-party system, so the ruling Kenya

African National Union triumphed even if a few of its internal favorites were eliminated by local constituents. Likewise, there was a ballot in Zambia within the single party framework. It followed a culling of permitted candidates by Zambian President Kaunda. The notion that African voters should freely choose their representatives was anathema almost everywhere north of Botswana.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Africa had pursued strategies of political and economic development that poorly used their own human and physical resources. They biased their economies against agriculture, thus creating massive new food deficiencies. They were unable to rely on any restructuring of the international economic order to boost raw material prices in ways that would be favorable to Africa. The West could help, my writing indicated, by aiding only those countries

that were conscious of a need to “clean house.” Foreshadowing the twenty-first century approach of the second Bush administration, I urged strict internationally mandated conditionality, unswervingly adhered to (tough love, to be sure) as the only feasible recipe for combating the underdevelopment crisis that had overtaken Africa and was diminishing Africa’s capacity to prosper. I implied not just contested elections, but also a system of governance which maximized participation of the actual subjects and stakeholders. Too many decisions in too many countries were being made by the political elites in their own, rather than the national, interest. (“Africa Needs to Clean House,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 May 1982; “The Economic Crisis Spreads in Africa,” *Boston Globe*, 1 November 1982.)

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## **What Went Wrong in Uganda?**

*Newsday* (7 November 1972)

Uganda's forced exodus of 40,000 to 60,000 hapless Asians, long-term residents of a country which no longer wants their kind, continues daily by air, land and sea. President Idi Amin's Draconian deadline for their departure is tomorrow, and accounts of African maltreatment of fleeing Asians and stories of military attacks on middle-class Africans multiply as the deadline approaches. The spirit, as well as the fabric, of the once prosperous and self-assured republic (population 10,000,000) athwart the headwaters of the Nile River has crumbled.

A few weeks ago, Uganda was also convulsed by an invasion of exiles from bases in neighboring Tanzania. Libyan soldiers flew to the rescue and, together, Ugandans and Libyans forestalled a potentially bloody civil war. In its aftermath, life in Uganda has turned even more ugly than before. Asians, whites and many Africans live in constant fear of arbitrary arrest or murder. The army, where indiscipline is now common, is carving up its own, murdering prisoners (from the civil war or local affrays) and kidnapping and indiscriminately killing (without orders from above) those who have somehow "given offense."

Benedicto Kiwanuka, the country's chief justice and a former prime minister, was taken from his chambers recently by unidentified armed men. He has not been seen again and has been replaced. A former minister of the interior's head has supposedly been displayed in Mbarara, one of the republic's main cities. A much respected former minister of education fled without a passport in August and is now sheltering in Rhode Island.

Uganda is in chaos, a poignant story which no American newspaper has so far covered adequately. Yet Uganda is no post-colonial Ruritania lacking educated and sophisticated citizens. It had a modernity that would be unapproachable throughout, say, Burundi or Chad. As independence approached 10 years ago, Uganda boasted the best educated population in eastern Africa. Its citizens, many staunch Christians with a Western heritage dating from the 1880s, were also comparatively wealthy.

The colonial period produced few traumas, and the transfer of power from Britain to Uganda proved easy and relaxed. No resorts to arms were required. When independent Uganda was born in 1962, relations between the governing blacks, the commercially minded Asians and the managerial or industrial whites were relaxed.

What went wrong? Why isn't Uganda now the model of African democratic civility, and developing as rapidly as neighboring Kenya? Why is Uganda furiously turning out Asians, squandering scarce foreign exchange on costly military equipment, fighting with neighboring Tanzania and creating an atmosphere of insecurity?

Some of the answers to these questions reflect the favoring by the British colonial rulers of the Bantu-speaking Ganda of the country's central region. When Apolo Milton Obote, a Luo-speaker from the northern sector, became Uganda's first president after independence, he slowly redressed the balance, boosting northerners and deflating the power of the country's southern, Bantu-speaking kingdoms. Fearing a southern uprising, he northernized the army and rapidly promoted Sergeant Idi Amin, an untutored soldier's soldier. Amin served as a noncom-

missioned officer in Burma during World War II and never attended overseas staff schools. He is a northerner and a Muslim. He seemed safe to become the first African commander of Uganda's army.

As Obote, a consummate politician without too much feeling for ideology, become more and more egocentric and autocratic, so he embraced a kind of socialism with chauvinistic (and incipient anti-Asian) overtones. Like Nkrumah and Sukarno, he acted as if his will embodied Uganda's. But in early 1971, Amin, the bluff, happy-go-lucky general, ended Obote's overweening rule. For a time, Amin reversed Obote's headlong plunge into deepest megalomania. A pragmatic man, he reassured the Ganda and ended a wave of nationalization.

Early this year, however, he began turning against the Israelis, who had helped ensure the success of his coup (the Libyans apparently called this tune). Then, in a bout of irrational paranoia, to the likes of which heads of state are often prone, Amin began to flail imaginary targets—Tanzania, the Sudan, the United States, etc.

Asians have traditionally monopolized Uganda's rural trade. Only such a family-intensive shopkeeping group could survive high transport and overhead charges. But the largely Gujarati-speaking Asians somehow made money (Africans assumed by cheating, Asians said by hard work) and, like the Jews and Moors ousted from Spain during the Inquisition, were widely (if unfairly) regarded as parasites.

There were Asians in the government and in big business, too. At independence, most had the choice of taking Ugandan citizenship or keeping their British status. About 40,000 of 83,000 took local passports. Yet they too are suffering. Even Ugandan Asians are being deprived of their citizenship and sent packing as stateless persons.

Amin has declared all resident Asians, whether Ugandan, Zambian, Kenyan, Tanzanian, or British by nationality, bloodsuckers and economic saboteurs. He did so in order to curry favor with his largely illiterate and demoralized soldiers and win the sympathy of common black Ugandans. But he paid little attention to the severe strain that the drastic departure of Asian capitalists will put on Uganda's stuttering economy. Africans have been invited to take over businesses abandoned by fleeing Asians, but rural trading and middle level bureaucracy demand knowledge and experience not easily acquired. The flow of goods within the country is already stagnating. Soon it will halt, and both the provision of goods and the marketing of crops will suffer. Already Amin's climate of fear has curtailed investment.

The *Times* (London) speculated two weeks ago that Amin suffered from hypomania—"an abnormal mental state in which the thought processes are speeded up." An incipient form of manic-depressive psychosis, hypomania is characterized by irrational bursts of anger and fault-finding, unjustified optimism and grandiose plans. Whatever the accuracy of this diagnosis, the result is clear.

Amin, more because of an aberrant personality than by design, has brought proud Uganda to its knees. Everyone, except a few pilfering soldiers, is suffering. Hardest hit of all are the 40,000 or so humble Asians now flung penniless to remote corners of India or Britain (the U.S. is taking 1,000 and Canada 4,000). Amin has a kind of local popularity, but the economy is destroyed, elite Africans are embittered and expatriates are distraught. Everyone who emerges alive from Uganda tells three or four new horror stories. Asians, insulted and robbed, are also split up, some having claims on British passports, some having few claims at all. The jails are

full. The army has lost most of its cohesiveness and *esprit de corps*. Were it less fractured, another coup would be expected and, perhaps, a more moderate and insightful autocrat would take the reins of government.

Such a prospect is unlikely immediately. The demoralized army includes no obvious successors. Ultimately, however, Uganda will take care of her own and, like Ghana and Nigeria after their purgatories, reemerge with a desire to find out how they went wrong. Then the United States, which could now take more refugee Asians, should be prepared to aid a new regime generously.

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### **Death in the Sun**

*Newsday* (2 September 1973)

Africans have always known hunger. Their agricultural and pastoral communities have traditionally suffered from periodic famine caused by prolonged drought or the predations of locusts. Even during normal years, their stomachs have been empty when supplies of maize, rice, sorghum, millet or manioc were exhausted before the new harvests were available. In rural areas children have displayed distended abdomens, sure signs of protein-deficiency disease.

But although Africans have experienced many failures of the land to be bountiful, no disaster in modern times has approached the scale of the present famine: Between 5,000,000 and 13,000,000 Africans are threatened by starvation across 1,000,000 square miles of semi-arid land stretching from Senegal across Mauritania, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger, and Chad, and touching the northern portions of Ghana, Dahomey, Togo and Nigeria.

Lord Salisbury, a 19th century British prime minister, aptly called this region a domain of "light soil." Never so hopeless as the shifting sands of the Sahara, but much poorer than the forest lands that comprise much of coastal West Africa, this band of light soil—the sahel or savanna—has managed to support some cash crops of peanuts, subsistence crops of grain and vegetables, and a carpet of grasses on which pastoral nomads could graze their cattle, fat-tailed sheep, camels and goats.

Low rainfall, occasional localized droughts and the overall infertility of the soil have never permitted heavy concentrations of people except along the rivers and watercourses. Poverty and starvation have always been real threats, but previously they were restricted to a region or a country. Never before have the rains failed everywhere—and for so long.

It has hardly rained anywhere in this region for four years. Waterholes have disappeared or turned to listless mud, river inlets have dried up completely. Between 40 and 80 percent of all the livestock in the sub-Saharan region are expected to perish. Most are dying because of the lack of grass, or from simple thirst. Others are being slaughtered for food by the nomads whose livelihoods depend upon them. In Mauritania, nomads desperate for water have been puncturing the humps of their camels. Some of the countries have relied on the sale of cattle for 50 to 80 per cent of their export earnings. Others have depended on the import of these cattle for their supplies of meat.

If the animals or their owners were strong enough they could move southwards to the River Niger, which still flows. But they cannot withstand long treks across the barren wastes. Even the

wildlife have become desperate. Antelope and buffalo are dying around dried-up waterholes. Herds of elephants trumpeting for joy are converging on Lake Chad. Giraffes have been seen for the first time in many years near the Niger, a hundred miles or more from their traditional habitat.

Nomads and herdsmen have been crowding into new villages created at formerly barren semi-desert crossroads. There men who once owned 200 head of cattle or 60 camels huddle together awaiting relief. Others have fled to larger cities, where epidemics of cholera and typhoid are feared.

Farmers with only dry land in which to plant their grain have begun eating the seed which they had been religiously saving for sowing. In June, when most West Africans were ready to plant this season's crops, no seed was available commercially.

Officials of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization attribute some of the present disaster to the abundance and benevolence of the past. The drilling of wells, the provision of better treatment for stock diseases, the eradication of endemic parasites, and higher prices for beef and mutton have probably contributed to livestock populations too large for the carrying capacity of the light soil. The herds grew too dense, they overgrazed, the Sahara expanded and then the rains failed. No one could have concocted a more potent recipe for ecological doom.

Even if climatologists could supply answers soon, their solutions could do little to avert catastrophe. In a region as finely balanced as the sub-Saharan fringe, small changes become incremental. Drought has already led to a shortage of pasture, to the consequent turning of marginal soil into Saharan sand, and thus to a total destruction of a once reasonable habitat. Whole areas on the fringe of the Sahara are now desert, and unreclaimable.

The FAO set up a food crisis early-warning system in 1968, but it gave no warning of this year's disaster. Existing technology, dependent as it is upon the collection of data by administrators, apparently was incapable of coordinating existing rainfall and other statistics in order to provide a profile of millions starving.

The crisis now can only be alleviated by the delivery of massive amounts of food, particularly grain. Nations and charities around the world have responded and are shipping in food, but its distribution is an unsolved problem. For instance, in July two British planes flew grain daily from Dakar to western Mali. But from Niore, where they landed, a mere 46 aging trucks were responsible for carrying the grain to 200,000 hungry herdsmen in the interior. No matter how vigorous the response since last May, when localized crises suddenly were fitted together to provide a picture of impending disaster, it is tedious and difficult to distribute the aid flown in. Many herdsmen and farmers are too weak to walk to population centers, roads are nonexistent in much of the area, and the administrative manpower needed for efficient dispersal is often unavailable.

Much for the American grain and seed contribution—156,000 tons of sorghum, wheat bran, and cottonseed—plus salt and medicines, is just now arriving on the coast. It must now be trucked overland to the hard-hit farmers of the savanna.

All of this aid may come too late. When the threat of starvation is ended, vast numbers of people and their livestock will have already died, children will have been permanently maimed by malnutrition, and futures drastically altered for entire countries. Unless the rains resume soon, neither the nomads nor their agricultural cousins of the sub-Sahara will be able to continue living in the way to which they are accustomed, and upon which the rhythm of their nations depend.

There are other, less obvious messages of the present perils of starvation. Despite their common colonial heritage and the several francophone organizations to which most of the hard-hit nations belong, the afflicted governments cooperated too late and too little. Had they consciously pooled information earlier, the direst aspects of the famine might have been averted.

Even now, although they have been talking about joint plans to attract development funds for dams and irrigation schemes, the countries are attempting to solve the myriad problems associated with famine in individual, uncoordinated ways. There is no overall plan for the distribution of relief, and there have been few attempts to spread the relief equally, according to need, across borders.

This lack of coordination is in some cases due to a real lack of interest on the part of governments. Most of the nations are ruled by agriculturalists. The majority of the sufferers are pastoral or nomadic. The settled peoples have long disdained the nomads. Thus some of the responsibility for the size of the present catastrophe may be attributed to the indifference of ruling humans as well as the cruelties of an impersonal climate.

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### **Why Not Boycott Amin?**

*Christian Science Monitor* (9 January 1978)

The moral case for boycotting Uganda is easily made; Idi Amin overthrew the government of Uganda six years ago. At first he was widely welcomed as an authentic popular hero with modest ambitions. By the middle of the first year of his reign, however, he had begun to show signs of being a despot.

By the end of Amin's first year the killings had begun in earnest. During the next year, Uganda's chief justice was hauled out of court and decapitated, a former interior minister was abducted and dismembered, and the rector of the university was murdered. The army was brutally purged of several particular ethnic groups. Even in remote areas villagers were assaulted by Amin's henchmen. No precise body counts are available, but a recent estimate suggests that since 1971 Amin has probably killed and caused to be killed about 150,000.

After six years of capricious rule, once prosperous Uganda is in economic shambles. Stores in the commercial capital are bare, necessities of modern life are unavailable, and medical and educational care once the best in eastern Africa are approaching Cambodian levels. For all but the ruling military cadre, life in today's Uganda is mean, brutish, and dangerous.

Only high prices for coffee keep Amin in luxuries and his military cohorts in guns and bullets. Without exports of coffee Amin might be unable to continue to command the loyalty of the soldiers who now deny basic human rights to a once accomplished and proud people.

Coffee accounts for 87 percent of Uganda's export earnings. Amin's government markets the coffee directly, almost exclusively by air shipments to London and Djibouti. Of the total value of the coffee (about \$312 million in 1976), the American share is 30 percent. Britain buys another 22 percent, and France, Italy, Japan, West Germany, and the Netherlands account for most of the remainder.

Without coffee sales Uganda's balance of trade would be deeply negative instead of being comparatively healthy. Amin's actions have destroyed tea and cotton exports, and eliminated once significant tourist revenues.

In terms of imports, Britain is a major supplier of Uganda, as is West Germany, but the American contribution is tiny (worth about \$7 million in 1976). A few American aircraft service concerns would be affected by any economic rupture, as would coffee brokers, but most of the purchasing of Uganda's robusta coffee (for instant coffee) is done by major American companies who could easily buy high-quality coffee elsewhere.

The threat of an American cessation of trade with Uganda would almost certainly put pressure on Amin personally and on his government directly. If British and other importers of coffee could be persuaded to join a boycott, Amin would be forced to improve the lot of his people or suffer economic deprivation severe enough to weaken his grip on the loyalty of his 20,000 military supporters. The quality of life of the new elite would be jeopardized.

These consequences could be made more severe if Britain and others also agreed to halt the airlift which takes the coffee out and brings liquor and foodstuffs in. Only the Soviets have the capability to keep Uganda supplied. But would they want to be so involved with another African despot?

The arguments against American involvement in a boycott of Uganda are:

1. Many African nations might object, and attack a boycott as racism.
2. A boycott could jeopardize the lives of the 240 Americans (mostly missionaries) who live in Uganda.
3. Boycotting Amin may set a precedent for UN-sponsored boycotts of other small states which we might wish to sustain.
4. No one can predict precisely whether or how a boycott will topple Amin. It could conceivably worsen the quality of life for Ugandans. A boycott is a blunt instrument.

The arguments on the other side are:

1. The U.S. has imposed boycotts on China and Cuba, and nations of the Soviet bloc. It has already used trade as a weapon of diplomacy.
2. Rescuing the Americans should prove possible.
3. If the U.S. avoids effective actions against a country like Uganda, President Carter's policy of human rights becomes a paper tiger. Zambia, Tanzania, and Botswana would like the U.S. to act against Amin.
4. Intervention in the affairs of another country very rarely is so justified. American interests in the case of Uganda are humanitarian, not hegemonic nor a Cold-War hangover.
5. If there ever were a case of leverage, and therefore a likelihood that a threat of a boycott could work, Uganda provides that case. Amin offers an opportunity to test the utility of trade boycotts under optimum conditions.
6. Those who want to boycott South Africa can both show that the U.S. interest in human rights is color blind and, most of all, demonstrate the efficacy of economic pressure by using Uganda as a relatively straightforward and painless (to the U.S.) test case.



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**The Deferred Dream of African Unity**  
*Christian Science Monitor* (22 December 1982)

The Organization of African Unity has failed, twice in a year, to hold its annual plenary session. Riven by conflict among its members, as well as between its several groupings, the OAU no longer can claim to be an expression of any form of unity. Many inside and outside Africa fear that the OAU will collapse. Others think that it should.

Last month the OAU could not muster a quorum of African heads of state to convene its assembly in Tripoli, the capital of Libya. Two-thirds of 50 national constituents of the OAU are required, but only 30 consented to attend, many objecting to the fact that Col. Muammar al-Qaddafi, the ruler of Libya, was slated to preside over the OAU if it convened. Some were incensed that Colonel Qaddafi had attempted to seat the delegation from Chad that, although Libyan-backed, had lost Chad's civil war. Colonel Qaddafi, by refusing to accept that his clients had no mandate from the OAU, from their own people, or from the battlefield, unwittingly provided his already existing enemies with an excuse to prevent his automatic accession to the chairmanship of Africa's premier regional entity. In August, the OAU failed in an initial attempt to hold its annual meeting.

Then the problem was the Western Sahara. Earlier, at a foreign ministers' meeting in Zimbabwe, the secretariat of the OAU had admitted the Democratic Sahara Arab Republic into the OAU. (The Democratic Sahara is the national name adopted by the Polisario Front, a guerrilla movement, for the Western Sahara.) But Morocco governs the arid territory for which the Front was seated, and has been engaged for six years in a bitter struggle to defeat the armed forces of the Front.

Next year Ahmed Sékou Touré, the former labor leader and 24-year President of Guinea, is due to host the annual meeting of the OAU and become its chairman. Although Mr. Touré came to power as a radical anticolonialist, and for many years cooperated with the Soviet Union, he has more recently turned decisively toward the West, receiving sizable amounts of American investment, and official encouragement and praise from President Reagan's administration. Mr. Touré, as a radical Muslim from a francophone country, would be acceptable to virtually all of the other African states. But will the OAU survive? Should it survive?

Whether the organization survives depends on the efforts of self-appointed mediators, like President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya, the OAU's last chairman. If they can find an amicable method of solving the Chadian and Western Saharan issues, then the OAU will continue at least to exist. The OAU will be able to stumble from meeting to meeting until a new outbreak of interstate hostility makes conciliation impossible.

Although there is no reason why the government which now rules Chad should not be seated by the OAU as the inscribed authority in its country, there is every reason why Libyan and Soviet-supported nations should want, by not seating it, to besmirch its legitimacy. For the same set of reasons, since there is no autonomous Western Saharan government fully in control of the once-Spanish Western Sahara, there should be no difficulty in not seating it and thus denying legitimacy to a guerrilla movement which is not a government.

But the politics of Africa are no less free of ideology than other regions of the world. Many African governments would prefer to demonstrate their antagonism to the monarchy of Morocco, and to side with Algeria, the principal backer of the Front. Some want at least the facade of unity, which the OAU provides, at all costs. The two instincts—to stand on principle and to support consensus—are thus in almost constant conflict.

What a quick look at the history of the OAU makes very clear is that these recent disputes only highlight basic cleavages within the continent. The OAU could not stanch the Biafran, Angolan, or Shaban wars, keep Ethiopia and Somalia apart, free the peoples of Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, and the Central African Empire from the clutches of odious dictators, or prevent Libyan intervention in the Sudan.

The OAU can claim a few successful efforts at mediation. But over the years African unity has become less and less plausible, the organization itself being more and more moribund as an effective regional spokesman and interlocutor. It wants to prevent disputes between African states and to bar foreign troops from African soil, but lacks both the joint will and the muscle. It waits to put a stamp of approval on any internationally validated Namibian conclusion, but the United States (sometimes in consultation with Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Tanzania) is actually in charge. It wants to bring about majority rule in South Africa but hardly knows how.

Yet the existence of such important issues mandates the survival of the OAU. Without the OAU Africa would truly have no voice. There is always the hope, too, that the chairmanship of a credible, strong leader could turn the tide of Africa's interstate and international relations. The dream of an Africa united is almost, but not assuredly, beyond recovery.

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### **African Economies Dangerously Mired**

*Boston Globe* (13 June 1983)

Conditions in crucial parts of black Africa, and possibly much of the continent, should alarm the policy makers of the West. This year, or possibly next, depending upon the extent of the world's economic recovery and its impact on the Third World, the wealthy nations may find themselves confronting the bitter consequences of climatic catastrophe, economic and political mismanagement and enforced human exodus. Africa has too few resources to cope alone.

The drought has been unusually severe in the growing season south of the equator. The meteorological manifestations that customarily bring rain to a swath of Africa from South Africa and Namibia to Ethiopia, failed again, in some extreme cases for the eighth successive year, elsewhere for the second or third season in a row. Neither South Africa nor Zimbabwe, the maize (corn) basket of much of Africa, will have the surpluses on which much of the rest of Africa depends.

In South Africa's case, only 4.2 million tons of corn were harvested, as against 14 million last year. Zambia, which is often in deficit because of the political discouragement of farm efforts in the past, grew only 6.2 million bags of corn and will need another 1.5 million bags. Zaire will be short, and so will Botswana, Namibia and the other small countries that have long depended on South African and Zimbabwean maize to feed their people.

In Ghana on the west coast, where the rains have been weak for two years in a row, tapioca, yams, maize and other staples may not be harvested in quantities adequate for the country's

recently enlarged population. These conditions may be particularly acute in cities, as well as northern rural areas, because of Ghana's woeful absence of foreign exchange.

In Ethiopia and the Sudan, the recurrence of famine has been exacerbated by the guerrilla wars that rage in Eritrea and Tigre, the two northernmost contested regions of Ethiopia. Relief officials claim that four million persons are subject to starvation.

The Sudan, which is heavily in debt, under International Monetary Fund (IMF) strictures to tighten its belt and unable to produce and export enough cotton, its main crop, to pay for both essential energy and food imports, is hard pressed to give succor to the hungry refugees who escape into the Sudan from the Ethiopian wars.

In the 1950s and early 1960s Ghana was prosperous, lettered, cultured and envied. It was self-sufficient in food and the world's leading exporter of cocoa. Today, after coups and counter-coups, three civilian and five military attempts at governing and a broadly acknowledged diversion of riches and squandering of the country's economic patrimony, Ghana cannot feed itself.

Although cocoa still counts for 60 percent of foreign exchange earnings, world prices have fallen, production is down and smuggling of what little there is swells the export figures of neighboring Ivory Coast, now the world's premier producer of the basic ingredient of chocolate.

Even with IMF guidance, nations such as the Sudan, Zambia and Ghana cannot undo a decade of decisions that deprived farmers of incentives and swelled the cities with workers who depend upon foreign-produced foodstuffs and contributed little that was productive to their national economies. (In Ghana nearly two-thirds of the national budget is devoted to bureaucratic salaries.) Now, when world prices for cocoa, cotton and Zambia's copper have slumped, there is much less foreign exchange, shelves are bare of consumer goods and local industries cannot provide commodities such as batteries, matches, toilet paper, soap, tires, fertilizers and so on without imported raw materials.

The economies of Ghana, the Sudan and Zambia, to provide just three examples, are consequently so far run down that only the kinds of upturns in world commodity prices that are wholly unexpected can pull these countries out of a deepening slough of misery. Certainly, the military rulers of the Sudan and Ghana are working no miracles. Nor is the civilian government of Zambia.

The suffering of these English-speaking countries has not moved them or others to request the kinds of neo-colonial financial control that France exercises informally in many of the capitals of francophone Africa. Instead, they request the kinds of long-term commodity stabilization schemes the West rejects, and they end up being compelled to submit to IMF reorganization regimes. These address current complications and do not necessarily solve long-term structural problems.

Conceivably, the specter of approaching hunger, unmanageable debts and the lack of other means of economic uplift will encourage one or more African leaders to examine hitherto unpalatable alternatives before Western relief becomes yet another unavoidable, temporary and yet necessary answer to the collapse of so many of the economies of Africa.

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**The Role of Voters in Africa**  
*Christian Science Monitor* (25 October 1983)

Amid the coups and wars of black Africa, there are some hopeful signs. Nigeria, the continent's largest country and most important democracy recently held a series of elections in which there was widespread participation. The voters of Kenya, the critical country in eastern Africa, last month forcefully voiced their opinions at the polls. A third canvas of a national electorate will be held in Zambia on October 27.

Not many African states still hold elections, or give their citizens choices when they do. But the ones that still adhere to one or another version of the participatory process are by and large significant ones. Nigeria's model, however flawed, is apt to be persuasive in West Africa if not elsewhere in the continent. Nearly a quarter of all Africans live in Nigeria. It is still a country of corruption, ballot rigging, and serious ethnic and sectarian rivalries. But the elections in August and September gave voters a range of choices for 1,913 offices, most of which they exercised. The result, in Nigeria, was an affirmation of participatory democracy in an African context. The dominance of the National Party, a coalition rooted in the populous, Muslim north, was reaffirmed.

There were bloody riots in some states, and the Yoruba people of the west felt themselves distinctly cheated. The courts overturned a few decisions because of irregularities. Overall, the conduct of the elections was not ideal. But for Africa, and for a country in severe economic trouble which had experienced more than a decade of military rule before returning to democracy, the result was salutary.

The Kenyan election was less open. Like Tanzania, Malawi, the Seychelles, and Zambia, Kenya has a single-party system. Everyone who runs for parliament must be a party member approved by the ruling Kenya African National Union and by President Daniel arap Moi. Nevertheless, more than a single candidate stood in all but a handful of the 158 constituencies. Most contests were hotly contested, and 57 sitting members were defeated. Five cabinet ministers and 13 junior ministers lost seats.

The minimal participatory practice of choice was upheld; ballot fiddling and other excesses were kept to a minimum. Kenya, as a comparatively stable state without opposition parties, at least gave a range of options to its various peoples. The Kenyan case, because the office of the President and his policies went unchallenged by the voting test, can hardly be as dynamic a model for Africa as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and a few other countries that have in recent years given their peoples a range of choices. Yet because so many African nations have changed governments by force, have systematically excluded citizens from even a rudimentary participation in the decision-making process, and expect to be ruled for some time to come by strong-armed military or civilian leaders, the reaffirmation of the limited democratic notion of the single-party state contributes to a stability that can be endorsed by Western policymakers.

Zambia's elections have been more tightly controlled at the constituency level than have those of Kenya. Five years ago, President Kenneth Kaunda personally vetoed winners of the preliminary round in several key constituencies. On October 27, however, he promises to give the voters a free rein, albeit within the single-party system. The extent to which all Zambians feel consulted by the process may enable this pivotal country, with its highly urbanized and economically unsettled population, to remain free of military intervention and other non-democratic excesses.

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**Kenya's Political and Economic Crisis**  
*Christian Science Monitor* (28 November 1984)

Kenya, a key United States ally on the Indian Ocean perimeter of Africa, is imperiled by its questionable management of an already weakened economy, by food shortages, and by potentially serious internal political conflicts. Western-oriented and devoted to individual initiative since gaining its independence from Britain in 1963, Kenya was once a stellar performer among the economically less well-endowed nations of eastern Africa. Exports of coffee and tea, combined with local food sufficiency and enlightened fiscal policies, gave Kenya the financial health to which the socialist-minded Somalia, Tanzania, and Zambia and war-torn Uganda could but aspire.

In the late 1970s and again this year severe drought exposed Kenya's underlying frailty. In 1983–84, the rains failed dramatically, drying up grazing lands and therefore the herds of cattle on which Kenya's many pastoralists depend. Wheat and maize crops failed in large portions of the Texas-size country, only 20 percent of which is arable. Kenya's grain shortfall is now estimated at 1.4 million tons. Moreover, its pastoralists, like the Maasai, have lost the supplies of milk and meat on which they traditionally subsist.

Government purchases of Asian and U.S. maize, and relief shipments of maize and wheat from the U.S. that are expected in January, will make up about 65 percent of the grain deficit, and additional help can be expected from the crops being grown now, during the currently normal but short rainy season. If the long rains in February and March again fail, however, Kenya's famine could be compared with Ethiopia's. Or if the government's transport network, largely controlled by well-placed officials, fails to distribute the grain in a timely fashion, pockets of hunger could also expand. The pastoralists will also be at risk, for it will take months to build up herds from scratch.

A hidden problem is that Kenya's balance-of-payments position is precarious. Buying grain and other consumer staples on the world market will drain scarce reserves. So will the cost of petroleum with which to move goods upcountry from Mombasa, Kenya's port. Coffee, tea, and other agricultural exports fetch 70 percent of Kenya's earnings, and coffee and tea now command high prices. But Kenya is also spending at least as much as it earns abroad on dubious public-works projects, governmental enterprises, defense purchases, and luxuries.

The World Bank, which has refused to approve a third structural adjustment loan, wants Kenya to reduce the state's growing control of the local economy. So does the U.S., which seeks ways to make continued assistance conditional on the reform of an economy that has become as state-dominated as the socialist countries of Africa or the Middle East, especially in the crucial agricultural sector.

The U.S., the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other international agencies are also alarmed at Kenya's inability to begin curbing its population growth. At independence, Kenya was a nation of 8 million. Now there are 19 million Kenyans. The World Bank's conservative estimate for Kenya in 2050 is 69 million, for the country is now growing faster than any other place on earth. Its 4.3 percent rate of annual demographic increase is double that of India. The consequences of such growth are obvious. Jobs cannot be created fast enough, particularly in a sluggish economy. Real standards of living decline, creating social unrest and driving people off the land into the squalid cities.

Even without the drought, Kenya was losing its ability to feed itself. Unless the government provides additional incentives for farmers and, according to World Bank and others, at least permits the

private shipment of food between districts (now controlled by government), the food situation will continue to worsen at a time when there are more and more mouths to feed.

The drought and the demographic reality have added to the government's woes. But outsiders and many Kenyans also blame a leadership that is highly centralized, ethnically divisive, and visibly corrupt for Kenya's lack of direction and a slumping national morale.

A few powerful men around President Daniel arap Moi control critical sectors of the economy, not always in the public interest. Through interlocking affiliations, for example, they direct the storage and transport of food and supervise export contracts. They expend government resources on major capital projects, not uniformly with public advantages in mind.

This new power at the top is in the hands of the country's less populous ethnic groups. President Moi, a Kalenjin, has destroyed the political grip on Kenya of the Kikuyu, who were dominant in the time of President Jomo Kenyatta (1963–78). Now Western diplomats and others fear renewed conflict between the Kikuyu and others if President Moi presses his rearrangement of political and economic power too harshly.

There seems no immediate danger of a coup like the abortive one of 1982, but Kenya is on edge. Food shortages could add to that tension, and the U.S. may be compelled next year to rethink the security of its strategic alliance with a Kenya that is as fragile and endangered as it was once thought unshakable.

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### **Drought in South Kenya Brings Hunger to Maasai**

*Boston Globe* (4 December 1984)

MAGADI, KENYA—The tiny Maasai boys clinging to the emaciated mothers may never grow up to be warriors. All along the parched southern border of Kenya there are scenes like those at an isolated primary school near Magadi, where the children and their mothers recently lined up to receive emergency food packs.

The Maasai of Magadi, like tens of thousands of other tall, cattle-herding and spear-carrying herdsmen, roam a seared landscape turned dusty brown by more than a year without rain. They traditionally drink the milk and blood of their cattle, and eat meat.

But when the grass stopped growing and waterholes dried up during the worst drought to affect Kenya in a century, virtually all the cattle died off. Now the Maasai, like the pastoral Samburu and Turkana farther north in Kenya, have nothing.

They have nothing in the midst of a country that is wealthy by the standards of Africa. Indeed their poverty and listless misery stand in stark contrast to many of the agricultural areas of the Texas-sized country. Especially in the rich uplands north of Nairobi, the capital, the rains have recently come, breaking the drought and permitting modest plantings for farmers who were earlier as deprived as the Maasai.

The crops that mature in January on the 20 percent of the country that is arable will erase no more than 18 percent of the nation's outstanding food deficit. Lacking 1.4 million tons, Kenya also expects shortly to receive grain from the United States and from Asia sufficient to account for an additional 60 percent of the expected shortfall. But the break in the drought and relief shipments can do little for the Maasai.

Only with steady rains in February and March will the grass grow again on the pastures and the Maasai, the Samburu and the Turkana be able to restore their herds. This will be expensive if not impossible since calves from elsewhere in Kenya will be scarce. The pastoralists will be the last to benefit from Kenya's recent climatic better fortune.

Michael Megan, until this year a Jesuit seminarian from Ireland, has taken on the challenge of the hungry and dying Maasai. Supported by the International Committee for Relief of Suffering and Starvation in Sag Harbor, Long Island, Megan has developed a feeding scheme which attempts to prolong the lives of large numbers of those among the Maasai who are most at risk.

Accompanied by a Kenyan health team, he travels thousands of miles in a battered, donated vehicle to schools like the one near Magadi, south of Nairobi. There troop the Maasai women and children upon whom Megan is focusing his efforts.

Gently putting a tape measure around the matchstick-sized arms of the little ones, and noting the resulting circumference as well as the general appearance of both child and mother, Megan and his team chart the conditions of the persons they are trying to help. Then they supply those who are most in danger at each location with a 15-kilogram mixture of dried flour, milk and oil. The pack is soluble in water and sufficient for 14 days.

During those 14 days Megan and his colleagues take their rescue mission to similar sites stretched along the vast plain that straddles the Kenyan border with Tanzania. Then he returns to the primary school near Magadi, as he does to each of the other centers, again to measure, to observe and to feed. His team also supplies preventive health advice, particularly to the nursing mothers.

Spending almost nothing on facilities or himself and his associates, and every penny and shilling on food and transport for the week, Megan is trying alone to feed as many as 30,000 Maasai.

He hopes it will continue to rain. But he and others active in the relief of hunger in Kenya know that the situation will worsen before it improves. Maasai in vast numbers are, despite his efforts and those of the Kenyan government and other voluntary organizations, certain to be malnourished and die.

If the long rains of February and March fail, or if the government is unable efficiently and speedily to transport to the needy the hundreds of thousands of tons of grain which will soon arrive in Mombasa, Kenya's port on the Indian Ocean, then today's desperate situation will turn to Ethiopian-like catastrophe.

There are long-term problems too. Kenya's climatic reverses have compounded the country's relatively new inability to feed itself. Once agriculturally self-sufficient, Kenya now has too many mouths to feed. There are 19 million Kenyans, twice as many as at independence in 1963. At 4.3 percent a year the country is increasing its population faster than any other place on earth.

The consequences of such growth are obvious. Jobs are not being created fast enough, particularly in the sluggish economy. Real standards of living have declined, creating social unrest and driving people off their farms into the squalid cities.

Unless the government of Kenya provides additional incentives for farmers and, according to the World Bank, permits the freer exchange of food and other products within the country, the overall food situation will worsen and any recurrent droughts will develop rapidly into crises.

Megan and others are frantically trying to keep this generation of Kenyans alive. If they do, and if the current food crisis subsides in mid or late 1985, then the much tougher problem of preventing renewed episodes of hunger will demand their attention.

## IV. Shifting Sets of Instability: Added Problems of the 1980s

By the 1980s, the list of once-promising African states that had abandoned the tenets of representative democracy and curtailed their ability to prosper was long, and growing. It could have been a time to despair of Africa, and many policy makers and commentators certainly wrote Africa off as hopeless. Those Jeremiahs dwelled too little on Botswana and Mauritius, both small, well-directed states surging in wealth and hewing closely to the rules of fair play, tolerance for dissent, and participatory governance on which they had been founded. They ignored a few hardly democratic but largely well-run and prosperous polities such as Senegal and the Côte d'Ivoire, the rich and reasonably organized countries like Gabon, and the benevolently non-participatory but economically weak territories such as Tanzania. These special cases, particularly the first two, argued for the ultimate potential of Africa. In most other corners of the vast continent, however, there were many examples of despotism, chicanery, corruption, malfeasance and misfeasance, cruelty, and outright disregard for the fundamental rights of a state's citizenry. Rulers—but not all—were abusing their subjects.

Military coups were not new to Africa. In Dahomey/Benin there had been dozens; in black Africa overall, about fifty. Ghana and Nigeria had each experienced its share. At the very beginning of 1982, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings had intervened in Ghana for the second time in three years. He was not unique “in ambition and in his contempt for politicians and for the people who vote them

into office.” There were precipitating excuses for his second coup: Ghana was not delivering essential services, it had run out of foreign exchange, and it had mismanaged the finances and economy of the once wealthy but now run-down nation. Rawlings' virtues included a willingness to impose austerity on a country where official corruption was time-honored. But his 112 days in autocratic charge in 1979 were not remembered fondly by politically active Ghanaians. (“After Ghana—More Coups in Africa,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 January 1982.)

Sierra Leone was also ripe for a coup since President Siaka Stevens, long in office, was heavy-handed, lining his own pockets, and systematically destroying the once promising state. In Nigeria, where there had been several previous coups and where the military under Gen. Yakubu Gowon had behaved well when it ran Africa's most populous land from 1967 to 1975, soldiers were again poised to bring down the elected government of Prime Minister Shehu Shagari. Sectional conflicts, personal ambitions, and the desire to loot the wealthy state of its oil revenues were at the roots then, and later, of the military scramble for control of Nigeria.

Shagari was re-elected by a vast majority of Nigerians in 1983. But Maj. Gen. Mohammed Buhari, at the head of the usual collection of avaricious officers, soon decided that Shagari's mild regime had done too little to counter the country's slump in oil revenues, and had siphoned too much of the return from the declining industry to Shagari's northern cronies. Nigeria was in danger of imminent collapse, so the military said that it was “obliged” to assume power. This was its fourth takeover since 1960. The press would be shackled and a mass spirit of independence stopped up.



Once again it marked the loss of legitimate political participation in a bellwether country of Africa. An army officer had substituted his personal notions of right and wrong for those of the people. Five years before, when Nigeria decided to return to democracy, the Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Ghana all more or less began to follow Nigeria's lead. The Buhari coup ended a grand governmental experiment while it was still working. The coup, I worried, could well instigate another, damaging trend. Military takeovers would become frequent and mindless. The people would once more be thwarted. What I failed to appreciate was how unstoppable and how destructive corrupt military rule would become in Nigeria, in Sierra Leone, in Ghana, in the Central African Republic, in Chad, and in so many other countries. ("Nigeria's People Are the Big Losers," *Boston Globe*, 9 January 1984.)

Before too long there was a coup in Guinea, when Ahmed Sékou Touré, the modern founder of the country, died in office and his chosen successor was ousted by soldiers. Under Touré, Guinea had extirpated opponents and compiled an unenviable human rights record. He had prevented foreign investors from developing the country's abundant mineral resources and, consequently, like so many other long-serving African heads of state, had presided over great falls in local per capita income levels. Fortunately, toward the end of his life, Touré had begun to acknowledge that "slogans, good intentions, and nationalism" were not enough to uplift his people. Scientific socialism had not worked. He turned away from the Soviet Union, his early patron, and pursued a more pragmatic approach to development. Incentive-based capitalism came into vogue in Guinea, as it was beginning to do elsewhere in black Africa. The new military

rulers of Guinea promised to adhere to that approach and, unlike the young Touré, to "indulge in fewer flights of fiscal fancy." Those promises, however, proved hollow. ("Touré—and the Evolution of Black Africa," *Christian Science Monitor*, 4 April 1984.)

Far out in the Indian Ocean, 1,000 miles from Kenya and Tanzania, there had been a coup in the Seychelles in 1977, a year after the formerly British dependency of 60,000 people and 150,000 square miles had won its independence. A group of self-professed Soviet-leaning socialists had ousted a British-trained democrat with the help of the island republic's small police force. They had regimented the lives of the islanders, taken control of the only radio outlet and only newspaper, nationalized hotels, confiscated land, imposed curfews, detained opponents, and built up an army. But the new government had not welcomed a Soviet base, as the U.S. initially feared, and the then important American missile-tracking facility on the country's main island functioned without interference.

During the Cold War, the Seychelles, like Socotra and Diego Garcia, possessed strategic significance. Bases for navies were important. So were denials of bases to the enemy. The tracking station, situated along the equator, was valuable. So were listening posts that may have existed. Both China and the Soviet Union had large embassies. I recommended that Washington upgrade its well-functioning little embassy by installing a permanent resident ambassador (which later happened) for symbolic purposes, and in order to help to persuade the Seychellois to remain neutral between the West and the East. Then they could continue to profit from Cold War rivalries, welcome tourists and gamblers, and take a lead (which they did energetically) in preserving oceanic biodiversity. ("The Socialist

Seychelles: More Than a Drop in the Indian Ocean,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 August 1980.)

On the mainland, Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi had already backed several coups against the American-allied military government of President Gaafar Nimeiry in the Sudan, Africa’s largest country. Libyan airplanes had also bombed Chadian refugees in the western Sudan, where they had taken refuge from a Libyan-financed attack on the government of Chad. Libyan intentions were reprehensible, and the Sudan was weak, but I wrote that it made no sense to rush American jet fighters and tanks to the Sudan, as many in Congress had proposed. The U.S. was essentially selling the armaments—AWACs and F-15s—to Saudi Arabia, which would give them to the Sudan. But the Sudan lacked the manpower to service or fly the promised aircraft, or even to drive the tanks.

Qaddafi should not be dismissed as “mad.” He had allied himself with Idi Amin, with the enemies of the governments of Chad and the Sudan, and with the Polisario guerrillas in Western Sahara. He had tried to subvert the governments of the Comoros and the Seychelles. Clearly, he was an opportunist and a sponsor of terrorism. The best short-term course was to remove the diplomatic status of Libyan missions abroad, and to purchase as little as possible of Libya’s oil. (“Qaddafi’s Solo Adventurism,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 May 1984.)

The Sudan needed butter, not guns. Probably bankrupt, in 1981 it was yet another African country that could not feed itself. Nor could its exports of peanuts and cotton begin to pay for imports, especially petroleum products. Cotton yields had fallen dramatically since the British departed. With a national debt of \$4 billion, which it could never pay, the Sudan was kept on a short leash by

the IMF. Better than arming Nimeiry, the U.S. needed to supply food, technical and managerial assistance for agriculture, and infrastructural help for road-building and basic communications. Selling guns to a country unable to afford them, or use them, was a “knee-jerk” response that obscured the fundamental problems of an impoverished land “under assault from within as well as without.” (“Sudan Needs Butter More Than Guns,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 December 1981.)

Nimeiry had managed to yoke the long-rebellious black, Christian south of his country temporarily to its Arab north. In 1972, after a seventeen-year civil war, Nimeiry had given the rebellious southerners autonomy. Yet, shortly after welcoming offers of American assistance, and overcoming Libyan-inspired coup attempts, Nimeiry for internal political reasons lurched toward Islamic fundamentalism. He revoked the south’s autonomy, provoking southerners, led by U.S.-educated John Garang, to begin an enduring revolt in 1983. It still simmered in 2003.

Nimeiry also obeyed the IMF and introduced steep price increases on staple commodities like bread, soap, and cooking oil. There were riots in Khartoum, the capital. Soldiers, his comrades in arms, therefore removed Nimeiry in 1985, after sixteen years. If his successors were to return a separate administration to the south, and promise to recognize the south’s right to a share in any oil found in the northern sections of the south, the new government would be worthy of U.S. assistance. (Oil had been discovered in the south in 1981; it was not seriously exploited until the 1990s.) Even better would be a willingness on the part of the soldiers in charge to return the Sudan to democracy, a condition which its people had only rarely enjoyed in the years since independence in

1954. If not democracy, I wrote, then at least the Sudanese people deserved tolerant rule after suffering Nimeiry's autocratic and capricious whims. But that was a faint hope. Indeed, the Sudan continued throughout the rest of the century to suffer from governmental failures. ("The Sudan: Beginning the Process of Returning to Tolerant Rule," *Christian Science Monitor*, 10 April 1985.)

Neither that military takeover, the elected government of Sadiq el-Mahdi that followed, nor the subsequent coup that brought Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan al-Bashir and Hassan al-Turabi to power in 1989, led to serious attempts to negotiate a just end to the south's rebellion. In 1989, the U.S. had an opportunity to bring the dominant north and the oppressed south together around the negotiating table. The peoples of the south, once enslaved by northerners and, since independence, denied equal economic and political opportunities in the sprawling nation athwart the Nile River, had mounted a credible rebellion, managing to withstand regular counter-attacks by the armies of the north. By 1989, as several times since, the war was proceeding poorly for both sides. The government was short of cash and arms and was logistically stretched. Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) could hold the rural areas of the south, and occasionally take towns, but without an air force it was too weak to overrun entrenched outposts of the north in the south, or to use military means effectively to secede.

The Sudan was still seriously short of foreign exchange in 1989. It was then backed by Libya and several Arab nations. But it tottered from economic to climatic to military crisis. The civil war was a continuing drain, but the discovery of oil in the south had created the possibility of altering various equations in favor of peace. It was to the

advantage of every group and faction to create a peaceful and developing nation. I advocated an energetic U.S. effort to broker a cease-fire and give autonomy back to southerners—a policy stance that remained relevant through 2003. ("Seizing an Opportunity for Peace in Sudan," *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 May 1989.)

Next door to the Sudan, U.S. Cold War clients were embroiled in wars and conflicts as bitter as the Arab-African battles along the Nile. Arab countries were supporting Eritrean liberation groups in their long (since 1961) battle for independence from Ethiopia, and also backing a Somalia-initiated (and ultimately futile) insurgency that was attempting to remove the Somali-inhabited Ogaden grazing lands from Ethiopian hegemony.

There had been a Marxist-led military coup in 1974 in Ethiopia. It had deposed Emperor Haile Selassie and installed an aimless collection of young autocratic officers called the dergue. (Later Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam became its brutal boss, with Soviet support.)

There was a case to be made, by middle-class Ethiopians as well as foreigners, for the dismemberment of the territory ruled by the old monarchy into more readily governable ethnic sections. Possibly, too, it made sense to accede to Eritrean irredentism and Somali aspirations. But, I wrote, President Carter's decision in 1977 to withdraw an American promise to supply Somalia with arms was correct. It could help lower tensions in the Horn of Africa. Moreover, Ethiopia should not be "allowed" to collapse. The crumbling of Ethiopia would produce a vacuum into which major powers and Arabs across the Red Sea would tumble. The Soviets would lose the most if Ethiopia fell to pieces, but the consequences for Africa, I argued, would be far more instructive, and devastating. ("Should

Ethiopia Be Dismembered?" *Christian Science Monitor*, 27 September 1977.)

Because the Soviet Union decided to support the dergue, the U.S. in 1979 switched its support from Ethiopia to Somalia (which had been a Soviet ally until 1977). In 1984, I warned that backing President Mohamed Siad Barre, another of Africa's unpleasant dictators, was dangerous for the U.S. Siad Barre had come to power in 1969, by a military coup that ended nine years of democracy. He ruled over a country of 5 million nomads herding cattle, sheep, goats, and camels. All the inhabitants spoke Somali. All were Muslims. Yet Somalia harbored fierce inter-clan rivalries.

Siad Barre had exacerbated those differences by funneling power and privilege to men largely drawn from his own Marehan clan, one of the nine major traditional divisions of the country. His socialist state was

corrupt, with all opportunities for making a living parceled out by Siad Barre. He had also learned how to navigate the warm shoals of U.S.-Soviet rivalry. The U.S. wanted naval and air base rights to ports and fields along Somalia's 2,000-mile-long littoral on the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Somalia flanked the then critical southern end of the Red Sea. In exchange for bases, American aid in the mid-1980s was supplying about 30 percent of the nation's annual GDP. But giving assistance to a country that was using it so poorly, and mostly to repress its own people, made little sense. American aid, I wrote, was shoring up a regime that was wildly unpopular and undemocratic. Even during the Cold War, assisting Siad Barre's Somalia made little strategic sense. ("Somalia and U.S. Strategic Interests," *Christian Science Monitor*, 5 December 1984.)

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**Should Ethiopia Be Dismembered?**  
*Christian Science Monitor* (27 September 1977)

President Carter's decision to withdraw the United States's promise to supply Somalia with arms was the right one. It may help to alleviate tension in the Horn of Africa, where the Somalis seem successfully to be invading Ethiopia.

More important, the dismemberment of Ethiopia is in no one's interests. Arms or the promise of arms from the U.S. could have contributed to the destruction of what was laboriously and bitterly united as a country only in this century.

Even without those arms, the Arab-backed two-prong attack on Ethiopia by the several Eritrean liberation groups and by the Somalis (the Western Somalia Liberation Front is but an extension of Somalia) may well triumph. Ethiopia is disorganized and lacking in morale after three years of aimless, authoritarian rule by a collection of young officers calling themselves the "dergue," the Somalis and the Eritreans at long last see an opportunity to regain territory to which they have long aspired.

The Eritrean case is straightforward. Shortly after Ethiopia was restored by allied intervention to the Solomonid monarchy of Haile Selassie (Italy had conquered Ethiopia in 1936), Eritrea, as a former Italian colony along the Red Sea coast, was given by the United Nations to Ethiopia as a trustee. Without the real consent of the Eritreans, who resent highland Ethiopia (and Amhara) control, Eritrea saw its promised autonomy eroded.

Then Ethiopia formally annexed Eritrea. Since the early 1960s Eritreans have been attempting to regain their territory with assistance from the Sudan, Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia.

As long as Haile Selassie ruled, Ethiopia (with American, French, and Scandinavian support) was too strong. It was sufficiently powerful diplomatically and militarily to withstand Somali claims to its arid Ogaden province, where there may be oil. (The Somalis also claim a large chunk of northern Kenya.)

But, since the coup in 1974 which ousted Haile Selassie, Ethiopia has grown weaker as a collection of secessionist movements has battled against military-sponsored land reform, against military-sponsored antagonism toward the conservative Coptic Church, and in opposition to the destruction of the monarchy. Most of all, middle-class (and now peasant-class) Ethiopians have resented the inability of the dergue to govern. As chaos grew, so support for the central government vanished.

Should the U.S. not therefore permit, or even hasten, Ethiopia's decay? Has the dergue not committed so many atrocities and destroyed the fabric of Ethiopian society to such an extent that the people of that land may be better off purged—if unfortunately by invaders?

Agreement would be easy. If Eritreans and Somalis succeed in their attacks, the restoration of Eritrean autonomy will probably prove—on balance—a good thing. But Somalia's acquisition of the Ogaden will but whet its appetite for Kenya, and for more martial adventures. Kenya, the wealthier country, is militarily weak. Who (the United States?) will protect Kenya? And where will the redrawing of colonial borders end?

These are important negative consequences of any decision to let Ethiopia collapse. Again, however, a greater danger would be the elimination of Ethiopia. If the invasions are successful,

Ethiopia's various internal schisms will grow in consequence. Soon there will be nothing left for a successor to the dergue to govern. The economy of Ethiopia, always precarious, will crumble. Africa, and the West, will be left with a vacuum of power into which near neighbors, Arabs across the Red Sea, and the major powers will all tumble.

Although the Soviet Union, now backing Ethiopia, might thereby be humbled, the consequences for Africa, as well as for the peoples of Ethiopia, would be far more instructive than would any setback for the Soviets. Although the United States can hardly save Ethiopia, it should do its utmost to discourage what now appears a highly likely dismemberment.

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### **The Socialist Seychelles: More Than a Drop in the Indian Ocean**

*Christian Science Monitor* (27 August 1980)

The Seychelles are much more significant than they seem. A mini-republic of 60,000 people spread over 150,000 watery square miles in the middle of the Indian Ocean, the Seychelles have a strategic value which has long been underestimated, at least in the West.

Once a French outpost and, from Napoleonic times to 1976, a British colony, the Seychelles are now governed by a strong-minded oligarchy with a determination to provide their long-isolated countrymen with enhanced educational opportunities, better health facilities, and the ability to grow or catch their own food.

President Albert René's closest supporters, the foreign minister, the minister of defense, and the minister of education and information, all emphasize their country's commitment to socialism. But the Seychelles have not granted a base to the Soviet Union, and recently demonstrated to official Americans and Britons that rumors of a Soviet enclave on one of the country's out-islands were untrue.

Yet, with a Western facility at Diego Garcia, farther east, and new American access to Kenyan and Somali ports (the Soviets use Aden and Socotra) on the western rim of the Indian Ocean, the Seychelles will continue to be wooed by the Soviets for their strategic importance.

Despite their Soviet ties and strident rhetoric, the political leaders of the Seychelles are cordial, and remarkably undogmatic and non-doctrinaire in conversation. What is unique about the socialism of the Seychelles, they say disarmingly, is its determination to impose no capital controls. (The rupee of the Seychelles is hard, and fully convertible.) They also believe in individual home ownership, in the nurturing of a variety of entrepreneurial instincts, and in the maintenance of an economy that must long remain dependent upon tourism—until the oil now being drilled for is discovered.

But President René's government has maintained a firm grip since the coup that brought him to power in 1977. The life of the islanders is more regimented than before. All information is controlled by a government-run radio and newspaper. A curfew in the hours before dawn was strictly enforced until recently. Thirteen prominent Seychellois, including the editor of the only independent newsweekly, were detained without trial last year and were suddenly released this month and then deported. A small local army has been trained, with Tanzanian and Malagasy assistance. René clearly fears a counter coup, but the extent to which socialism, Seychellois style, has antagonized any but the former bourgeoisie is unclear.

The Seychelles, long somnolent, are becoming volatile. There are new ambitions in the islands which big power competition in the Indian Ocean can but accentuate. In addition to a missile tracking station, the U.S. presence consists of an excellent three-person embassy, 12 Peace Corps workers, and a very modest aid program. The British and French (as well as the Soviets, the Chinese, the Algerians, and so on) have large embassies with resident ambassadors.

Although symbolic, a first step toward strengthening American ties to the Seychelles would be the appointment of a resident ambassador. Doing so would show that we take the Seychelles, and its potential, seriously. So would new assistance for agriculture and fishing. It would be unwise to ignore the Seychelles.

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**Sudan Needs Butter More Than Guns**  
*Christian Science Monitor* (7 December 1981)

The Sudan, Africa's largest country, is in serious trouble. But no matter how well-founded its fears of Libyan attack, the main dangers are internal. Rushing supplies of American jet fighters and tanks to the semi-desert nation is thus a misplaced short-term solution to deep-seated problems. Doing so could also deepen the difficulties of a vast country on the verge of internal collapse.

The United States has been responding to the cries of alarm of Sudan's President Gaafar Nimeiry. It is doubtless true, as President Nimeiry has said, that Col. Muammar Qaddafi, the leader of Libya, has designs on the Sudan. They have been personal enemies for years, and Qaddafi is passionate about the legitimacy of Libyan expansion at the expense of his neighbors. Libya has attacked border posts in the western Sudan, and made some bombing runs. Their targets, however, are the defeated Chadian forces loyal to Hassan Habre, until last year a contender for the Chadian presidency. There is as yet little evidence that Libya dares invade or make a frontal assault on the Sudan.

Correspondents reporting from the western Sudan indicate that any invading army would need to surmount the logistically difficult 600 miles of almost roadless desert from the Chad-Libyan border to Sudan's capital on the Nile River. Colonel Qaddafi has backed coups against General Nimeiry. He has doubtless attempted to subvert the fragile political alliances of the Sudan from within. Many of the Sudanese who have traveled to Libya to seek employment are Libyan economic hostages, and perhaps a source of potential subversive recruits. But the real worry in the Sudan is its parlous economy.

The Sudan no longer feeds itself. Nor do its exports provide funds sufficient to pay for imports, especially costly petroleum products. Even Sudan's membership in the Arab League has not prevented imported fuel costs from increasing during the last eight years from about \$20 million to \$550 million. Over the same period, the Sudan's production of cotton and peanuts, its main earners of foreign exchange, has plummeted.

Under British rule, the Sudan grew cotton on a vast state-run plantation between the ample waters of the White and Blue Nile Rivers. The Gezira Scheme, as the plantation was known, was a showpiece of Africa. In the last two decades, however, mismanagement and its ecological byproduct, increased soil salinity, have taken their toll. The cotton yield has fallen over the same

period from 1 million to 400,000 bales per year. World prices are also low, and this year's earnings will not even match the nation's fuel bill.

The import and export curves have crossed, and most financial experts think that the Sudan may well be bankrupt. Its national debt is probably at least \$4 billion; this year the balance of payments deficit is expected to be about \$700 million. Only the intervention of the International Monetary Fund has kept the Sudan afloat.

The IMF has recently been negotiating another credit for the Sudan. But that credit, which the Sudan desperately needs, will not be tendered without stringent conditions capable of causing serious internal unrest. Now that the Sudan has agreed to the IMF recipe for devaluation of the Sudanese pound, the prices of government-subsidized commodities will rise dramatically. Flour, sugar, milk, and kerosene cost more, and the political tempers of the urban masses of Khartoum and Omdurman may well rise.

President Nimeiry has with great agility survived several coup attempts and the vicissitudes of politics in a part-Arab country with its own fervid Islamic fundamentalists and many rival military factions. He has also managed to yoke the non-Arab southern half of his country to the Arab north in reasonable harmony. But a functionally bankrupt country the size of the Sudan may be ungovernable, and fundamentally implosive, without sophisticated, targeted assistance from abroad.

The U.S. has proposed a military arms assistance package of about \$100 million. Since the Sudan cannot be expected to pay for any sizable part of that package, the American plan has been for Saudi Arabian payments to offset the purchase. In the wake of the American decision to sell AWACS and F-15s to the Saudis, that offset may be likely. But no matter who pays, the Sudanese cannot yet man or service the aircraft that have been promised. Nor do they have the manpower to service tanks and antitank vehicles.

The Sudan needs butter anyway, not guns. A more imaginative, more far-reaching method of combating Libyan designs on the Sudan, and of shoring up President Nimeiry, would combine defensive arms in modest quantity with food shipments, technical and managerial assistance in the agricultural sector, and infrastructural help for road-building and basic communications.

Selling guns to a country that may not have the capacity to use them, and cannot afford them, is a knee-jerk response that will succeed only in obscuring the fundamental problems of an impoverished land under assault from within as well as from without.

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**After Ghana—More Coups in Africa?**  
*Christian Science Monitor* (20 January 1982)

This month's coup in Ghana could well presage a fresh wave of military takeovers of Africa's fragile states. The toppling of President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana in 1966 unleashed a cascade of coups throughout the continent. More recently the return to representational democracy in Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, and, for a time, in the Central African Republic, was the decisive impulse.

Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, Ghana's military leader for the second time in three years, is not unique in ambition and in his contempt for politicians and for the people who vote them



into office. Whether President Hilla Limann and his cabinet were corrupt and inefficient, just inefficient, or simply unable to return Ghana to its one-time prosperity may long be a matter of opinion. What is clear, however, is that Ghana's balance of payments difficulties, its severe shortages of foreign exchange, and the inability of the state to deliver essential services gave Mr. Rawlings ample excuse to oust the politicians.

Ghana largely depends upon earnings from the export of cocoa. But the world prices of cocoa have fallen dramatically in recent years. Ghanaian peasants have stopped growing for the cash market and have also been adept at smuggling their crops into the neighboring Ivory Coast. Thus, the inability of Ghana to prosper has been as much the fault of commodity price instability as it has local mismanagement. Moreover, all governments since the time of Mr. Nkrumah have suffered from the burden of debt left by him and from his diversion of Ghanaian resources and energies into a myriad of unprofitable, grandiose, and draining industrial and agricultural schemes.

Mr. Rawlings may follow Col. Muammar Qaddafi of Libya, from whom he has had financial support, and move Ghana to the left. More upsetting to Ghanaians may be his attempt to impose austerity and asceticism on a country where governmental corruption and the market economy are ways of life with centuries of tradition behind them.

If Mr. Rawlings reforms Ghana without too many deprivations of liberty or other tribulations, his rule may be welcomed by Ghanaians. But his 112 days in charge in 1979 are not remembered with any fondness by politically active Ghanaians. Then he appeared mercurial, headstrong, and imbued with a sense of personal self-righteousness.

Other soldiers in Africa may be as ambitious and strong-minded as Mr. Rawlings. If corruption, governmental mismanagement, and economic decay are the guides, then a country like Sierra Leone could well be the scene of a coup. But does Sierra Leone have a Jerry Rawlings in the military? And would he dare attack the heavy-handed rule of President Siaka Stevens, a grand old man of Sierra Leonean politics?

Nigeria is a worry, too, for the military are credited with running the country well from 1976 until 1979, when they permitted a national election. Prime Minister Shehu Shagari is accused of favoring members of his own National Party when jobs and other perquisites are distributed. He is also regarded by numerous Nigerians as being indecisive at a time when the country's oil-derived revenues are ebbing and agricultural output has slowed. Whether or not there is discontent sufficient for the soldiers to move once more from their barracks must be a matter of local judgment and timing.

Farther afield, Zambia has been precarious for some time. President Kenneth Kaunda has been in office since 1963. The military is well armed and strong. The urban population, about 50 percent of Zambia's 6 million total, is anxious for better and less expensive consumer goods, and for an end to the shortages that plague Zambia. Beef, cooking oil, and even maize, the staple, are frequently in short supply. The main trade unions are also angry at Mr. Kaunda, but whether the soldiers are prepared to move against the "father" of their country must depend on the existence of a local version of Jerry Rawlings.

The coup in Ghana may end up being personalized, local, and of short duration. Or, as once before, the soldiers of Africa could rise up both for causes and excuses on the right as on the left.

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**Nigeria's People Are the Big Losers***Boston Globe* (9 January 1984)

Coups in small, impoverished African nations are unremarkable. Last week's military ouster of Nigeria's recently re-elected democratic government, however, was a critical event of enduring significance for politics on the continent.

Nigeria's population of at least 100 million is the largest in Africa, dwarfing all other states. At least a quarter of black Africa lives within its borders. Nigeria has also proven a mecca for immigrants from landlocked territories farther north and west.

Until three years ago, Nigeria was rich, earning the equivalent of \$25 billion a year from the export of petroleum to the United States and Britain. But, with the international slump in oil revenues, inflation, an overvalued currency, heavy infrastructural expenditures, a slide in local food production, corruption and mismanagement, the boom years have been replaced by austerity, import restrictions, shortages, service impairments, more corruption and more mismanagement. Nigeria now earns only \$14 billion each year from oil, and oil represents 90 percent of its export earnings.

*Corruption, Fiscal Mismanagement Cited*

According to Maj. Gen. Mohammed Buhari, who has emerged as the leader of Nigeria's ruling military junta, it was the failure of the civilian government to eliminate corruption and return the country to prosperity that compelled the coup. The giant republic was, he said, in danger of imminent financial collapse. So the military was obliged to assume power. But he offered no recipe for economic reform and, two days before the coup, the civilian government had announced a new, strict budget that met International Monetary Fund requirements.

Other soldiers have arrogated power in much the same way, three times before in Nigeria and on at least fifty previous occasions in Africa since 1963. But the Nigerian regime of President Shehu Shagari had been validated by a vast majority of all Nigerians as recently as August for a second four-year term. Shagari had won a hotly contested presidential election, and his Nigerian Party had obtained resounding support in all but a few of the country's nineteen states, and in both houses of the legislature.

Buhari justified his overthrow of the democratic order by citing Shagari's failure to eliminate chicanery and because the August and September balloting had been "rigged." Independent observers acknowledge the probability that the elections in two states and in scattered constituencies were marred by fraud, but the mild-mannered Shagari and his coalition party were the widespread compromise choice.

Even if there remain doubts about the election, the collapse of political participation after a five-year trial bodes ill for Africa as well as Nigeria. A parliamentary democracy from independence in 1960 to late 1965, the giant land of forest and savanna was ruled by changing sets of soldiers until they returned power to civilians in 1979. A presidential system modeled loosely on the United States' was established after lengthy debate. The reassertion of popular government and Shagari's organization of the country after a rousing first electoral campaign were widely hailed.

As Nigeria went, so could Africa. Indeed, by coincidence or in emulation, the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Upper Volta, and Ghana all more or less began to follow Nigeria's much more dramatic lead. Changing terms of world trade limited the resumption in many African countries of real electoral politics, but so long as Nigeria's example prevailed, the ideal remained. Now, destroyed as much by economics as by personal or institutional avarice, but not by ideological disputes, the hope of a steady transfer of power from the barracks to the professions and the masses remains unrealized.

### *Nigerians Stripped of Their Rights*

The military technocrats of Nigeria may be able to revitalize the country's economy. They may be able to produce more oil and sell it at favorable prices. They may be able to exhort their people to grow more food and become more self-sufficient so that import requirements can be reduced. They may or may not impose austerity and honesty on a rambunctious lively land where entrepreneurial initiative, ambition, ethnic conflict and corruption have flourished not merely for years, but for centuries. But by holding themselves out as the only true defenders of probity and efficiency, they rob the people of their right—now rarely exercised in Africa—to participate effectively in the decisionmaking process.

A free press has become shackled. A mass spirit of independence has again been stopped up. So has the capacity of the Nigerian millions to influence their own fates, and to take charge of their national destinies, forcibly been sundered.

Most of all, in a continent where all eyes are on Nigeria, a grand governmental experiment has been ended. An army officer has substituted his personal notions of right and wrong for those of the people. Other soldiers in other countries will take note and deduce approval for their own ambitions.

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### **Touré—and the Evolution of Black Africa**

*Christian Science Monitor* (4 April 1984)

The long rule of Ahmed Sékou Touré, president and founder of Guinea, marks the evolution of black Africa. Within the history of his own reign, from the liberation of Guinea from French colonial rule in 1958 to his triumphant visit to President Reagan's Washington in 1982, there was encapsulated much of the travails of modernity on the continent.

Only a week after Mr. Touré passed on, the evolution of Guinea took another turn with a military coup yesterday. Prime Minister Lansana Beavogui, the favorite to replace Touré, was ousted in a peaceful takeover.

A poorly educated labor leader of socialist leaning, Mr. Touré played David to Gen. Charles De Gaulle's Goliath. More nationalistic and populist than many of his contemporaries in French colonial Africa, he demanded more independence than General De Gaulle, then prime minister of France, was prepared to concede.

In 1958, when the other colonial possessions of France voted "yes," in a referendum, Mr. Touré defiantly orchestrated a negative vote in Guinea. General De Gaulle tossed Guinea out of

the French community, ending aid and technical assistance. It was a mark more of Mr. Touré's pride and pragmatism than his Marxism that thereafter Guinea turned toward the Soviet Union.

The Soviets, as opportunistic then as they remain, obligingly supplied training, technology, and arms. United States Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his successors worried, as well they might, about Soviet influence on then emerging Africa and on the strategic danger of Soviet bases in places like Guinea. The Soviets did take advantage, and from 1958 through much of the 1960s, and to a lesser extent into the 1970s, the Soviet Union exercised a significant role both in Guinea and in other parts of independent west Africa. Because of his relations with the Soviet patrons and because of his close ties to Kwame Nkrumah, president of Ghana during the early 1960s, Mr. Touré was assumed by the West to be Marxist in ideological conviction and commitment.

It was during those years that Mr. Touré consolidated his own grip on power within Guinea, harshly extirpating his exponents. Many were jailed, and Mr. Touré and Guinea compiled an unenviable human rights record, as so many other African nations did, throughout the relatively prosperous 1960s. Guinea was better placed than many new nations in Africa to grow rich and provide increasingly improving standards of living for its 5 million people. In the Guinean highlands, there were vast deposits of bauxite, iron ore, diamonds, gold, and uranium. Tourism was a possible magnet for European foreign exchange. At independence, Guinea was self-sufficient in food.

But Mr. Touré, in common with so many African leaders, squandered these opportunities. Because he accepted poor advice from the Soviets, because of mismanagement at home, because of overvalued exchange rates, because there were insufficient incentives for farmers, because of climatic misfortunes, and because the trade patterns of the world changed, Guinea has never realized the promise of its early independence.

The West has reason to be disappointed with Africa, and the Africans argue that the West also bears responsibility for much that has gone wrong. However the blame should be apportioned, the point is that Mr. Touré was among those African leaders who lived long enough to acknowledge the mistakes of their formative years.

Mr. Touré, like so many others, discovered that slogans, good intentions, and nationalism were not enough to uplift their peoples. He turned away from the Soviets, in 1982 publicly embracing the U.S. and promising an open door and full repatriation for the investments of the West. But, by so doing, he was again becoming pragmatic, not ideological.

True, the premises of scientific socialism had not worked in Africa. Thus, he moved his country back toward the middle ground of Afro-Socialism. This is his legacy and the position in the 1980s of nearly all Africa. The era of experimentation with Soviet sponsorship is largely over, and Africa will now necessarily need to blend incentive-based capitalism with the remnants in small-scale economies of state control. This may not mean that countries like Guinea will be better run, or their leaders less autocratic. But it does mean that they will take fewer economic risks and indulge in fewer flights of fiscal fancy.

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**Somalia and U.S. Strategic Interests**  
*Christian Science Monitor* (5 December 1984)

The hijacking of a Somali airliner on November 24 by military dissidents drew renewed attention to the deep-seated cleavages that threaten to sunder the stable appearance of the United States' firmest friend on the edge of the troubled Middle East. Because of its position, Somalia has an obvious strategic value.

President Mohamed Siad Barre recently celebrated the 15th anniversary of the military coup that brought him to power and ended Somalia's nine-year experiment with democracy. At first President Barre ruled autocratically, with lavish Soviet assistance. But he abandoned the Soviets in 1977 when they tried as well to befriend Ethiopia, Somalia's bigger neighbor and arch rival.

This shift in alliances provided an opening for the U.S., which had been very close to Ethiopia before the revolution of 1974. Since 1979 the U.S. has given significant amounts of assistance to Somalia and has refurbished the old Soviet airfield and port at Berbera, in northern Somalia across the Gulf of Aden from southern Yemen and near the critical Bab el Mandeb strait at the southern end of the Red Sea. Somalia is a country of nomads who herd cattle, sheep, and goats across a wasteland slightly smaller than Texas. Its population is about 5 million, all of whom are Muslims. They speak Somali, as well as English, Italian, and Arabic. Yet Somalia has fierce clan rivalries.

The hijackers were northerners, from what before 1960 was the British colony of Somaliland. They demanded the freeing of seven northern Somali youths who had been sentenced to die for opposing Barre's rule. They also sought the release of 14 former government officials, six of whom were jailed in 1982 for allegedly plotting a coup against Barre. The six have never been tried. Northern Somalis oppose rule by southerners, who were brought up in what was the Italian colony and then the post-World War II Trust Territory of Somalia. More than the north-south split, there is a bitter resentment in many quarters at Barre's funneling of power and privilege of office to men largely drawn from his own Marehan clan. Modern Somalia includes nine major clans, none of which is believed to contain more than 12 percent of the entire population.

In a socialist state that is demonstrably corrupt, where the opportunities for achieving fortune, or even making a living, are all in the giving of Barre and the small group around him, it is no wonder that there is discontent among those who have been pushed aside. More broadly, many politicians and officials, even some of those who are still in the government, worry that Barre wants to abandon the U.S. and resuscitate ties to the Soviets. Former Cabinet ministers cite overtures to the Soviets by President Barre which have been spurned, but may someday soon be accepted. President Barre may hanker after solid support against his internal allies, as well as the financial rewards for him and his cronies, which would follow a return to the Soviet fold.

U.S. and other foreign aid provides about 30 percent of Somali gross domestic product annually. It has been the country's main source of foreign exchange since last year, when Saudi Arabia stopped buying Somali cattle on the hoof. (The Saudis claim that Somalia is contaminated with hoof-and-mouth disease, but the Saudis also want to exert pressure on Somalia to become more puritanical in its worship of Islam.)

The Saudis were supplying petroleum, but have turned off the tap. Without oil of their own, and without the foreign exchange with which to purchase more than minimal amounts to keep the Army and Air Force in limited amounts of diesel fuel, Somalia has fallen on hard times. Its shops are empty of imports. Gas is rationed. Endless lines of cars seek their daily injection of energy.

On the surface Somalia seems secure. President Barre's praetorian guard of men drawn from his own clan is powerful. The national Army of about 60,000 men, enormous for a country of Somalia's size, is demoralized, bruised by its losing battle for the Ogaden against the Ethiopians, badly paid, and without good equipment.

In addition to the regular Air Force, President Barre recently obtained 11 Hawker Hunters from Kuwait. They are for the repression of internal dissidence.

No Somalis were available to fly or service them, however, so the President is reliably reported to have recruited white pilots from South Africa and Zimbabwe who once flew in the air forces of those countries. The aircraft are being maintained by a white-owned Kenyan company.

Because Berbera and the nearly 2,000-mile-long Somali coastline are strategically situated facing the Arabian Peninsula, the United States wants to keep its base and Somalia out of Soviet hands. It will give assistance to a country that uses it poorly, even knowing that much of the aid serves merely to shore up a regime that is unpopular and undemocratic. But official Americans also realize how fragile Somalia is and, possibly, how dangerous being tied to Barre may ultimately prove.

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### **The Sudan: Beginning the Process of Returning to Tolerant Rule**

*Christian Science Monitor* (10 April 1985)

The ouster of Gen. Jaafar Nimeiry in last weekend's bloodless coup provides a superb opportunity for the new military rulers of the Sudan to stabilize an immense country that was steadily becoming ungovernable. The United States has rightly welcomed Mr. Nimeiry's fall. Even the former President himself has wished his successors well, and crowds welcomed them by cheering in the streets of Khartoum.

Gen. Abdel-Rahman Swareddahab, who took charge of the Sudan on behalf of the Army when protests by members of the professional class and street riots swelled into an effective general strike, has inherited a full and dangerous agenda. He must end a serious revolt that has split the Sudan in half; contain urban agitation against recent price increases of staples; and alleviate starvation in the desiccated western and eastern reaches of his vast domain.

The Sudan stretches 1,300 miles from Egypt to Uganda and is a full 800 miles wide, from Ethiopia to Chad. It is Africa's largest country, containing 22 million people, 70 percent of whom are Arabs, and 30 percent are Christian and animist Africans who have no great love for their northern, Muslim, longtime rulers. The north is mostly desert. In the south the Africans live along the tangled but still mighty White Nile as it flows downstream toward Khartoum and, eventually, Cairo.

The southerners, led by Col. John Garang, who received a Ph.D. in economics from Iowa State University, virtually cut the south from the north two years ago, when President Nimeiry's sudden lurch toward Islamic fundamentalism frightened and angered the majority Dinka and

other peoples of the south. Earlier President Nimeiry had deprived the south of its autonomy within the Sudanese state, a major concession that had been wrung from him in 1972 after a 17-year civil war.

Dr. Garang's prime demand was the ouster of Mr. Nimeiry. Now that the Sudan has a new, albeit Arab-focused, government, it could be relatively easy for General Swareddahab to negotiate a truce and then a settlement with Garang and his forces. This is a time for the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, the Sudan's closest friends, to propel Swareddahab and his colleagues in that direction.

The U.S. will also want to use its position as the Sudan's major donor of aid and famine relief to encourage the kind of governmental reforms that could inspire national as well as international credibility for General Swareddahab. The Nimeiry regime was erratic and corrupt. Already Swareddahab has ordered the dismantling of the feared security police, which threatened military authority and terrorized the Sudanese. He has also released political prisoners. But bringing order as well as political participation to a Sudan that has hardly ever been governed democratically since 1954 is a tall order.

The first obstacles to the kind of political reforms that would transform Swareddahab from a well-meaning coup leader into a statesman of African repute are economic. The Sudan is deeply in debt, thanks to overspending on defense, years of mismanagement, and falling prices for cotton, its main export, during a decade when costs of imported energy have soared.

Peace in the south would permit Chevron and other international petroleum companies to resume exploration and exploitation of oil. But the south will want its share of the returns. In this delicate negotiation the U.S. may want to be helpful without being heavy handed.

General Nimeiry imposed steep price increases on bread, soap, and edible oils before flying incautiously to the U.S. He mortgaged his own future at the behest of the U.S. and the International Monetary Fund. Those increases are still necessary if the Sudan is to stop subsidizing urban consumers at the expense of agricultural producers, and if it is to stanch its desperate balance-of-payments position. But retaining all of those price rises may be too much to ask of the new regime. The next problem is one of providing the Sudan with needed austerity without again sending the mobs into the streets and giving opportunities to Col. Muammar Qaddafi of nearby Libya to pose as the champion of the oppressed.

General Swareddahab will not have an easy time. But with tactful American backing, the release of \$67 million in suspended aid funds, the transfer of 350,000 tons of foodstuffs from the U.S. to feed the hungry, and moral support of a high order, the transitional government of the Sudan ought to be able to quell urban protests, resolve the real grievances of the very different and resentful south, and begin the process of returning the Sudan to some kind of tolerant rule after nearly 16 years in General Nimeiry's capricious and hard hands.

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## **Seizing an Opportunity for Peace in Sudan**

*Christian Science Monitor* (12 April 1989)

The United States should seize the chance for decisive peacemaking in Sudan. Doing so could avert the tragic deaths of thousands of famine-stricken victims of the country's bitter civil war between Arabs and Africans.

Rebel leader John Garang, educated in the U.S. at Grinnell College and Iowa State University, recently promised that his Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) would lay down its arms. He challenged Sadiq al-Mahdi's government in Khartoum to do the same, and to talk about permanent peace.

Dr. Garang's challenge provides a grand opening for the U.S. to propel Mr. Mahdi to the negotiating table. In November, an earlier initiative on the part of Arab political partners of Mahdi proposed to end the war, but domestic jockeying for power among members of the coalition government, and fears of military interference, led to inaction.

The war itself is going badly for both sides. Short of cash, arms, and popular support, and logistically stretched, government forces from the north cannot re-supply the besieged towns of the south. There, along the upper reaches of the White Nile and on the savanna westward toward the Central African Republic, the SPLA rules.

The SPLA, without an air force, even dominates the approaches to all airports and river ports. But the SPLA, supplied from Ethiopia, is itself too weak to overrun entrenched Sudanese outposts or, effectively, to secede.

The stalemate is obvious and has led to the recent offer by Garang. What also influenced him, and should encourage the U.S. State Department to intervene diplomatically, is the enormous loss of life behind the front lines. The SPLA has prevented international relief supplies from reaching famine-stricken Southerners from Juba to Wau and beyond. It has sought to force the Sudanese government to sue for peace in order to prevent famine-related deaths; to accomplish this goal, it has hindered relief flights. Doing so has also emphasized the SPLA's efficacy and legitimacy.

The cease-fire, which Garang unilaterally proposes to maintain throughout May, recognizes the failure of his tactics and the starvation caused by those tactics. To avert renewed loss of life, and to minimize further chaos, the U.S. ought immediately to encourage a positive response by Mahdi's beleaguered government.

Sudan was once the largest recipient of U.S. aid in sub-Saharan Africa. Mahdi has himself received support from the U.S.. So has the bloated Sudanese officer corps. This is the time for the U.S. (and Britain, because of its historic ties to the formerly Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and because Mahdi was educated at Oxford) to focus again on solutions to the problems of Sudan.

Sudan itself is effectively bankrupt. Imports of energy, food, and military equipment cost far more than the country receives from the proceeds of its once highly prized cotton crop.

Despite recent backing from Libya and occasional assistance from its Arab neighbors, Sudan has tottered from economic to climatic to military crisis. There is very little left of the fabric of the country. What remains is daily drained by the civil war and by the nearly impossible job of attempting to supply victims of hunger and famine.



Complicating the civil war, there are supplies of oil in the south, some of which are in concessions operated by the Chevron Oil Company. The SPLA, like other separatist groups, hardly wants its patrimony expropriated by northerners. Nor do the Christian and animist Southerners want any longer to be ruled by Muslims from the north. Mahdi's government has suspended the nationwide application of the strict criminal notions of the Muslim *sharia*, or legal code, but Garang and his colleagues fear the return of Islamic fundamentalism.

The Southerners have innumerable grievances. Once enslaved by northerners, and later ruled and misruled by them, they claim to have borne the brunt of racism and purposeful underdevelopment. Fortunately, the insurgents of the south seek autonomy, not independence. They are not secessionists in the full sense, and Sudan risks reorganization, not dismemberment, if Garang and Mahdi talk about a permanent peace.

Peace is to everyone's advantage. The Sudan cannot continue at war. Famine, pestilence, hordes of refugees, and mounting expenses result from the fighting. The south remains paralyzed by incessant guerrilla battles. Bargaining can divide what few economic opportunities remain, like the flow of oil. Peace could also attract major developmental funds.

The trials of Sudan drag down Africa and occasion massive relief efforts which are necessary only because of war. The U.S. should take the lead in ensuring that the cease-fire sticks and leads to meaningful autonomy for the Africans of the south.

## V. No End of Challenges

Africa remained challenged by consuming issues of governance and human-influenced disaster well into the opening years of the twenty-first century. Botswana remained a well-managed democratic oasis on the continent at a time when Ghana and Nigeria, both restored to democracy, sought to restore economic prosperity to their long-suffering inhabitants and a failed state like Sierra Leone began to emerge from decades of decay. But, despite many attempted peace parleys, Somalis and Sudanese continued to battle their respective fellow countrymen; on the other side of the continent, once strong and wealthy Côte d'Ivoire rapidly fell into civil strife and near partition. In those three cases, as well as Burundi and Liberia, fear of the other and competition for scarce resources, jobs, and opportunities fueled ceaseless cross-ethnic, cross-religious hostilities. Likewise, in the so-called Democratic Republic of the Congo, one after another negotiated accord and ceasefire sundered on the shores of mineral-based avarice, personal greed, or inter-state mistrust. ("Conflict Diamonds Aren't Forever," *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 October 2001.)<sup>1</sup>

There were successful elections in Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, and finally in Kenya in late 2002. Success in each case meant that the contests were judged fair and that existing non- or quasi-democratic regimes were replaced by better-led, far more democratic presidents and governments. The Zambian election was more tainted than the others, but President Levy Mwanawasa nevertheless moved against high-level corruption; early in 2003, former President Frederick Chiluba was indicted on fifty-nine counts of theft by a public servant, becoming

among the very few African heads of state ever taken to court for speculation.

The most abused citizens, however, were those of Zimbabwe. A rigged poll in 2002 returned President Robert G. Mugabe to power despite a general condemnation of the mechanics of the election and the manner in which police, soldiers, and official thugs intimidated voters and opposition workers. Before and since the election, Zimbabwe's very strong economy slid into receivership, goods vanished from shop shelves, gasoline stations ran empty, and inflation and corruption reached astonishing levels, even for Africa. Starvation became a present danger in 2002 and 2003 for two-thirds of the country. Adding to the misery of Zimbabweans, Mugabe withheld internationally-donated food from areas which had voted for the opposition, deepening the possibility of millions of preventable deaths.<sup>2</sup>

Rainfall deficiencies in the rest of southern Africa in 2002 caused neighboring countries to appeal, as Zimbabwe did, for assistance. But none of those countries interfered politically with relief deliveries (Zambia objected to genetically modified maize, but eventually came to terms with its anxieties), and by April 2003 only Zimbabweans were continuing to anticipate deepening hunger. Malawi, where mismanagement of agricultural inputs and grain stores had added in 2001 and 2002 to the country's food deficit, recovered by 2003. ("Africa's Coming Hunger," *Christian Science Monitor*, 6 February 2002; "The Starving of Africans," *Boston Globe*, 26 June 2002.) Like all of its southern African neighbors other than Zimbabwe, it was expecting decent grain harvests in 2003, and a temporary cessation of Africa's long losing race to grow food at affordable prices sufficient to feed rural and urban dwellers alike.

In April 2003, as Nigeria headed into another national election without having resolved any of its ethnic, religious, regional/federal, economic divisions, too many of the continent's countries remained mired in war, and too few (Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda) were consistently delivering high levels of political goods to their citizens. ("A Yardstick for the Best and Worst of Africa," *Financial Times*, 25 November 2002; "Rating Africa," *Boston Globe*, 2 December 2002.)

Those who could claim a strict adherence to the rule of law were just as few. In many places, leadership was either narrowly focused or venal. ("New Breed of African Leader," 9 January 2002; "Lessons from Botswana," *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 March 2003.) Only a handful demonstrated a visionary responsibility capable of inspiring their peoples. Much of Africa in 2003 was still trying to reclaim the promise of the 1960s,

and in many respects it was still weighed down by the problems of questionable governance that had become so apparent in the 1970s and 1980s. In other words, there was still room for improvement.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on conflict diamonds and the Kimberly Process, see Ingrid J. Tamm, WPF Report 30, *Diamonds in Peace and War: Severing the Conflict-Diamond Connection* (Cambridge, MA, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> None of my many opinion articles on Zimbabwe since 2000 are included here. They will appear in a separate publication. For one article in 2001 and a host of others before that date, see *Ending Autocracy, Enabling Democracy*, especially the postscript.

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**Conflict Diamonds Aren't Forever**  
*Christian Science Monitor* (24 October 2001)

The global campaign to curb the sale of “conflict” diamonds, and thus prevent war in Africa, is near collapse. Only a concerted effort by Washington can rescue the 32-nation negotiations that once seemed so promising and effective.

Although only 4 percent of the world's rough diamonds come from the bitter conflict zones of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sierra Leone, approximately \$500 million to \$800 million is involved. (Nonwar diamonds are mined primarily in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Australia, Canada, and Russia.) About \$1 million buys approximately 90,000 high-quality repeating rifles and ammunition. Hence the critical importance of cash from diamonds.

Without illicit profits from the digging of diamonds in the mostly alluvial fields of Angola, Congo, and Sierra Leone, civil wars would be difficult to sustain. As the rebels of UNITA—the Union for the Total Independence of Angola—have in recent months lost authority in many of Angola's diamondiferous areas, their available cash has shrunk, and attacks on government forces have slowed.

In Sierra Leone, where limbless orphans testify to the ferocity of the internal combat over diamonds, rebels no longer have sole control over the diamond fields. That country's long-running war has thus largely ended, although some combat has moved into neighboring Guinea (which also has diamonds) and Liberia. Many of Sierra Leone's diamonds have found their way into government hands in Liberia and on to markets in Europe.

For 16 months, a remarkable coalition of far-sighted diamond industrialists and a hardy band of small nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have tried to develop a certification-and-passport system to differentiate nonwar diamonds from those fueling rebel movements in Africa. To avert consumer boycotts, the industry-NGO plan creates a paper trail guaranteeing the nonconflict nature of diamonds at all stages of a stone's progress from mining to sorting, to cutting and polishing, to sale as jewelry.

Doing so would accomplish two purposes: It would legitimize consumer purchases of nonwar stones. And it would depress the price that nonlegitimate diamonds could command on the world market, thus reducing the amount of cash available to buy arms and keep wars going. As nonlegitimate diamonds were squeezed out of most trading networks, so the mining of diamonds in conflict areas might gradually become unprofitable.

About half of the world's retail diamonds (by value) are sold in the United States, and only 28 percent in Asia and 13 percent in Europe. Legislation that is languishing in Congress would provide standards by which customs officials could differentiate conflict and nonconflict diamonds at ports of entry. Now there is no basis on which to bar rough diamonds, even those from countries (like Gambia) that mine no diamonds.

The proposed and bipartisan Clean Diamonds Trade Act, sponsored by Reps. Tony Hall, Frank Wolf, and many others—and very similar to a Senate bill sponsored by Sens. Mike DeWine, Dick Durbin, and Russ Feingold—would halt the import of diamonds from any country that is not part of the proposed international rough-diamond-certification process. Unfortunately, given Washington's other priorities, and concerns in the U.S. Treasury and Customs

Service about the practicalities of halting diamonds at borders, the Clean Diamonds Trade Act may not pass quickly, if at all. Executive leadership is needed.

The NGOs, the jewelry industry, and the diamond producers strongly support the U.S. legislation. De Beers Ltd., which mines 50 percent of all rough diamonds and controls 65 percent of the world's diamonds trade, backs both the legislation and the certification system.

The negotiations to craft "passports" for diamonds are known as the Kimberley Process. After meetings this year and last, the industry-NGO coalition believed it had persuaded the exporting and importing countries to sign on and cooperate. At a meeting in September, however, the European Union decided that the proposed plan could breach EU arrangements. Representatives of Washington and some African nations were also hesitant. At its meeting on October 29 in Luanda, Angola, the Kimberley Process could unravel completely.

No one wants more killings because of diamonds. Everyone who produces and sells diamonds is united in trying to ostracize rogue, war-driven stones. It would seem simple to pass U.S. legislation and finalize the Kimberley Process, but without serious efforts on the part of the U.S. Treasury and the State Department, diamonds will continue to provide the basis for war in Africa.

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### **New Breed of African Leader**

*Christian Science Monitor* (9 January 2002)

The failed and failing states of sub-Saharan Africa—including Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Zimbabwe—attract the most attention. But a quiet renaissance of positive leadership is taking hold in the region, including the Islamic northeast.

The dominant personalities in such battered places as Somalia and Somaliland are firmly on the side of the United States, and ready to be helped in rebuilding their states. No state in Africa now seeks to harbor terrorists; better rewards are to be found in alliance with the developed world.

In Botswana, Ghana, Senegal, South Africa, and Tanzania, basic human rights are being respected, and there's a promise of better times. After a year of principled leadership, Ghana is in the vanguard of change. If Ghana's gains can be sustained, West Africa will have another model to help transform a neighborhood characterized by fractiousness and meltdown.

Nigeria is a problem case. As Africa's most populous and historically most poorly governed place, its turn to democracy in 1999 seemed dramatic. But President Olusegun Obasanjo has been unable to lead the nation in a wholly positive direction. Too many of Nigeria's Muslim-dominated states have thumbed their noses at the central government. So democratic rule is a phenomenon of the center only, not of the states.

When the ingredients of visionary leadership are lacking, the stew of governance tastes sour. When they are richly available, everyone prospers and AIDS and other scourges seem survivable. The U.S. and UN need to craft new policies to support and encourage responsible leadership skills among elected officials across sub-Saharan Africa.

In South Africa, Nelson Mandela demonstrated leadership without bullying. As president, he was an inclusionist who convinced black South Africans from all backgrounds, as well as coloreds, Indians, and whites, that he was everyone's champion and that he sought a peace dividend for them, not for himself.

Neighboring Botswana, thinly populated and mostly desert, has been an oasis of steady, open rule for more than 35 years. Even before it became the world's greatest producer of gem diamonds, Botswana was well-run. It endured insults and occasional blows from apartheid South Africa, ignored the collectivist and authoritarian fancies of nearby Zambia and Tanzania, and concentrated its energies not on personal enrichment but on encouraging middle-class empowerment amid old-fashioned liberal values.

Festus Mogae, Botswana's president, had excellent role models. His predecessors were participatory, sensible, and focused on what was good for their peoples, not for themselves and their families. Sir Seretse Khama, Botswana's first president, had the charisma and stature to have gone either way. His presidencies (from 1966 to 1980) coincided with the heyday of African single-party rule, state interventionism, Afro-socialism, and nonalignment masquerading for self-aggrandizement. He could have followed the examples of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia—all well-intentioned leaders who confused personal preference with platonic wisdom.

Botswana's President Khama set a different tone for sub-Saharan Africa. He shunned motorcades, promoted by merit, insisted on orthodox methods of governance, and, most of all, measured his accomplishments by improvements in living standards, educational and medical facilities, and the quality of deliberative democracy. Many argue that Mr. Mandela and Khama inherited structures conducive to good government. If so, then neighboring Zimbabwe should have remained participatory and prosperous. Instead, it fell into the clutches of a ruthless autocrat. Under Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe is now the poster child of chaos and man-made shortages.

President Mugabe fits in the same malign mold as Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire/Congo, Idi Amin of Uganda, and Jean-Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Republic. For them, people's needs were irrelevant. It's true that sub-Saharan Africa has arbitrarily arranged postcolonial states, many too small, resource-poor, landlocked, and infused with diseases to prosper easily. Disease weakens resilience in the face of oil shocks, raw-material price collapses, and the venalities of the ruling classes.

For many of those reasons, in the very decades when Asians prospered, black Africans experienced declining standards of living and massive reductions in life expectancies. For many millions, freedom never produced peace dividends. In Asia, positive leadership, not structure or history, made a key difference. In Africa, the difference between participatory and autocratic leaders—between servants of the people and those who believe themselves anointed and all-knowing—is the key to success and failure.

Levels of schooling, world views, and prior experience do not seem to matter. Mugabe is among the most educated and worldly of Africa's leaders. Sub-Saharan Africa will continue to lurch from crisis to crisis so long as positive leadership is not strongly supported. Washington, London, Brussels, and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund need to provide tangible incentives for good leadership.

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### **Africa's Coming Hunger**

*Christian Science Monitor* (6 February 2002)

Hunger is again stalking Southern Africa. Throughout the length of the already-impoverished nation of Malawi, there is no maize, the staple food. Cassava, a substitute stomach filler, is also hard to find. So are yams. Moreover, no one seems to be doing anything to avert the coming starvation. Officials deny the seriousness of the situation.

Here, on the rainy slopes of towering Mt. Zomba in Malawi, I purchased small white potatoes and could have bought dead and live animals that were dangled from outstretched arms, a scattering of vegetables, and a variety of herbs and charms. But nothing was on sale to fill the belly in the local African manner.

Neighboring Zambia is also bereft of maize and cassava. So is Zimbabwe, traditionally a much wealthier land that usually exports maize and whose people disdain cassava and yams. In Zimbabwe, too, cooking oil and sugar (both of which Zimbabwe usually provides in abundance) are hard to find. Bread was unavailable last week.

In these three countries, up to 30 million people are at risk of going hungry by July, and millions of children are certain to become even more malnourished than they already are.

The shortages have three causes: a severe drought in the 2001 growing season, heavy rains that destroyed crops, and official mismanagement and inattention. Despite independent warnings, governments in two countries, Malawi and Zambia, have been slow to accept the extent of the maize and cassava shortfalls. Both countries have also lacked the foreign exchange with which to purchase maize from South Africa or more distant exporters.

The growing hunger in Zimbabwe has more directly man-made causes. By attacking commercial farmers steadily since 2000, President Mugabe has destroyed agricultural productivity. In recent months, too, Mugabe's thugs have confiscated maize being stored on farms to feed loyal farm workers, adding to the spread of rural famine. Despite forecasted maize shortfalls, the government sold its existing inventory of maize to the Congo and Kenya in October. High-placed individuals profited.

In order to feed Zimbabwe from February to July, when this year's maize crop will have been harvested, transported, and milled, the country will have to import about 750,000 metric tons of maize. That means moving 150,000 tons a month along congested rail lines from South Africa, or receiving the equivalent in U.S. surplus maize directly or from the UN World Food Program via Dar es Salaam in distant Tanzania.

All of this is tortuous, late, expensive (if purchased from South Africa), and politically volatile. Yet Zimbabwe, unlike Zambia and Malawi, is virtually bankrupt because of Mugabe's troops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and official corruption. Zambia and Malawi are poor and lack funds to invest in their people's welfare.

Indeed, Zambia's long-nationalized, mismanaged, and patronage-ridden copper industry, which provides 75 percent of the nation's export earnings, is about to collapse. By the end of 2002, Zambia may lose its main source of employment.

Malnutrition will hardly help the millions who are HIV-positive fight off AIDS. All three countries have adult HIV-positive rates approaching 30 percent. Malawi, with one physician per

60,000 persons, has the weakest health-care system, but the other two, especially cash-starved Zimbabwe, are also desperate.

Zambia has a new government, but the recent regime of President Frederick Chiluba was notoriously corrupt and magnificently neglectful of its people's welfare.

Once-tranquil Malawi has also been going through a crisis of governance and alleged corruption. Judges have been impeached, a tough and honest finance minister sacked, university students shot, and democracy made more precarious.

In a country where donors provide up to 15 percent of the annual gross domestic product, Denmark has recently withdrawn its mission in disgust, Britain is withholding balance of payments support, and the U.S. has reduced aid.

Even if Mugabe is ousted in next month's election in Zimbabwe and President Levy Mwanawasa of Zambia revamps his predecessor's policies, the specter of hunger will still hang over their two countries, and even more unfortunate and beleaguered Malawi. Massive outside humanitarian aid is required immediately. It should be coupled with outside insistence on governmental probity, but that may be asking a lot.

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### **The Starving of Africans**

*Boston Globe* (26 June 2002)

Thirteen million Africans risk starving between now and November, thanks more to local leadership failures than to drought. Naked greed and political calculation, when coupled with spotty rains and poor maize harvests across a broad swath of southern Africa, have resulted in disaster. Wealthier nations will now have to provide relief supplies, if only needy African governments let them. When the Group of Eight leading industrial nations meets this week in Canada, feeding Africa's hungry should be high on its agenda.

Earlier this month, in the rural and urban markets of southern Africa, maize kernels and ground-up maize flour (the basis of all local meals) were either scarce or wildly expensive. I saw 50-kilogram sacks of maize being imported into Malawi from Mozambique, sold for a 15 percent profit, then transported to large cities for a further 20 percent markup. With worsening conditions, the price of a bag of unprocessed maize kernels will increase astronomically.

The worst affected areas in Africa are Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, where politicians refused to heed early warnings of crop failure, illicitly exported grain from their strategic stockpiles, profited from pilfered reserves, and now use food as a political weapon. Lesotho and Swaziland are also facing shortages.

The efforts of such energetic suppliers of food relief as the World Food Program of the United Nations and U.S. and European bilateral donors have been thwarted by theft and profiteering on the part of some governmental officials and, in Zimbabwe, on the embattled regime's determination to keep food away from its opponents. Additionally, the Zimbabwean government has refused, on spurious grounds, to accept U.S.-donated maize in case it might have been grown on genetically modified plants. (The United States sanctioned Zimbabwe's leadership earlier this year, so this is a tit for tat at the expense of the poor.)



Of the 13 million Africans facing imminent hunger and possibly starvation, 6 million to 7 million are Zimbabweans. Their country was once the bread basket of Africa, with healthy annual surpluses of maize as well as good supplies of winter-grown wheat. In 2000, however, the government of President Robert Mugabe began attacking the most productive white- and black-owned commercial farms, rapidly destroying their ability to grow food or cash crops. By 2001, for a variety of reasons, Zimbabwe was effectively bankrupt, so Mugabe's men exported a vast strategic grain reserve for cash. When it became clear that the 2002 maize harvest in March would be small (mostly because of farm invasions, not so much because of weak rains), the government store was bare and there was no money to purchase maize from South Africa or Argentina.

To compound the misery of Zimbabweans, the country's minister of agriculture and other associates of Mugabe refused until April to agree that the country would run out of staple food. Opposition politicians had predicted disaster last September. But for purposes of propaganda before the presidential election in March, his government denied the possibility of shortfalls. Even after belatedly acknowledging the country's precarious food situation in April, the government has harassed external relief efforts and has succeeded in denying food relief to areas that voted against Mugabe in March.

About 3 million Malawians also risk starving. The national maize harvest in March was much smaller than usual, and the country's strategic grain reserve, which usually compensates for bad harvests, was empty. Politicians had appropriated 167,000 tons of maize—the entire reserve—and sold it. Several key national leaders profited handsomely.

In Zambia, where about 2 million may starve, politicians mismanaged the supply of seeds and fertilizer, then refused to prepare for pending food shortages until it was too late.

American and European aid agencies and the World Food Program are now rushing maize and wheat to Malawi and Zambia, purchasing the South African surplus to supply the same countries, and negotiating unsuccessfully with the Zimbabwean authorities over when and how relief shipments will be received and to whom the food will go.

Because of governmental delays and muddles in all three countries, poverty, and transportation bottlenecks, the food donors' valiant efforts will be insufficient to prevent millions from perishing. Women and children are especially vulnerable.

Donors may be able to move sufficient food into Malawi and Zambia greatly to mitigate some hunger. Lesotho and Swaziland will get help from South Africa and the World Food Program. But only South African official action or an unlikely humanitarian impulse by Mugabe will make food available to those at greatest risk in Zimbabwe. Washington and London should speak loudly against a ruler who kills his own people, but so far their shouting has availed little and hardly dented the suffering of ordinary Zimbabweans.

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**A Yardstick for the Best and Worst of Africa***Financial Times* (25 November 2002)

Now that the New Partnership for Africa's Development has reneged on its original plan to subject the character and quality of national governance in Africa to peer review, the need for a method to improve the way the continent governs itself is more urgent than ever.

Many African nations, and others elsewhere in the developing world, are poorly governed. It is a recipe for lagging behind the rest of the world in economic growth, in medical and educational attainments, in social and political betterment and in freedom from internal conflict. If governance could be improved, in Africa and elsewhere, infant mortality rates would fall, the struggle to contain the Aids epidemic might be winnable and civil wars would prove less deadly.

Well-governed states perform for their citizens. They deliver high levels of security, frame a strong rule of law, respect political freedoms and human rights, nurture strong institutions, provide quality educational and health services, strengthen or regulate effective infrastructure, bolster an economic framework conducive to growth and prosperity, offer an atmosphere in which civil society can flourish, and regulate the environmental commons for the benefit of all.

Botswana has since independence in 1966 delivered such public goods consistently and with great impact on the lives, attainments and prosperity of its people. Diminished governments such as those of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola or Sierra Leone over time have preyed on their own citizens and delivered few, if any, public goods. Their arteries of commerce, educational and medical systems, and security operations are sclerotic. Rule of law is honoured in the breach. Political institutions are rudimentary.

Zimbabwe is a once well-governed state that, thanks to President Robert Mugabe's ruthless greed for power and wealth, now teeters on the brink of failure. Rule of law is gone, political institutions are much weakened, the economy is in free fall and only ruling party thugs are secure. The best-governed and worst-governed states of Africa stand out. But how do the others rank? How do they compare with south-east Asian or Latin American nations?

Now that Nepad has changed course, we need a valid method of designating the positive achievers and contrasting them with those needing improvement. Creating a new rating method for African and other developing world nations should spur the least well-governed countries and their rulers to strive to improve, if only in order to attract foreign investment and donor support. Indeed, the road to better governance begins with a public recognition of comparative governmental quality among developing nations.

What is needed is a method of anointing those countries and leaders that are providing well, and shaming those who, for a variety of reasons, perform less effectively than their peers. Groups of experts could offer a subjective, impressionistic formula for rating such nation states on the qualities of their governance. But we need a method that is much more rigorous, and so thoroughly objective as to be free of bias.

Objectivity can be enhanced and rankings made less prone to impression (and thus criticism) if the essence of good governance is quantified. Among the dozen or so plausible indicators, for example, are: infrastructural growth (relatively easy to reduce to numbers), security (harder), political freedoms and human rights (also difficult) and adherence to the rule of law

(much tougher). The delivery of economic betterment and prosperity can be approximated relatively easily through using familiar proxies such as per-capita gross domestic product.

Measuring educational and health changes is relatively straightforward, using percentages of school age children in school, infant mortality trends and so on. Concern for the environment or hostility to civil society is more difficult to measure, but not impossible. The precise proxies, and choosing the ones that will measure good governance best, should be subject to extensive debate. But an array of proxies can surely be found to do the job, permit governments to be ranked numerically and with some transparency, and thus enable international agencies and critics, donors and concerned observers to praise the best in Africa and elsewhere, and criticise those falling behind. Citizens can thus act, too, in their own interest.

A good governance ranking system could make a difference in the developing world. At the very least, it would focus attention on a critical problem bedeviling many struggling nations.

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### **Rating Africa**

*Boston Globe* (2 December 2002)

Strengthening African governance requires a new method of comparing those nations who deliver essential public goods to their citizens against those failing to perform well or at all. Africa declared in July that it would monitor and improve its national forms of governance. Now it says that it will not.

Africa, led by Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, has decided not to use a promised peer review mechanism, or anything else, to classify states like Liberia, the Sudan, or Zimbabwe (among many others) as nonperforming. Peer review, as a way of encouraging the worse governed African states to do better, was developed in exchange for higher levels of donor assistance to Africa from the developed world. But criticizing each other's deficiencies clearly had its perils, even for the new Africa that Mbeki and Obasanjo are attempting to create.

Economic empowerment and improved living standards depend in large measure on good governance, the rule of law, political freedoms, stability, low levels of corruption, and a strong infrastructure. Foreign investment and donor assistance flow to the better-governed countries. The fast-growing countries of the developing world all deliver high-quality public goods, the building blocks of successful governance. Those places with severely reduced living standards, massive health and educational crises, collapsing roads, and gruesome civil wars are governed shamefully.

The best-governed (Botswana, Mauritius, Senegal) and the worst-governed states of Africa stand out. But how do the others rank? How do they compare to Southeast Asian or Latin American nations? Any attempts to help Africans uplift the poorly governed regions depend in large part on a valid method of designating the positive achievers and encouraging and helping others.

Already, by assiduously rating the countries of the world on the degrees to which each is corrupt, Transparency International has effectively forced the existence of corruption out of the

closet, stigmatized those ranked most corrupt, stimulated national miscreants to combat the scourge of corruption, and held all nations to a single, measurable standard.

Governance requires a similar, parallel method of designating those nations and leaders who are governing well and those who are not. In-country experts could offer their opinions, a subjective method similar to Transparency's. But a more objective approach would be less liable to criticism, especially given the natural sensitivity of governments to any index of comparative successes and failures.

During the past four years Kennedy School graduate students and I have been attempting to create a quantitative ranking system for African and other developing world countries. We use an array of measurable proxy output indicators, and continually refine their variety and calibrate their precision.

Using such a method, good governance can be measured by the extent to which a country provides national and human security, a strong legal framework (including independent judges), permits political participation, enables economic growth, and fosters an entrepreneurial climate, offers macroeconomic and fiscal stability, limits corruption, maintains a solid infrastructure, educates effectively, ministers to health needs, and protects the environment. Each of those criteria demands several kinds of quantifiable calculations. But they can be made, and the appropriate kinds of statistical tests applied.

The results, especially after several years of ratings, could provide data for donors and investors. Flows of outside funds could thus be directed to those countries that are making tough choices and performing more effectively for their citizens. Equally important, if a ranking system is seen as fair and objective, it can spur the nations and their ruling elites to improve their adherence to the rule of law, grant more political participation, and pay better attention to different methods of empowering their citizens. A rating method would demonstrate how severely countries such as Liberia and Zimbabwe, and even some of the presumably middle-performing states, including Cameroon or Chad, are cheating their citizens of their inalienable rights and depriving them of opportunities.

If the people of Botswana can enjoy the benefits of esteemed methods of governance, why not others? An objective ranking system should at the least validate and support the efforts of those leaders who are trying to make Africa do more for all of its peoples.

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### **Lessons from Botswana**

*Christian Science Monitor* (3 March 2003)

GABORONE, BOTSWANA—This is the heart of a very special Africa. It is the kind of place where an ex-head of state answers his own cell phone and rushes to the airport to greet an American visitor, displaying a modest decorum unusual among former African presidents.

Former President Sir Ketumile Masire's tactful underplaying of his own prominence and importance as Botswana's revered second president exemplifies the Botswanan difference. Unlike many of its neighbors, this gentle nation has always enjoyed and now actively expects honest, visionary leadership, good governance, and a macroeconomic regime conducive to economic growth. Because of such favorable conditions, the annual per capita GDP of Botswanans

is at least 10 times greater than that of those who live in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

This pattern of responsible leadership began with Botswana's founding president, Sir Seretse Khama and now continues under President Festus Mogae. He speaks straightforwardly to visitors, refuses motorcades, and eschews the expensive private jets favored by presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Sam Nujoma of Namibia, and King Mswati III of Swaziland.

Mr. Mogae even mused to a recent visitor about the possibility—remote, he thinks—that his ruling Botswana Democratic Party would refuse to renominate him for a second presidential term. Hardly any other serving African president could contemplate such a result, much less discuss it rhetorically. More often, African presidents attempt to rewrite constitutional provisions forbidding third and fourth terms (as in Malawi, Namibia, Togo, and Zambia), run roughshod over their political parties and their electorates, bribe oppositions, or blatantly rig elections, as last year in Zimbabwe. Mogae, however, makes it clear that if he should be reelected president in 2004, his term will have to end exactly on the 10th anniversary of his first presidential day, at the end of March, 2008.

Botswana is no paradise, except comparatively, but the rest of Africa can learn much from its practices. Indeed, Africa's most critical concerns are readily apparent here in the sleepy, stable capital of the continent's longest-enduring democracy. Once poor and uneducated, most of its people now receive eight years of schooling, know no hunger, and have been promised free retroviral medicines if they test positive for AIDS. It is a relatively contented oasis, with much to teach the rest of Africa, because of a firm adherence to the rule of law, the comparative absence of corruption, and a pattern of tolerant, benevolent rule.

Not all Botswanan professionals live in three-bedroom brick houses with swimming pools and a small garden, but there are many who do. When a university lecturer, his family, and I had tea together last month in the garden near one swimming pool, Mogae and his government came in for gentle criticism, but more because of what more they could do for the people and less because of personal failings or excesses. In similar settings in most of the rest of Africa, a visitor would have heard talk about major presidential errors and gross governmental mistakes. Complaints about corruption would have been on every lip. Moreover, less-favored Africans would fear being shot or tortured for criticizing the behavior of their "big man."

Botswana has among the world's highest recorded national HIV prevalence rates. But at least it is doing what it can to combat the scourge of AIDS. Mogae campaigns vigorously for awareness, prevention, and safer sex. His government provides free retroviral medicines for anyone infected.

Much of Africa is deficient in Botswana's qualities. Too often, and in too many other countries, the performance criteria that signify positive governance are honored in the breach, economic prospects are limited by large deficits, galloping official theft, overregulation, and weak rule of law. Too many of Africa's leaders feather their own nests while disdaining the needs and rights of their subjects. The leadership failures of most African heads of state are obvious to indigenous inhabitants wanting good schools, medical clinics, decent roads, internet connections, and fundamental security.

Thanks to the vision of Sir Seretse Khama, his little country's political culture is firmly participatory, ethical, and committed to service delivery. Botswana's emphasis on the last point

contrasts starkly with many of its neighbors, where education and health for the people are sacrificed on the altar of defense spending, jobs for the big guys, lavish palaces, corrupt payoffs, and a macroeconomic framework designed to benefit elites.

As Botswana has grown strong, thanks to a supportive governmental and economic framework and gem diamonds, other raw material producers in Africa—especially the oil exporters—are poorly governed and have transferred much of their riches into the hands of a privileged few.

Doubtless there are cultural reasons within Africa for some of these differences, but most reflect the personal predilections of sets of charismatic but overbearing leaders. Botswana has been spared that affliction, and now is capable of resisting any future leader who tries to behave as autocratically as President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe or recent President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya.

It is not so much that Botswana is remarkably well run, it is that it is run for its people, not for a ruling clique or a band of well-connected crooks. Other Africans deserve as much.

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