

NIGERIA - GENERAL

1995

~~NO~~ DECEMBER

Special summit called over Nigeria

ARLT 1/12/95 (226)

GABORONE — Botswana's President Ketumile Masire will call a special summit of southern African leaders to discuss sanctions against Nigeria

Presidential secretary Bergsman Sentile said "The meeting is being arranged We are contacting the heads of states to arrange a convenient date"

South African's President Mandela had asked Mr Masire, chairman of the 12-nation Southern African Development Community, to convene a summit on Nigeria Mr Masire discussed the issue with his Foreign Minister Mompoti Merafhe before deciding to convene it, said Mr Sentile — Reuter

Mandela and Nigeria

(226)

Sowetan 1/12/95

By Mathatha Tsedu
Political Editor

Moral outrage is not enough, economic and political pressure against Nigeria is needed

PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA TRAVELLED to the Northern Province last Friday to officiate, together with Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, at the opening of the new bridge over the Limpopo River

The bridge is important to the economic wellbeing of the two countries. But it was not the foremost thing on Mandela's mind on Friday

That was Nigeria, or more accurately, Zimbabwe and Nigeria. When the Nigerian crisis began during the Commonwealth summit in New Zealand, Mandela and Mugabe were in the forefront of calls for punitive measures against Nigeria for executing Ken Saro-Wiwa and his fellow activists

Sanctions have, however, not come about because the main customers for the junta's oil, Britain and the United States, have not implemented it. The two countries argue that the United Nations Security Council should impose sanctions

South Africa, for its part, with hardly any economic links with Nigeria, recalled its ambassador. It has also been calling for international oil sanctions

Mandela insulted

Mandela's actions have earned him the wrath of Nigeria's dictators, who have taken to insulting him personally. Mandela soldiered on. After all, he had the support of other Commonwealth African members (Zimbabwe in particular)

Until last week, when Zimbabwe said it would not impose or call for sanctions against Nigeria. Malawi had said the same earlier. Which caused the change in attitude?

It was this that would have been uppermost in Mandela's mind last Friday

And Mugabe must have clarified his views, for at the end of the discussions, the Zimbabwean president reaffirmed his support for sanctions against Nigeria

Until then, it was beginning to look more and more as if Mandela was out on a limb and that the 'old boys' club of African politics was behaving as in days of old, when atrocities continued without as much as a whisper from other states

Human rights abuses

With many countries not too far behind Nigeria in denying their own citizens their due rights, it is not surprising that Africa has not come out in unison against Nigeria's military rulers

Those who live in glass houses, the saying goes, should not throw stones

Those pushing Mandela to act place much worth on his so-called moral power of persuasion - that if he were to speak against Nigeria, the dictators would obey

Those who adopt this attitude forget that even on the night before the hangings, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's efforts to speak to General Sani Abacha were fobbed off, with juniors telling Mbeki the hangings were not about to happen

That Saro-Wiwa and the others were killed despite those interventions shows that, unfortunately, the world

Those who live in glass houses, the saying goes, should not throw stones

does not run on moral power alone. It needs more earthly factors like business power and money

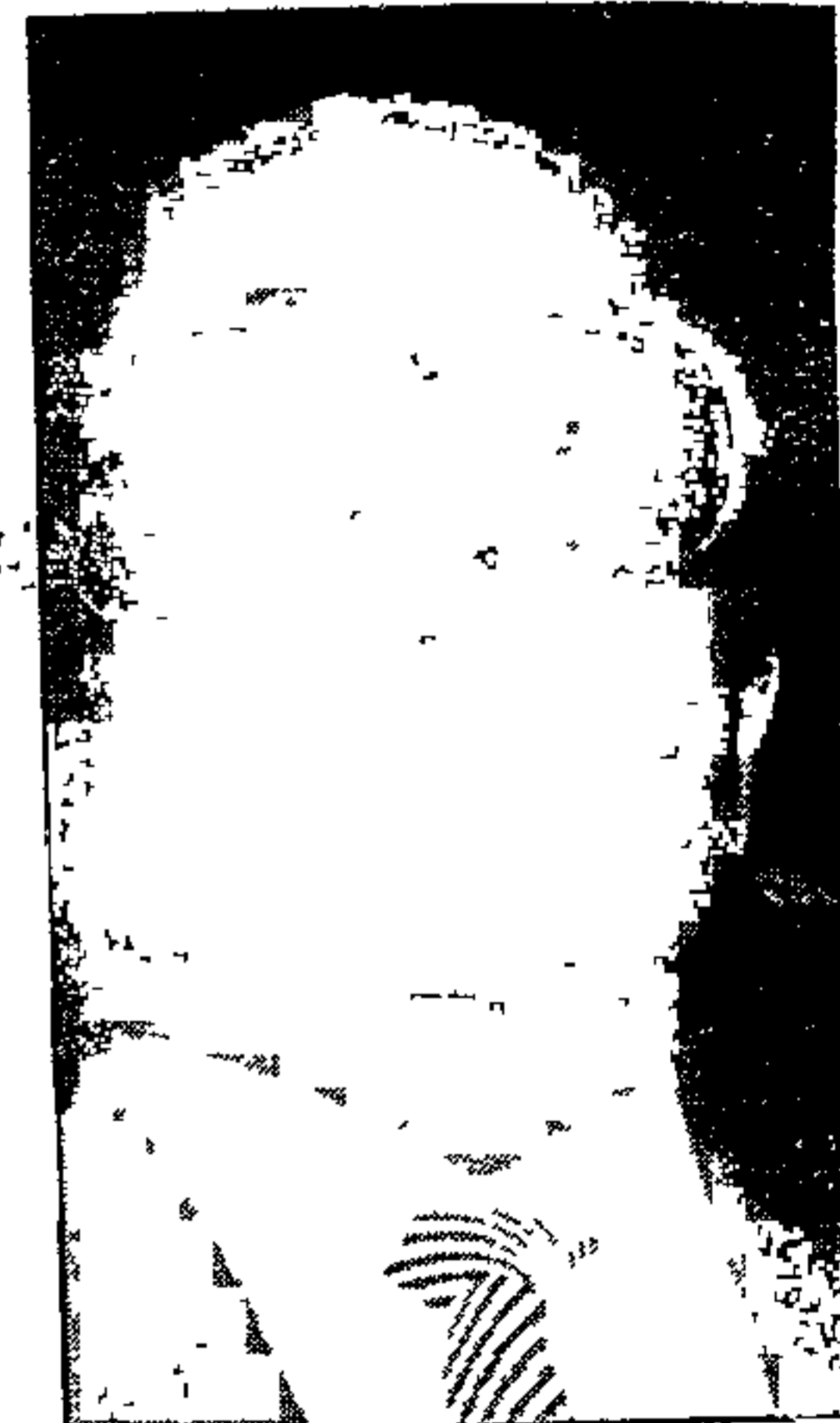
South Africa does not have that hold over Nigeria, and can only appeal to it - and be ignored and insulted, as has happened. Those with the power,

the US and Britain, are not using it. They are certainly not moving with the haste they normally show when Middle East countries are the culprits

With the US no longer buying oil from Iran, Iraq and Libya, its oil sources are drying up. The absence of Nigerian oil from the world market would see the price go through the roof

It is in this scenario that Mandela has to operate, waging a virtual one-state war against human abuse. It is correct policy but cognisance must be taken of what South Africa can and cannot do

In this onerous task, company is extremely important, especially in Southern Africa. Mugabe's support is therefore vital in Mandela's efforts to marshal Africa behind the advance of human rights



Robert Mugabe... his support for human rights is vital.



would have set an important precedent.

Individual businessmen share the same anxieties about the way that the world is going as do intelligent people of other backgrounds. Yet as a collective, they seem peculiarly resistant to the idea that morality and advantage might coincide in an effort to adopt common standards of production, safety and environmental care, and to avoid collusion with bad governments.

As George says "Why doesn't just one of them do it? And see if the consumers of the world would flock to its doors? I think they would. All the corporations think of is doing good public relations, and not of doing good, which might turn out to be the best public relations of all." — *The Guardian*

Fragile shell: Nigerians demonstrate outside Downing Street against Shell's behaviour

PHOTOGRAPH CLIVE GRYLIS

The world's multinational corporations

Does big business have to behave unethically to make profits, asks **Martin Woollacott**

THE multinational corporation, today an even greater force in the world than it was 30 years ago when the first concerted criticism of corporate power emerged in western countries, is in moral crisis.

The behaviour of Shell in Nigeria — right up to its announcement almost immediately after the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa that it is to go ahead with a new natural gas project there — is the case that proves the point.

Shell's failure to deal with the consequences of its decisions in Ogoniland is one example of a widespread abdication of responsibility by big corporations. Multinationals are insisting not only that they take an absolutely neutral line on the politics of the countries in which they invest and trade, but that they must "work with" local standards of ethics and morality. Thus opportunistic relativism is spreading rapidly.

Multinationals are moving swiftly into countries with oppressive governments, such as Burma. "Dollars matter more than democracy," one foreign businessman there said recently.

Large United States corporations were the principal forces which undercut President Bill Clinton's efforts to link human rights in China with trade. It is possible today to see an economic equivalent of appeasement operating in the world, with the old industrialised, democratic world collaborating with bad regimes — not so much through formal political association as through the multinational corporations which link their economies.

Nor is the development that the multinationals are bringing about in the poorer half of the world necessarily the

right kind of development. This may seem an unfair argument when you consider that investment by multinationals in the South has grown hugely since 1989 and that in roughly the same period this has created 12-million jobs, half of them in China.

The problem with such statistics, however, is that they ignore the political conditions of investment and also the very high investment-to-jobs ratio involved. The hundreds of millions of people who need work in the poorer countries could not conceivably be accommodated with jobs paid for at this kind of price. What is wanted in such countries is job-rich ventures. The combinations of cheap skilled labour and relatively high technology that multinationals create may be welcome, but they cannot be an overall solution.

The worst suspicion is that corporations have gone beyond any supposed neutrality over political conditions to develop an attachment to a particular level of bad government, not so bad as to create chaotic conditions for business, but tough enough on its citizens to ensure a combination of public order, cheap labour, and low environmental and safety costs.

The most notable feature of the world economy is that comparative advantage rests more and more on social factors. The profits of corporations depend so much on exploiting the gradient between the wages, resource costs, and the environmental and safety conditions of different countries that they can be deemed to have an actual interest in the maintenance of certain kinds of authoritarian government.

This must not be so oppressive as to lead to social unrest, or so lax as to permit banditry, but above these low levels corporations may well find bad government not only acceptable but useful. As Susan George, a veteran critic of multi-

nationalism and the international financial institutions, says of corporations: "They need a minimum of order, policing and infrastructure, but after that they lose interest in the local politics."

Most corporations would now see the Nigerian government as falling below that line. It is too corrupt and too inefficient. In recent years, many big firms have reduced their scale of operations there. Nigeria illustrates the differences between resource corporations, who must extract what they need where it is in the ground and cannot quarrel with geography, and the others, who can retreat from investments and markets if the situation becomes too difficult.

Shell's argument in Nigeria appears that it operates there in joint venture

Structures of protection have been dismantled, and there is hardly a country in the world in which multinationals cannot work, and very few in which there are any serious limitations on their activities. The corporations ought to be happy companies of men.

But they are notoriously unhappy organisations. Looked at from the outside, multinational corporations seem very strong, but, from the inside, it seems they feel vulnerable indeed. If corporations are world managers today, they are not good ones — because they work on the basis of an almost complete separation of trade from politics.

MW (PMM) 1-7/12/95 (226)

with the government, and the government would not countenance a reduction in profits that would have followed from spending money on compensation and cleaning up pollution. Shell does not say, but it follows that the Nigerian government is by its character incapable of responding to social protest except by force and that if Shell had acted unilaterally, it would have been acting against the government.

Shell's difficulties can be imagined, and there is no reason not to accept that the corporation faces a very complex situation in Nigeria. Yet the apparent absence of moral calculation from its behaviour is striking and the more men who were executed are only the most obvious of those who have paid the price for that lack of morality.

The most notable feature of the world economy is that comparative advantage rests more and more on social factors

At the root of corporate behaviour is a contradiction. Multinational firms have in recent years been able to operate much more freely than before, thanks to worldwide privatisation and deregulation, and to the changes that have taken us from the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to the World Trade Organisation.

In exchange for the unprecedented access they enjoy, there seems to be an unspoken agreement that corporations will take few ethical stands and generally resist any attempt to use trade sanctions to bring about political change. One side is free to trade as it sees fit, and the other to rule as it sees fit.

The result is corporations see themselves as having few choices, as victims of circumstance, and they tend to react to protest movements even in their home countries as another of their problems. Managers are right to feel they are guardians of the productivity which

One side is free to trade as it sees fit, and the other to rule as it sees fit

keeps the world turning and that the way in which productivity is achieved cannot be spotless in a difficult, and chaotic world. But there are surely degrees.

Theo Orlemans, Dutch head of the Nigerian natural gas company in which Shell has its stake, who announced in October that a new plant would go ahead, says "I have not been able to see how stopping this project will help anybody, including the Ogoni people." In the narrowest sense he may be right. Yet a serious gesture by Shell would have hurt the Nigerian government in perhaps the only way it can be hurt and

Face high moral crises

P.T.O.

Saro-Wiwa was an 'international comman'

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The colonel who directed the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa tells **Chris McGreal** he has no regrets

COLONEL DAUDA MUSA KOMO, the military governor of Rivers State in Nigeria, which encompasses Ogoniland, prefers his bowler hat and traditional dress to the uniform and braid to which his rank as an army colonel entitles him

Komo also begs to differ when it comes to international condemnation of his state's "Civil Disturbance Tribunal" which sent Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists to the gallows earlier this month. It was Komo who directed the executions — reportedly badly bungled — and was responsible for disposing of the bodies

Saro-Wiwa was one of "a handful of international comman who successfully manipulated their own kith and kin," Komo states flatly. "Above all, sadly with the connivance of the international media, they have manipulated international opinion."

With at least 19 more Ogonis facing execution on murder charges, Komo vows that the cases will continue to be heard by the special, non-jury tribunals despite their condemnation as kangaroo courts by international human rights organisations and legal experts

He said the current situation in Ogoniland justified the bypassing of regular civilian courts and the appeals process as an emergency measure to stamp out unrest

Komo argued that it was not until

Saro-Wiwa's trial that the international community voiced criticism of the tribunals

"So what is so unique? I don't see now what is the exception or why there is something wrong with it. This is part of Nigerian law. Every country applies the law based on the special circumstances that are prevalent," Komo said

"You know we have the same tribunal to try drug traffickers? Those tribunals have the death penalty as well. Strangely enough, among the same Western democracies and those now telling us about international law and processes, that tribunal has met the international standards because it is serving Western interests."

The tribunals, comprising two civilian judges and an army officer experienced in law, were set up by military decree eight years ago. Appeals can be made only to the country's military dictator, General Sani Abacha, and his ruling council

A separate decree permits similar trials for violent criminals. Hundreds of those convicted have been machine-gunned to death

Nigerian human rights groups condemned the speed of the Saro-Wiwa group's executions only 10 days after conviction, and after Abacha's ruling council spent only four hours reviewing the details of a nine-month-long trial

Lawyers also point out that the extent of the Nigerian government's commitment to due process can be seen in Abacha's decrees exempting his regime from accountability to the courts.

Komo, like his boss, appears genuinely baffled by international reaction to the Ogoni executions



Ken Saro-Wiwa: He manipulated international opinion says the man who directed his execution

"Those who fall foul of our laws normally try to hide behind human rights abuse to try to malign our government for taking action," Komo said. "I can assure you that judging by any standard, especially African

standards, even European countries, I don't think any of them can boast of any better human rights record than us here in Nigeria."

"Take the situation of the British and the Northern Ireland crisis. We

have access to a lot of the material and methods used there by the British forces. We have not used even one hundredth of those techniques here in Nigeria in ensuring law and order are brought under control in Ogoniland."

Saro-Wiwa and the other hanged Ogonis were buried in Port Harcourt's public graveyard. The police have since prevented anyone visiting it — including the families.

The colonel says he wants to prevent the bodies being used to whip up unrest. He denies press reports that acid was poured on the corpses to dispose of them more quickly.

He said "We know we are dealing with people with no respect for the truth or respected values. We were good enough to preserve the bodies. We buried them in coffins." — *The Guardian*

Chananan President Jerry Rawlings has appealed to his Nigerian and South African counterparts to refrain from public recriminations and personal attacks against each other, the Ghana News Agency said this week.

"As a colleague and friend of both [General Sani Abacha and President Nelson Mandela], I have been seriously concerned about the unfortunate situation where in recent days heated exchanges have taken place in the international media between my two brother heads of state," Rawlings was reported as saying.

"In a battle between elephants, it is the grass that gets trampled," he said.

Mandela's has been one of the loudest voices against Nigeria following the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine fellow activists — *Sapa/AFIP*

SADC set to call special summit on Nigeria

~~SAW 1/12/95~~ SPAN 1/12/95 (226) ~~(226)~~

Gaborone - Botswana's President Ketumile Masire is set to call a special summit of southern African leaders to discuss sanctions against Nigeria following the hanging of nine minority rights activists last month, it was announced yesterday.

Masire's secretary, Bergsman Sentile, said "The meeting is being arranged. We are contacting the heads of states to arrange a convenient date."

President Mandela last month asked Masire to convene a summit on Nigeria in his capacity as current chairman of the 12-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC).

A diplomatic source said the summit was expected to be held in South Africa, possibly on December 11.

In Pretoria, a government

source said Mandela wanted to report to the SADC on initiatives he had taken to put pressure on Nigeria's military rulers after the arbitrary hangings.

These included telephone conversations with British Prime Minister John Major and US President Bill Clinton urging them to impose a ban on purchase of Nigerian oil, the country's most important export.

Mandela also summoned top local officials of the Shell oil company, which has major interests in Nigeria, to demand that Royal Dutch/Shell pulls out of Nigeria.

Washington has rejected an oil embargo and Britain has not ruled out sanctions against Nigeria's military rulers.

Diplomatic sources said Mandela had been furious last month when he learned of the hangings

while attending the Commonwealth summit in New Zealand.

They said he told fellow Commonwealth leaders he expected his policy of quiet diplomacy to save the lives of the nine men.

The New Zealand summit suspended Nigeria from the Commonwealth and gave its military rulers two years in which to return the country to civilian rule.

A South African source said Pretoria expected SADC states to reach a common consensus consistent with the Commonwealth agreement on Nigeria.

Diplomatic sources said, however, that some SADC countries were wary of South Africa's summit call.

One source said Pretoria should have prepared the way better by sending a special envoy to regional leaders - Reuters.

Saro-Wiwa's spirit lives on in this passionate heart

THE MAUREEN ISAACSON INTERVIEW



The Giant of Africa, as Nigeria is known, is a monster. This is the message Ogoni Community Association president Lazarus Tamana brought to Johannesburg this week

In Ogoniland in the oil-rich Niger Delta, where he comes from, the skies are hunched by gigantic oil flares. They are void with smoke, pollution and rage. His blue batik *kembe*, a cotton suit has been worn and stitched in this phase that has laden his eyes with sorrow.

In the wake of the hangings of minority activists Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others, he has come to South Africa to plead the cause of his people, whom he believes are threatened with extinction.

The Nigerian airport authorities have been issued with his name by General Abacha's military officials and it will be a long time before he sees his parents, Patrick and Rose Tamana, again. They live in Ogoniland's Bodo, his oil-rich birthplace. He talks about pipes that run through the land that was once arable and fertile. About hydrocarbons that cling to the air before the rain turns them to acid. There is no compensation for the oil spills caused by corrosion and faulty equipment, he says. He tells of hunger and respiratory diseases that have set in. He talks of the 7,000 troops who have moved into the 646 sq km containing the six kingdoms that make up Ogoniland. Tamana explains that they have come to ensure that the people will be intimidated into staying at home instead of farming what remains of their land. That they have come to rob, to rape and to murder; to massacre, to deappropriate and dismember.

Dress in black in Ogoniland these days and you are arrested for mourning Ken Saro-Wiwa and the eight recently hanged activists, he says. Already 21 people face the death sentence next month for

He talks about pipes that run through land once fertile and arable. About hunger and respiratory disease

implication in the same murders for which the nine were hanged. And you can forget about religious worship in this predominantly Christian area. He shows me a piece of paper on which it is written that in the past two weeks a stop has been put to all religious services and last week more than 1,000 Bibles were destroyed, bishops, pastors and teachers were arrested.

If the military is allowed to continue to brutalise and isolate these people in this way, what will become of the fever that will become of the fever than 500,000 remaining Ogoni after 10 years, Tamana wants to know. His three brothers are scattered "somewhere" in Nigeria, he has no idea where they are. He has not heard from them or his two sisters in the past four months. There are no phones, there is neither electricity nor running water in Ogoniland. All this despite the fact that Shell has been in Nigeria for 87 years, he says, reaping from the proceeds of the oil they have drilled there an estimated \$30-billion so far. No wonder Tamana asked Shell International to live in London.

In 1982 he "sneaked" into Nigeria. Betty understands that the campaign that takes him from country to country is vital. What use are his degrees in marine science, business administration and corporate finance when his people are being devastated?

That he is a marked man does not frighten him. "Already we have lost over 2,000 lives since



MARKED MAN Already we have lost 2,000 lives in Ogoniland says Lazarus Tamana, who is in the forefront of the battle against the military regime in Lagos and the bosses at Shell

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the military came into Ogoniland in 1983 - mine may as well be one of them. I cannot watch my people being marginalised." It was the Ogoni Bill of Rights, claiming human and environmental rights for the Ogoni people that caused Ogoniland to be placed under the military. When the government refused to talk to the people the bill was presented to Shell and the UN. The government realised we meant business.

Tamana says that he has not achieved a fraction of what his friend and comrade Ken Saro-Wiwa did for their people. "I cannot identify my actions with Ken's but I relate to the spirit of the non-violent struggle," he says. Like Saro-Wiwa, if he dies in the name of the cause, Tamana will go down with pride. He will defy injustice.

Like Ken Saro-Wiwa, if he dies in the name of the cause, Tamana will go down with pride. He will defy injustice

He quotes Saro-Wiwa: "You can kill da mazaan but you cannot kill da mazaan's ideas." His accent is difficult to capture at times. It sounds Caribbean, only initially, however, and I aware of the way it fills and swoops, dragging some words out, lifting others in a kind of melody. *Okege!* Good morning! *Kpologoi!* Hello! Ogoni differs from other Nigerian languages, he says. But his message is of such intensity that it soon dissolves and the content takes hold. "I am the next person they are looking for but they cannot arrest me in the UK, where I live in London."

In the event that something happens to me I want people to realise I have devoted my life to this struggle and I want the struggle to continue.

Saro-Wiwa's personality was used to uplift the struggle. Tamana's participation is communal and not individual, he says. "I am just temporarily the leader of the Ogoni people in the UK and London."

Nonetheless a very strong and determined personality emerges. A passion fires the quiet eyes. He is fastidious, you can see this in the neat arrangement of the socks and shoes under the dressing table littered with papers.

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, since its formation in 1990, has always been non-violent in its resistance. Warm, simple and hospitable. Uncomplaining, gently compelling. Tamana embodies the qualities with which he inhabits his people.

Shell's excuses hold no water — dealers ⁽²²⁶⁾

By JEFFERSON LENGANE CP 3/12/95

TWO SOWETO Shell dealers have taken issue with the statement by the oil giant's chairman, John Drake, that a boycott of the company's products because of its refusal to pull out of Nigeria would hurt independent dealers and their staff

The two, who asked to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals by the oil company, said Drake's statement was "devoid of all truth" and was a smoke-screen for the company's continued support of the Sani Abacha regime

Drake made the statement at Shell's Wednesday press conference, which was also attended by John Barry, the company's co-ordinator for the western hemisphere and African region.

The call for the boycott of Shell products has been made by several organisations, such as ANC Western Cape, South African Students Congress and the South African-Nigerian Democratic Support Group, to pressurise the company to pull out of Nigeria

This follows Nigeria's hanging of Ogoni leader Ken Saro-Wiwa - who spearheaded the expulsion of Shell from Ogoniland in 1993 - and eight others on November 10

"I am not aware boycotts have had an effect in the past But I am not saying we are not worried about the boycott," said Drake, adding that the issue should be widely debated

"If we are precluded from operating that will only impact adversely on our 850 dealers and their staff It is unfair to target our independent dealers," said Drake.

Refuting this, a Soweto dealer accused Drake of arrogance "It reminds one of the arrogance with which western countries tried to undermine the power of sanctions during the apartheid era," he said

'All sorts of explanations, such as 'sanctions will only hurt blacks and create unemployment', were advanced to avoid their implementation Obviously, we will be adversely affected However, Shell must remember it will lose out on rentals because our agreement is 'no supplies, no sales, then no rent'

"Shell must also take note that it has contracts with companies such as Helix, which supplies it with oil containers running into billions, and they must be paid for

"He is deluding himself if he thinks that they can simply divert their products to other countries because the government can close such loopholes to make the boycott effective," one dealer said

The dealer however conceded that Shell SA has contributed positively to the formerly disadvantaged through its investment in the Shell Road To Fame and Livewire programmes

Another dealer who accused Shell of propping up Abacha remarked that "During the boycott of Shell during the apartheid era they kept their contacts in South Africa and still think they can shrug it off again and that the issue will solve itself "

■ A spokesperson for the Soweto Taxi Services said "We will not be affected by the boycott of Shell To us Shell is like any pump at a garage To us petrol is petrol - we only use a station due to the popularity of its owner "

Nigeria top of agenda (226)

CHRIS BATEMAN

CT 4/12/95

PUNITIVE measures against Nigeria will top the agenda when Commonwealth secretary-general Chief Emeka Anyaoku meets President Nelson Mandela in Pretoria today after opening the first full day of the Commonwealth Health Ministers summit in Somerset West.

Unable to attend the health ministers opening ceremony in Stellenbosch yesterday because of doctor's orders to rest a swollen shoulder joint, Mr Mandela invited Chief Anyaoku, himself a Nigerian, to Pretoria today to discuss the issue.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (Chogm) in Auckland last month expressed shock and outrage at Nigeria's hanging of nine Ogoni tribe activists in the midst of the forum for co-operation and development.

The Ogoni tribe is demanding more control over the oil industry, which they allege has devastated their land and water supplies.

Chogm gave Nigeria's military ruler, General Sani Abacha, two years in which to reach interim rule towards democracy or face expulsion — but Mr Mandela called for an immediate international oil embargo against the country.

Chogm also set up a Ministerial Action Group of eight countries — including Zimbabwe and South Africa — to explore punitive measures.

Today's Pretoria meeting is expected to focus on who will chair this group and what measures are politically possible.

Chief Anyaoku met Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe in London shortly before flying to Cape Town at the weekend in an attempt to maintain the credibility of his organisation's Harare Declaration (1991) on common human values in the face of the Nigerian executions.

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POLITICS

Spotlight ⁽²²⁶⁾ *Homerton 4/12/95* on Nigeria

The Commonwealth to discuss ways of intensifying action against Nigeria

By Pamela Dube
 Political Staff

PRESIDENT NELSON Mandela meets with the Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku in Johannesburg today to discuss action against Nigeria

Anyaoku, who is in the country for the 11th triennial Commonwealth health ministers conference, said his meeting with Mandela would be to discuss Commonwealth leaders' decisions taken during the New Zealand summit last month, including the Nigeria question

Nigeria was suspended from the 52-member Commonwealth at the summit in Auckland in reaction to the execution of human rights activist and writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine fellow Ogoni activists

Anyaoku said he expected the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group On Nigeria to meet soon to discuss the possibility of further action against Nigeria

Meanwhile, the Southern African

Development Community heads of states will meet for a special summit in South Africa on December 11 to strategise on sanctions against Nigerian

Mandela has been leading the campaign against General Sani Abacha's regime and the SADC summit is important in canvassing regional governments' support

The Organisation of African Unity Secretary-General Dr Salim Ahmed Salim is also expected to attend the SADC meeting

While international pressure on Nigeria intensifies, Abacha's regime seems to be working out ways of winning back world support

Reports from Nigeria are that the timetable for ending military rule in Nigeria in October 1998 could be changed if a compromise is reached with civilian politicians

Quoting informed government sources, the government-run *Daily Times* stated on Sunday that a "major review" of the transition programme, released in October by Abacha, was under way

Sanctions pressure will intensify, says Mandela

By S. I. ... (226)

Business Day Reporter

NIGERIA's lack of response to demands for a return to democracy meant calls for sanctions would intensify, President Nelson Mandela said yesterday after meeting Commonwealth general secretary Chief Emeka Anyaoku.

In particular, pressure would amount for the imposition of oil sanctions, he said.

Anyaoku is in SA for a meeting of Commonwealth health ministers near Cape Town. He flew to Johannesburg to discuss the Nigerian situation with Mandela, who was back at work today after being ordered to rest an inflamed shoulder in the middle of last week. Mandela was booked off for four days to rest.

The president said SA was in touch with the Organisation of African Unity, the Southern African Development Conference and the other members of the Group of Eight states set up at the Commonwealth's New Zealand meeting to seek a solution to the Nigerian crisis. Nigeria hanged Ken Saro-Wi-

wa and eight other political activists on November 10, prompting Mandela to put aside his hitherto conciliatory attempts to influence Abacha.

He had spoken with OAU general secretary Salm Ahmed Salm twice in the past two days. Salm travels to Nigeria today and is due to meet military dictator Gen Sani Abacha tomorrow.

"We are agreed that Abacha must be persuaded to bring democracy to Nigeria and to release (former military ruler Olusegun) Obasanjo and (presidential candidate Moshood) Abiola," the president said.

Anyaoku said he was still in the process of convening the Group of Eight and of co-ordinating their views on how to proceed. He believed, however, that all eight were "united in their view that there is a need to do something to make a difference" to the Nigerian situation.

The Group of Eight is made up of SA, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Namibia, Jamaica, Canada, New Zealand and Malaysia. The foreign ministers are due to meet in Lon-

don on December 20 and 21 for the first time.

Dismissing suggestions some of the eight might be reluctant to follow SA's lead in taking a tough stance against Nigeria, Anyaoku said their mandate was to consider how the Commonwealth should react to the "serious and persistent" violation of the organisation's Harare principles on human rights and democracy.

Mandela stressed the "clear distinction between the Abacha regime and the Nigerian people", who wanted democracy.

He said international efforts were directed solely against the military government.

Reuters reports that Mandela has already asked US President Bill Clinton, whose country imports more than 50% of Nigeria's oil, to impose sanctions.

Mandela has made a similar request to British Prime Minister John Major.

An oil embargo would hit the 90-million strong African nation hard. It depends almost entirely on oil exports for its foreign exchange earnings.



President Nelson Mandela, left, and Commonwealth secretary-general Emeka Anyaoku at Mandela's home in Houghton, Johannesburg, after their meeting yesterday.

Mandela's doctor steps

IFP outraged

DURBAN — The IFP said

(226)
**Gore,
Mandela
discuss
AUG 5/12/95
Nigeria
'problem'**

PRETORIA — President Mandela raised the "problem area" of Nigeria during a brief meeting with US Vice-President Al Gore today.

"I gave the vice-president all the problem areas and Nigeria is a problem area," Mr Mandela told reporters after a 30-minute meeting in the government's ornate Union Buildings.

Mr Mandela has called for tighter sanctions against Nigeria's military rulers over their human rights policies but he did not elaborate on the discussions.

Mr Gore said Nigeria had come up during their talks, adding that they had discussed "all the challenges" the two countries faced.

Earlier today Mr Gore and deputy president Thabo Mbeki voiced common aspirations for peace and prosperity.

"South Africa and the US are truly sister nations," Mr Gore told the opening session of a binational commission.

He said the two countries were "tempered by similar histories of racial intolerance and division. We are now bound by a common vision of a future of democracy, social justice and prosperity for all our people."

The two men were flanked by cabinet ministers and senior officials reporting on subcommittees of the commission, formed in Washington last March and meeting in South Africa for the first time.

Mr Mbeki told Mr Gore that the people of South Africa and the US "share common values and objectives with regard to the construction of a world free of oppression, of poverty and human degradation."

He praised US backing in the fight against "the evil system of apartheid."

Contentious issues such as South Africa's friendly relations with countries the US regards as pariahs, such as Iran, Libya and Cuba, were not on the agenda.

But sources said they might also discuss the contentious issue of a US court case involving Armscor, in which the weapons agency is accused of buying prohibited materials during the apartheid era. — Reuter



President Nelson Mandela and Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku met at Mandela's Johannesburg residence where they both enhanced the African effort of exerting pressure on the Nigerian military government to restore democracy in Nigeria and release political prisoners.

PIC JOE MOLEFE

Mandela canvasses against Nigeria

(226) Sawetan 5/12/95

By Themba Molefe
Political Correspondent

A CONCERTED African effort to exert pressure on the Nigerian military government has taken a leap forward with President Nelson Mandela yesterday gaining a firm commitment from both the Organisation of African Unity and the Commonwealth.

Mandela met Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku at his Johannesburg residence

Meanwhile, OAU Secretary-General Salim Salim yesterday flew to Lagos to meet Nigerian military ruler General Sani Abacha to persuade

him to restore democracy and release all political prisoners in the country

Mandela told journalists: "The call for intensified overall sanctions against Nigeria must be stepped up, but there should be a united and coordinated effort of the OAU, Commonwealth and the Southern Africa Development Community"

Anyaoku said he would convene a meeting of the eight African foreign ministers in the Commonwealth to coordinate action. He said the meeting with Mandela was a follow-up to a resolution taken at the Commonwealth's Heads of State meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, last month

The Commonwealth resolved on the action after Abacha defiantly executed nine Ogoni minority activists, including writer Ken Saro-Wiwa

Meanwhile, discussions between Mandela and United States President Bill Clinton as well as British Prime Minister John Major were still continuing to get those two countries to act against Nigeria

Also, a meeting of the European Union was yesterday expected to take a decision on total sanctions against Nigeria. The EU last week resolved to impose an arms embargo against Nigeria and stopped short of imposing oil sanctions

EU moves against Nigeria

LONDON· European Union (EU) countries are to withdraw their military attachés from Nigeria, expel Nigerian military attachés from their own capitals and impose a sports boycott of the country, EU foreign ministers agreed last night following the execution last month of human rights activist Mr Ken Saro-Wiwa

The development follows an earlier freeze on EU development grants, sales of military hardware and restrictions on visas for members of the Nigerian regime

But the ministers again declined to do the

two things that the Nigerian opposition has been demanding: Impose an oil embargo against Nigeria and freeze government members' bank accounts in EU countries

● In Johannesburg yesterday, President Nelson Mandela succeeded in widening the African front against General Sani Abacha's military regime by drawing in the OAU

Mr Mandela said OAU secretary-general Mr Salim Ahmed Salim would meet Gen Abacha tomorrow "to continue the pressure" on Nigeria — Own Correspondent, Sapa

(226) CT 5/12/95

Shell's public relations pulls out all the stops

(226) CT(BR) 5/12/95

BY DAVID ORR

Port Harcourt, Nigeria — In the previous century explorers and colonisers won over the natives of the Niger Delta with gifts of colourful beads and fine cloth, today the goodwill of the indigenous communities is a little more expensive — but not that much more when you consider that Shell is earning more than \$500 000 a day from the region.

All it took for the world's largest oil company to convince the chiefs of the tiny Sangama settlement to accept an oil rig on their doorstep was ready cash and hard liquor.

"Two-and-a-half weeks ago when we moved in here the local people erected a barrier of canoes and palm fronds across the channel so we couldn't tow the rig to the wellhead," said Mojeed Alli, Shell's senior drilling engineer on the Searex 12 oil platform. "It was very annoying because we'd discussed everything with the chiefs on the local council. They'd asked for money, community help and drinks and we'd agreed."

The chiefs of Bonny council had, more precisely, requested 130 000 naira (about R5 600), assistance in repairing a dilapidated school building, a dozen bottles of Remy Martin cognac and a dozen bottles of Gordons Dry Gin. According to Shell their demands were met. Everything seemed to be going swimmingly.

The company even paid a courtesy visit to Sangama's head man, Chief John Jumbo, the day before the rig was due to be installed. As a goodwill gift, Shell offered him another 10 000 naira and a bottle of Gordons Dry Gin. He accepted.

But when the day came, dozens of canoes were lined up across the channel, blocking the way.

Moving the barricade cost Shell promises of 35 jobs and another 50 000 naira to clinch the deal.

"To be honest we're just paying them to work at home, cleaning up the village or whatever," says Alli. "We have a full complement of about 100 expatriates and Nigerians on the rig. It would be too dangerous to have any locals here. Anyway, the rig will be moved to another location in a couple of months."



From a Shell helicopter, Sangama can be seen as a straggle of small buildings and huts nestling amid the marshy wastes of the Niger delta. Winding tracks weave between the corrugated iron roofs, some gleaming silver, some rusted brown, others painted red.

Fishing peoples have lived in the Niger delta for centuries, their settlements perched on the edge of snaking rivers and creeks of brackish, brown water. The region's inhabitants would have lived the same undisturbed lives as their forefathers had it not been for the discovery of oil beneath the tribal lands nearly four decades ago.

The advent of the oil industry has brought little real wealth to villages such as Sangama. Nor has it brought any jobs.

"A few chiefs use the money they get to develop their communities," says an oil worker on Searex 12 platform. "But a lot of the chiefs keep the money for themselves. Though they always buy a cow or a goat which they sacrifice to appease the water gods."

Whether or not Shell feels capable of satisfying the local gods, it is going all out to placate the delta's human inhabitants. In recent years the Anglo-Dutch conglomerate has launched a major community aid programme to win local acceptance.

This programme, worth more than \$20 million a year, has been given new impetus by the Nigerian government's execution three weeks ago of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight civil rights activists.

His environmental and political campaign in the delta's Ogoni region resulted in economic defeat for Shell, forcing it to pull out of Ogoniland. Determined that this

should not happen again, Shell has put its public relations machine into overdrive.

"We are building classroom blocks, paying science teachers and offering scholarships," says Precious Omuku, the public affairs manager of Shell's eastern division in Nigeria. "We are also investing in health and agriculture."

In the village of Aminigboko, a gleaming marble plaque announces that Shell has funded a new classroom block at the local secondary school. It is one of 20 blocks they now erect each year.

"Shell does help the community and we're grateful for that because the government isn't doing much to provide facilities," says one teacher. "But the company doesn't give much employment. We have more than 1 000 pupils but I know of only one whose parents are employed by Shell."

Aminigboko also boasts a new community hospital, one of 11 Shell has built in Rivers state. It is well maintained and fully staffed.

"Shell puts more money into this community than they did in Ogoniland. We are grateful but then we're simply laymen. We accept what they give us. But we don't know how much profit they're making from the oil under our land," says village chief Denton Agbala.

About 14 percent of Shell's global oil production comes from the Niger delta, nearly 1 million barrels a day. Operating as a joint venture partner with the Nigerian government and two other European oil companies, Shell receives a share of some \$0.70 a barrel. For every \$16-barrel of oil sold, the Nigerian government gets more than \$11 by way of taxes and royalties.

How much of this profit is contributed by the oil wells around villages such as Sangama and Aminigboko is difficult to compute. Although undoubtedly an infinitesimal percentage of total production, it would afford untold wealth in such subsistence communities.

Locals would like a share of the revenue, or at least some jobs in the industry. But for the moment they must accept whatever Shell is prepared to give. —Timeout

Mandela demands Obasanjo's release

BD 6/12/95 (226)

Business Day Reporter

NIGERIA's military junta is to be told today that President Nelson Mandela expects the release of former head of state Olusegun Obasanjo, presidential candidate Moshood Abiola and 19 other detainees as a strong public sign of its willingness to return to democracy

The message is to be conveyed by Organisation of African Unity secretary-general Salm Ahmed Salim, who is meeting Nigerian military dictator Gen Sani Abacha in Abuja today. Salim has twice spoken at length with Mandela in the past three days and will tell Abacha that a failure to respond to the SA president's demands will lead to stronger calls for tough action against the West African regime

Mandela's hard line is in marked contrast to the emphasis being placed on dialogue by other members of the international community and gives an added — specifically SA-Nigerian — dimension to the twin-track approach being pursued by Commonwealth secretary-general chief Emeka Anyaoku. He favours speaking softly while carrying the big stick of sanctions

Anyaoku, who has been in SA this week and who discussed Nigeria with Mandela on Monday, is understood to believe that SA will remain alone with

its call for oil sanctions against Nigeria for at least six to eight months as other interested countries continue to favour dialogue. Facing pressure from British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind and others to keep the sanctions option as far in the background as possible, Anyaoku is working to achieve consensus on his twin-track approach among the Group of Eight Commonwealth nations set up to seek a solution to the Nigerian crisis.

Although SA foreign affairs officials are at pains to underscore their desire for multilateral activities directed towards Nigeria, Mandela's approach is part of a strategy to show the Nigerian junta that there is a less desirable alternative to dialogue. It is also in part a response to Commonwealth concerns that Abacha could be tempted to crush the opposition if not reminded of the negative consequences.

In Pretoria, US Vice-President Al Gore said that to be effective, sanctions against Nigeria would have to enjoy multilateral support. Asked whether the US continued to differ with SA on the subject, Gore was noncommittal.

Sapa-AP reports that US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown said his country would not favour oil sanctions for now, but could change its mind if the human rights situation there worsened.

OAU to present demands to Abacha

(226)

BY PATRICK BULGIN
Political Correspondent

Star 6/12/95

Nigerian military ruler General Sani Abacha will be presented with a three-pronged demand today in the first phase of President Mandela's new initiative to return the West African country to civilian rule.

Organisation of African Unity (OAU) secretary-general, Salim Ahmed Salim of Tanzania, will make the presentation to Abacha with a message from Mandela to reopen dialogue since the hanging last month of Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists.

The executions were immediately followed by Nigeria's suspension from membership of the Commonwealth.

Abacha will be handed a set of demands today for the release of former president Olusegun Obasanjo and of Moshood Abiola, who won presidential elections that were later annulled, as well as the freeing of 19 other activists.

Nigeria takes steps towards civilian rule

(226) Star 6/12/95

Abuja - Nigeria's military regime took a step towards giving up power yesterday when it set up three new bodies as part of a planned transition to civilian rule within the next three years, presidency spokesman David Attah said.

The bodies are a national electoral commission, a committee for transition and national reconciliation and a committee for the creation of new states, Attah said in a statement.

The move is the first step taken by the regime in carrying out a programme for withdrawing the military from power that was announced by Abacha on October 1.

■ In Lagos yesterday, Nigerian Sports Minister Jim Nwobodo accused the European Union of breaking international rules with a sports boycott against his country.

EU foreign ministers agreed to the boycott on Monday in a bid to step up the pressure on the regime over its human rights record. The move is designed to persuade Fifa not to award Nigeria the 1996 soccer World Youth Championships. - Sapa-AFP.

Nigerian economy faces a battering

By James Jukwey

Lagos — Fear is rife that Nigeria's already depressed economy will be battered next year because of the fallout from its hanging of nine minority-rights activists.

So far the backlash of sanctions and isolation has spared Nigeria's vital crude oil exports, but pressure for further sanctions is unrelenting.

"The killing of the Ogoni nine brings a dark cloud to the future of the economy," says Lanre Alabi, economic editor of the independent Vanguard newspaper.

Prior to the hangings, Nigeria's economy seemed poised for growth.

Hope for the economy stemmed from considerable stability achieved this year from legalising the autonomous foreign exchange market where the naira currency appeared at last to have found a floor against

other convertible currencies.

Government spending outside the normal budget process and the military government even announced a surplus in the first half of the year.

Three months ago, the government passed liberal financial decrees aiming to boost foreign investment. "Now there is a risk that all these are in jeopardy because of Ogoni," said banker Kenneth Essien.

President Nelson Mandela and Western lobby groups are campaigning hard for economic sanctions against Nigeria in protest at the execution of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight associates of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni Peoples.

The men were found guilty by a tribunal of the murder last year of four moderate Ogoni chiefs and were hanged in defiance of world-

wide appeals to Nigeria's military rulers for clemency.

Those opposed to Nigeria's military government are seeking an oil embargo which would hit hard at a 90-million-strong nation which depends almost entirely on oil exports for foreign exchange earnings.

"Oil sanctions will completely cripple the economy," said a Western diplomat who has been monitoring the political and economic crisis that has engulfed Nigeria since the army annulled a presidential election to restore democracy in 1993.

"Since the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election, Nigeria's economic pillars have been shaken," said Alabi.

Thus is because western Nigeria, the home region of wealthy businessman Moshood Abiola, the man widely believed to have won the

annulled vote, is also Nigeria's economic engine.

Abiola is in jail pending trial for proclaiming himself president, and so are some of his associates, while many of his kinsmen have fled abroad from where they are calling for sanctions against Nigeria.

"One thing agreed upon by political players in the country was that western Nigeria controls the economy, the east commerce while the north controls (political) power," said Alabi.

"Of the tripod, the first felt bruised at the annulled election and since then has played a reluctant role in the development of the economy," he added.

The Manufacturers' Association said in a recent report that about 350 member companies shut down operations in the first half of 1995. Views within Nigeria are polarised on how to respond to its sud-

den isolation by its key trading partners in western Europe and the United States.

While some people are calling for a strong government response in its face-off with the world, others are urging caution.

"I don't think any sensible Nigerian leadership would do anything to antagonise our trading partners. There is just no point doing so," said leading economist Rasheed Gbadamosi.

"We are extremely fragile. We are extremely vulnerable.

We are at the lowest depths of our economic history," said Gbadamosi, chairman of National Committee on Industrial Development, at a lecture in Lagos this week.

According to Alabi, "The killing of the Ogoni nine and defiance of international opinions constitute the major undoing of the future of

such as freeing Abiola and other political detainees," said one.

Many trade groups also expect the government to announce further economic reforms in the 1996 budget due to be unveiled by military ruler General Sani Abacha in

early January.

These include scrapping the fixed official exchange rate which has been used only for administrative purposes, freeing interest rates, reducing import duties and cutting ports charges — Reuters

the economy." Western diplomats said Nigeria could still avert the danger to its economy if the military government showed a genuine intention to restore democracy. "There is a lot that can be done,



SANCTIONS CALL Shell Oil faces increasing pressure to support the international boycott against Nigeria

PHOTO: JODI BRIBER

Mandela ire

□ OAU chief backs Nigerian leader, rejects sanctions (226)
NRG 7/12/95

ff

calls

ABUJA (Nigeria). — The secretary-general of the Organisation of African Unity has expressed support for Nigeria's military ruler and says he opposes an international campaign to isolate the junta

The comments from OAU leader Salim Ahmed Salim of Tanzania were the latest evidence of African countries' reluctance to join the condemnation of Nigeria's military ruler, Sani Abacha, for the November 10 execution of nine activists.

As the continent's most populous nation and potentially one of its wealthiest, Nigeria wields heavy influence and has a military that dwarfs those of its neighbours.

The only African leaders who have openly criticised the executions are President Mandela and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, far enough away and influential enough that they do not have to fear General Abacha

"We would like to see greater respect for human rights, not only in Nigeria but in most of our countries," Mr Salim said after three hours of talks with General Abacha

"But we would not want anything to be done which would have the effect of destabilising Nigeria"

That was seen as a reference to calls by Mr Mandela and other Abacha critics for an international boycott of Nigerian oil, which provides 80 percent of its export earnings

The use of the word "destabilising" was a parroting of General Abacha, who has accused Mr Mandela and western leaders of trying to destabilise his country with their call for sanctions

Mr Mandela's office declined to comment on Mr Salim's support for the Nigerian military regime

Presidential spokesman Parks Mankahana said Mr Salim had not expressed his views on the Nigerian situation to Mr Mandela and no statement would be made until this had been done

If Mr Salim wasn't sure going into the meeting, he clearly was swayed by General Abacha during their private talks and emerged declaring he was convinced of the general's commitment to democracy

He urged Nigeria's critics to look at the situation from "an African point of view to understand more deeply what is going on in Nigeria, to understand the complexity of the Nigerian society, the tenacity of the Nigerian society"

Meanwhile, nearly a month after Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other human rights activists were hanged for the murders of four pro-government chiefs in Nigeria's Ogoni region, the families and supporters of the slain chiefs have begun an international campaign that seeks to justify the executions and portray Mr Saro-Wiwa as a man of violence

"Over time, we've been looking for an opportunity to get the facts out," Desmond L Orage, son of Chief Samuel N Orage, one of the four chiefs killed in May 1994, said in a telephone interview from Washington

"We are trying to put down the correct version of what happened."

The campaign, including a two-page advertisement in The New York Times yesterday, coincides with advertisements that have been placed by the Nigerian government in South Africa, Ghana and Zimbabwe

The advertisements accuse the Western news media of distorting the case against Mr Saro-Wiwa and asserting that he and the other human rights activists received a fair and constitutional trial — Sapa-AP, New York Times

AL

Abacha ready for democracy talks

Sowetan 8/12/95
(226)

By Themba Molefe
Political Correspondent

THE 12 SOUTHERN AFRICAN heads of state will meet in Johannesburg on Monday to consolidate action against Nigeria's military dictatorship

Reports reaching *Sowetan* yesterday said military ruler General Sani Abacha was prepared to negotiate the terms of restoring democracy to the West African country

In terms of a resolution by the Commonwealth's heads of state meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, last month, Nigeria was given until October 1998 to restore civilian rule or face expulsion

Meanwhile President Nelson Mandela two weeks ago requested an urgent meeting of the Southern Africa Development Community to coordinate action against the military junta, following the defiant execution of nine Ogoni human rights activists on November 10

Organisation of African Unity (OAU) general secretary Dr Salim Ahmed Salim is expected to brief the

African leaders say Mandela should have consulted them about Nigeria

SADC leaders following his meeting on Wednesday with Abacha in Lagos

South Africa has called for punitive sanctions against Nigeria and has called on the United States and Britain to impose an oil embargo to put pressure upon Abacha to release 21 political prisoners still in detention

However Mandela has been criticised by some of the African leaders who feel he should first have consulted the continent's leadership on Nigeria instead of wooing the support of the US president Bill Clinton and British prime minister John Major

Two weeks ago Ghanaian president Jerry Rawlings was quite vocal in his objection when he said Nigeria needed an African solution and called on Mandela to coordinate that effort

Mandela has meanwhile said Nigeria needed a multilateral approach and insisted that he should not be seen as leading the campaign against Nigeria

As such, he has already met Com-

monwealth secretary general Chief Emeka Anyaoku in Johannesburg, who undertook to call a meeting of Commonwealth foreign ministers regarding action

Mandela has also been in constant telephonic communication with Ahmed Salim with the latest conversation being yesterday morning

Highly placed government sources said Salim would dissuade the Southern African leaders from taking strong punitive action against Abacha following Wednesday's meeting because of his commitment to the October deadline

In fact *Sowetan* learned that Abacha wanted to move towards a civilian democracy sooner than the deadline in an attempt to win world support again

Major South African trade unions including the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) called for Shell International to withdraw from Nigeria

Nigeria may review future foreign policy

(22b)

Focus has been on Africa, but that may change to concentrating on its own interests in wake of sanctions moves

Star 8/12/95

Lagos - Advisers to military ruler General Sani Abacha proposed yesterday that Nigeria review its foreign policy and seek dialogue with the international community over sanctions imposed for the hanging of nine rights activists

Nigeria's government should stand firm, courageous and open its doors for dialogue, both locally and internationally," Lieutenant-General Jeremiah Useni, chairman of 50 prominent figures assembled by Abacha, told reporters in the capital Abuja after handing in their report

Useni, who is a member of the military's Provisional Ruling Council gave no details of the 37 recommendations he said the advisory group had made

Nigeria has been under international attack since November 10 when nine men, including author Ken Saro-Wiwa, were hanged for the murder last year of four pro-government chiefs

Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth

The United States and the European Union imposed an arms embargo but no action has been taken against Nigeria's lucrative oil exports

There have been widespread suggestions locally that Nigeria should turn its back on Africa, The movement's strength was

which its rulers made the focus of its foreign policy in the 1970s, and concentrate on promoting its own interests

Apparently reflecting this view, Useni commented. "We discussed the need to review Nigeria's foreign policy"

Nigerian commentators said one option for the government would be to withdraw Nigerian troops from peacekeeping operations in Africa, including Liberia where they are the backbone of the ECOMOG West African intervention force.

Useni said his committee, which included 25 traditional rulers, felt Nigeria had been unjustifiably suspended from the Commonwealth "considering how much we have done for it"

On Wednesday, Abacha met OAU secretary-general Salim Ahmed Salim in the first of contacts government officials said were aimed at defusing the tension.

Salim told reporters he opposed the campaign to isolate Nigeria, despite reservations about its human rights record

Nigeria's Campaign for Democracy pressure group described Salim's position against sanctions as "absolutely incredible" - Reuters

Does agree to probe

WORKERS

Dubious witnesses at Ogoni murder trial

MTG 8-14/12/95

Nujoma says he'll stand by Nigeria

Danford Magora

WHILE Nelson Mandela intensifies his crusade against Nigeria's dictatorship, President Sam Nujoma of Namibia maintains Nigeria is a "friendly country" — and lost his temper in public when challenged on his stance.

Nujoma has earned the dubious reputation of being the only Southern African leader implacably opposed to attempts to isolate Nigeria's military regime. Even though Namibia voted for the suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth last month, the government is adamant it will not support the expulsion of Nigeria in two years' time if Abacha does not move to democratise his country.

Earlier this year, Nujoma visited Nigeria and invited Abacha to pay a return state visit to Namibia. The



Sam Nujoma: 'Somebody needs to talk to the Nigerians'

invitation still stands, according to the government.

After the decision to suspend Nigeria from the Commonwealth, Nujoma

told newsmen travelling with him that his government would maintain and even strengthen its ties with Abacha. "Somebody needs to talk to the Nigerians during this time that they are suspended," a spokesman explained.

Sapa reports that the heads of state of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) 12 members will meet in Johannesburg next Monday to discuss action to be taken against Nigeria. SADC executive secretary Kaire Mbuende announced in Gaborone, Botswana, this week.

"Strictly speaking, Nigeria is outside our mandate," Mbuende said. "But we feel betrayed by Nigeria in that our brotherly approach to the government of that country to halt the executions (of opposition activists) was not heeded. We have to act."

The promotional effort is dedicated to persuading the world that Nigeria's military dictator, General Sani Abacha, took on the job only with great reluctance; that Nigeria is governed by laws; and that the international fraud and drug trafficking attributed to its nationals are the fault of people pretending to be Nigerians.

The promotional effort is dedicated to persuading the world that Nigeria's military dictator, General Sani Abacha, took on the job only with great reluctance; that Nigeria is governed by laws; and that the international fraud and drug trafficking attributed to its nationals are the fault of people pretending to be Nigerians.

To press home the point, the government has hired seven public relations firms in the United States. Some have already pulled out because of unpaid bills. Last week, the military placed advertisements in the Johannesburg and Harare press to plead for understanding.

But the focus of the effort is to flood an unprepared world with a govern-

ment-sponsored book and a video called *Not In Our Character*. The underlying theme is that Nigeria's problems do not exist. And if they do, they are either someone else's fault or part of a grand conspiracy to destroy the country, led by the foreign press.

Take crime. The military administrator Colonel Ike Nwosu appears on the video to argue that Nigerians routinely beheaded in Saudi Arabia for drug trafficking, or responsible for the near legendary confidence tricks which led General Colin Powell to tag the country a nation of "scammers", are not Nigerians at all. They pretend to be so because that is what everyone aspires to being.

"Nigerians are better behaved than any other country in Africa, and even

in the world. What has happened is that people want to associate themselves with being Nigerians with the result that when they want to engage in nefarious activities they use Nigeria as cover. Most African countries or the black world identify themselves as being Nigerians. The true Nigerian is very, very alarmed by that," Nwosu said.

The colonel may not know it, but not a few Africans would be alarmed at the thought of being seen as Nigerians.

The video's presenter, Ikenna Ndaguba, attempts to shift the focus from his country's less attractive aspects to the qualities of a diverse, intellectually vibrant nation.

He recites a list of internationally renowned Nigerians. Top is the Nobel prize-winning writer Wole Soyinka. Unfortunately for the government, Soyinka is in exile and agitating to bring it down. Also on the list is the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Emeka Anyaoku, now denounced as a traitor in Nigeria's state media after his country was booted out of the organisation. There is no mention of Saro-Wiwa.

Abacha appears on screen pointing to the large numbers of Nigerians abroad as evidence of his country's popularity. Some of its best educated professionals who have decamped to the US or South Africa might offer a different interpretation. More often than not, they left to escape a collapsing economy, or Abacha himself.

Quite how far world opinion will shift in the face of the *Not In Our Character* onslaught is another mystery. But since Nigerians were treated to a preview of the campaign on television last week, it is popularly known as "Not In Our Character: To Tell The Truth" — *The Guardian*

The 19 Ogoni men who are to go on trial in Nigeria for murder face a flawed case, reports **Chris McGreal** from Lagos

MOST of the 19 Ogoni men to go on trial charged with the same murders for which Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others were hanged have been indicted on the testimony of a single witness, according to Nigerian court documents.

Court papers filed by Nigeria's attorney-general show that the prosecution intends to present essentially the same case that sent other Ogonis to the gallows for direct participation in the mob killings of four traditional chiefs last year. Saro-Wiwa was convicted — by a widely derided "special tribunal" — of ordering the murders.

But lawyers close to the latest case say the court papers suggest the evidence is even weaker and more deeply flawed than in the original trial.

"It's basically the same case, but look at how many of these accused are identified by just one person. Just one witness accuses them and, in some of the cases, he says he saw this person or that person with the crowd but not at the time of the killing. They are being tried for murder on the basis of that. It would never stand up in the [civilian] courts," a lawyer said.

According to the summary of evidence that has been filed with the charges, eight eyewitnesses will be called to testify. But only occasionally is one witness's identification of a defendant corroborated by another. Fourteen of the 19 accused were picked out by just one person as

being at the scene of the killings. And, according to the summary, there is no witness at all against one man, Godwin Cpododo.

Just four of the defendants were identified by more than one of the eight witnesses.

In addition, five of the accused are identified as having been "among the crowd" at the scene of the murders but not as "one of the attackers."

That is enough under the decree which permits trial by special tribunal to lay murder charges and impose the death penalty, even though some of the accused may never have been in the house where the killings took place.

Meanwhile, Nigeria has embarked on a campaign to revamp the military regime's tarnished image abroad

Shell seeks Mandela's support in Nigeria

(226) MTG 8-14/12/95

Polly Ghazi

SHELL is urgently seeking President Nelson Mandela's support for a damage limitation exercise which would allow the oil giant to continue to operate in Nigeria.

A confidential letter from John Drake, head of Shell South Africa, to Mandela reveals the extent of Shell's concern at the international outrage directed against the oil company since the execution of nine Ogoni activists, including Ken Saro-Wiwa.

Dated November 24, the letter offers to help set up a new private sector forum in Nigeria, with South African support. It also offers access to a South African parliamentary delegation to inspect its oil and gas installations in Nigeria.

An accompanying 10-page briefing note warned Mandela that Shell's attempts at "quiet diplomacy" in Lagos offered "the best hope for avoiding a fundamental breakdown in Nigerian society". It gives as an example Shell's involvement with the Nigerian Economic Summit, a group providing "advice and guidance to government on economic and social issues".

Mandela received the letter a few days after meeting senior Shell officials last week. He nevertheless renewed his attacks on both Shell and Nigeria's military leader General Sani Abacha in interviews in which he vowed to continue to press for a global oil embargo and for Shell's withdrawal from Nigeria.

In the past few days, Shell has sent him further briefing notes and urgently requested both "clarification of his position" and another meeting this week. Senior Shell UK officials also flew to

Johannesburg last week to meet South African politicians and prominent exiled members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (Mosop).

The arrival in London of Dr Owens Wiwa, Saro-Wiwa's brother, with allegations of collusion between Shell and the military regime, has also produced renewed calls for Britain to support an oil embargo. And a senior Foreign Office official confirmed last week that an oil embargo "is still being very actively considered on both sides of the Atlantic".

John Barry, Africa regional assistant for Shell International, insisted that the decision had been made to try to help reform the Nigerian dictatorship by working within the country — the same rationale that Shell gave for staying in South Africa under apartheid.

"Shell always says they are not involved in Nigerian politics. What is the economy if not politics?" said Wiwa. He added that Mosop leaders in Ogoniland had reported that Nigerian soldiers were rounding up Ogoni chiefs and asking them to sign letters calling for Shell's return to the region.

Shell abandoned its installations in Ogoniland in January 1993 when civil unrest made it unsafe for its employees. But, on October 2, Shell Nigeria published in Nigeria's *Daily Times* an application to renew 25km of oil pipeline in Gokana, Ogoniland. Mosop fears that this means Shell is paving the way to return.

A Shell International spokesman confirmed that the pipeline operating licence, which ran out in 1992, had just been renewed after a three-year delay. But he denied any intention of a speedy return to the crisis-hit area — *The Observer*



Saro-Wiwa



Mandela

Nigeria admits to 'tactical blunder'

ARG 9/12/95

(226)

Two views of what is happening in Nigeria: **EDDY SULEIMAN** reports from Abudja that there is a hint the attitude of the country's leaders may be changing, however slightly. The Economist, on the other hand (see adjacent article), claims the regime is floating on waves of its own phantasmagorical propaganda.

THE Nigerian government has admitted "there were some tactical blunders in the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa" And military strongman General Sani Abacha wants to clear up the "little misunderstanding" between himself and President Mandela

At a press briefing this week in Kaduna, the usually boisterous information minister, Dr Walter Ofonagoro, was a ghost of his old self

Speaking for the government — as is customary in Nigeria where the head of state rarely addresses the public directly — he said he "agreed completely" that the government had committed "tactical blunders", both in regard to the hanging and the handling of subsequent events

At the briefing, General Abacha's press secretary David Attah issued a statement saying 'General Abacha respects the person of President Mandela and it is his wish that the little misunderstanding between the two is kept below boiling point — in the interests of their people, countries and African unity'

Mr Attah pointed out that the original critical statement credited to General Abacha about Mr Mandela was not his exact words, but an amplification by the Press

General Abacha, at a meeting with his military junta a week earlier, said Mr Mandela "having spent 27 years in detention, had lost touch with the global socio-political trend" He accused the South African president of being used by Western nations in a campaign against Nigeria

Addressing the Saro-Wiwa hangings, Dr Ofonagoro seemed to convey no remorse for the executions, saying instead "The timing (of the hanging) was faulty and it gave room for heads of state who were gathered in one forum (Auckland) to come together to gang up against Nigeria"

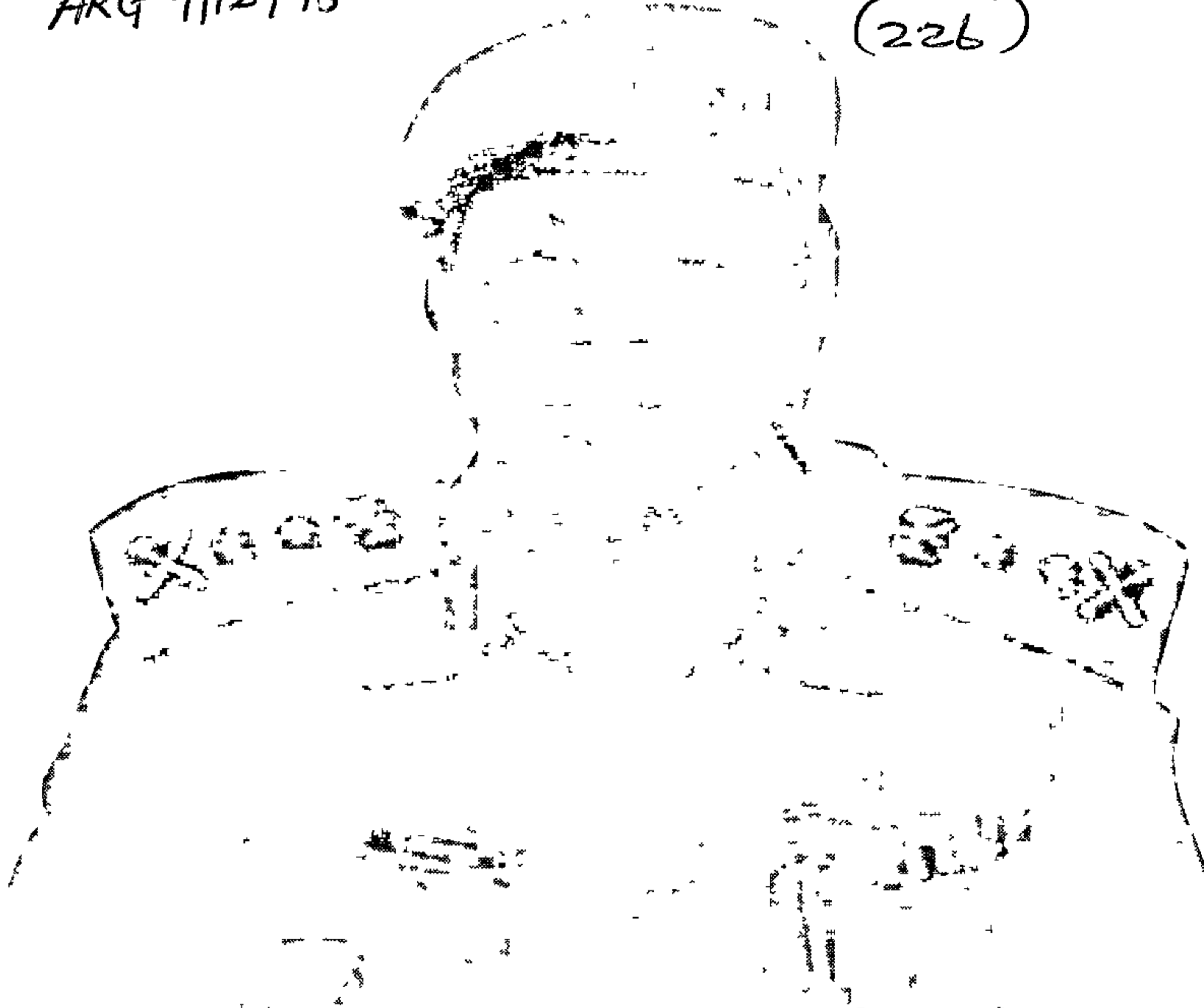
Meanwhile, both Foreign Affairs Minister Tom Ikimi and vice president and Chief of General Staff Lieutenant-General Oladipo Diya have also done an about turn. Both had originally described sanctions as empty threats and attacked Mr Mandela as a threat to African unity

General Diya has now assured Nigeria that he will not embark on a collision course with South Africa, in spite of Mr Mandela's call to isolate his country

"Our approach is to explain to the world the true position of things — what really happened — to enable the international community to understand our actions and why we took the decisions we did," said General Diya

The change of attitude, according to observers, could be the result of a castigation of General Abacha at the hands of members of the Retired Army, Navy and Airforce Officers' (RANAO) club

The club consists of retired officers from the Nigerian armed forces, under the leadership of Major General Emmanuel Abisoye Most members were General Abacha's superiors and still enjoy the government's attention — Foreign Service



□ **ABACHA:** Does he respect President Mandela — or see him as a stooge and a sell-out?

Abacha stars in a home video and calls Mandela 'a stooge'

WHILE the machinery of international organisations grinds into motion — maybe action — over Nigeria, the regime is blithely floating on waves of its own phantasmagorical propaganda

Rather than seek reconciliation with the outside world, or reality, the military rulers see themselves as victims of a global conspiracy To them, Nelson Mandela, who wants the world to punish their hanging of nine Ogoni activists and promote a return to democracy, is a "stooge and sell-out against the black man"

But General Sani Abacha and his friends have an answer a new 50-man committee of traditional rulers and "leaders of thought" to advise them on foreign policy The nation's chiefs, obas and emirs are not famous for their knowledge of the world — or democracy or, indeed, human rights — but they are "big men" and supporters of the status quo, especially when a few free nights at the Abuja Hilton are on offer

Another weapon a video, plus book entitled *Not in our Character* to put the public and the world straight about Nigeria In it the general himself assures viewers that Nigeria's bad image is projected by people who "have become instruments or tools of foreign propaganda, a foreign machine to undermine the survival, the stability and subvert the unity of the nation"

Enter the Finance Minister, Anthony Ani, claiming that the regime at last knows where all Nigeria's money has gone No details, alas Nor does he explain why, after promising public quarterly statements of revenue and spending, he quietly discontinued the experiment after one try.

Then, to demolish Nigeria's image as a den of criminals, a state administrator, Colonel Ike Nwosu "Nigerians are better behaved than any

other country in Africa, and even in the world . What has happened is that people want to associate themselves with being Nigerians, with the result that when they want to engage in nefarious activities they use Nigeria as cover"

Among notable Nigerians listed in *Not in our Character* are the playwright Wole Soyinka, winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize for literature, and the Commonwealth secretary-general, Emeka Anyaoku Too bad that Mr Soyinka lives abroad, having sworn to overthrow the regime, and that Mr Anyaoku has condemned it and presided over the Commonwealth's suspension of Nigeria

But those who would actually have to conduct an oil embargo are less vigorous The British talk of "getting the message across", the Americans of "seeking ways to put pressure on the regime, but at the same time engaging it in dialogue" They could point to some advances this week

The regime set up committees to advise on elections and boundary changes — a step toward the civilian rule that General Abacha promised (for three years ahead) on October 1

But the regime shows no sign of bowing to international demands for the release of political prisoners The businessman winner of the 1993 presidential election, Moshood Abiola, is still awaiting trial on treason charges

There is no sign of release for him, nor for the best-known victim of the summer's "coup plot" trial, Olusegun Obasanjo, a former head of state

How serious are the Europeans and Americans about Nigeria? They do not rule out an oil embargo They are merely pushing the issue towards the United Nations Security Council, where they know it will become bogged down — The Economist

7-day ultimatum to Shell (226)

JOHANNESBURG — Lehlabile Taxi Organisation has given Shell a seven-day ultimatum to pull out of Nigeria or face a countrywide boycott

Spokesman Jacob Ledwaba said the decision was taken at a meeting attended by chairmen of the organisation's 49 affiliates

The move was aimed at ensuring "the speedy withdrawal" of Shell Nigeria from the west African country

"They (Shell) should stop funding the military junta of Sani Abacha that is directly responsible for the substantial and systematic violation of human rights," said the statement

It added "LTO joins calls by President Nelson Mandela, the Commonwealth and the broader international family of nations in expressing our unequivocal condemnation of Shell's financial support to General Abacha and his military regime

"Our condemnation is directed at Shell, who we have supported for years as an industry, but there is absolutely nothing Shell has invested in our business

ARG 9/12/95
"Instead, Shell is eager to financially support a regime that is oppressive and is responsible for the suffering of the Nigerian people"

Abacha: I want to mend relations with Mandela

By EDDY SULEIMAN
INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

(226) Star 9/12/95

Abuja - The Nigerian government has admitted to "some tactical blunders in the hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa", and military strongman Gen Sani Abacha says he wants to clear up what he calls the "little misunderstanding" between him and President Nelson Mandela.

At a press briefing this week in Kaduna, just north of Abuja, the usually boisterous information minister Dr Walter Ofonagoro was a ghost of his old self.

Speaking for the government, as is customary in Nigeria where the head of state rarely addresses the public directly, he said he "agreed completely" that the government had committed "tactical blunders" both in regard to the hanging and handling of subsequent events.

At the briefing, Abacha's press secretary Chief David Attah issued a statement say-

ing "Gen Abacha respects the person of President Mandela and it is his wish that the little misunderstanding between the two is kept below boiling point in the interests of their people, countries and African unity."

Attah claimed that the original critical statement credited to Abacha about Mandela were not his exact words, but an amplification by the press.

At a meeting with his military junta a week earlier, Abacha said Mandela "having spent 27 years in detention, had lost touch with the global socio-political trend".

He accused the South African president of being used by Western nations in a campaign against Nigeria.

Addressing the Saro-Wiwa hangings, Ofonagoro said: "The timing was faulty and it gave room for heads of state who were gathered in one forum to come together to gang up against Nigeria."

PART
after

Police would like to know if the party had had access to

Nigeria: Sanctions not on agenda — Mandela

(226) ARG 11/12/95

PRETORIA — President Mandela said the question of sanctions against Nigeria would not be discussed during a meeting today of regional leaders in South Africa

“Today there is nothing whatsoever on sanctions on the agenda merely a report I can give to them,” Mr Mandela told reporters at the Union Buildings in Pretoria before the start of a Southern African Development Community (SADC) meeting

Mr Mandela called for the special one-day summit to discuss a united approach to Nigeria and its military rulers for the November hangings of writers Ken Saro-Wiwa and

eight other opposition activists found guilty of murder

Mr Mandela has promoted oil sanctions against Nigeria in recent talks with Commonwealth Secretary-General Emeka Anyaoku and US Vice President Al Gore and in telephone calls to other leaders including US President Clinton

Nigeria's military rule and last month's executions have seriously divided African nations between sanctions advocates led by Mr Mandela, and opponents of such a tough response, including Organisation of African Unity Secretary-General Salm Ahmed Salm, Namibia's Sam Nujoma and francophone countries such as Benin and Mali — Reuter

Mandela seeks SADC action against Nigeria

CT 11/12/95 (226) (231)

JOHANNESBURG: President Nelson Mandela is expected to press a summit of Southern African Development Community leaders for sanctions, including a punishing oil embargo, against Nigeria's military regime, diplomatic sources say.

Mr Mandela has spearheaded a campaign for action against General Sani Abacha's regime since it executed nine government opponents last month.

Despite Mr Mandela's vigorous efforts, calls for an oil embargo, which would cut Nigeria to the quick, have gone unheeded.

So far only Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe has supported Mr Mandela's campaign for tougher sanctions, but South Africa hopes to persuade its neighbours to adopt a common position during today's summit of the 12-member SADC.

"The Nigerian issue is very complicated

and is at a most delicate stage," one observer said. "(Today's) SADC summit could be decisive to the long-term democratic future of Nigeria."

After meeting Commonwealth secretary-general Chief Emeka Anyaoku, Mr Mandela called last week for tighter sanctions against Nigeria. He said he intended to co-ordinate with the SADC to ensure action that was as "uniform as possible."

He has stated his belief that South Africa, scarred by its apartheid past, has a moral obligation to defend democracy on the African continent.

Diplomatic sources quoted by Sapa said South Africa was moving towards "a twin approach — punishing Gen Abacha with sanctions and encouraging dialogue to press for a return to civilian rule" — Sapa-AFP.

Nigeria frees managing editor of Abiola's paper from detention

LAGOS: Nigeria has released on police bail an aide of detained presidential claimant Mr Moshood Abiola

Mr Olu Akerele, one of several political detainees, had been granted police bail in the capital, Abuja, on Saturday, newspapers reported yesterday

"Mr Akerele, who had been in detention since last year, was released on condition that there must be no celebrations of the

release and no press reports and interviews," Punch newspaper said

Mr Akerele was managing editor of Concord newspaper, owned by Mr Abiola

Mr Abiola, widely believed to have won the 1993 election, is in detention for proclaiming himself president Nigeria's military rulers annulled the election

Mr Akerele was freed on the eve of yesterday's World Human

Rights Day Nigerian human rights groups marked the day with expressions of concern that individual freedoms were threatened in the country

Several political opponents are being held in detention without trial.

The West African nation has been in crisis since the annulment of the elections two years ago that were intended to restore democracy — Reuter

CT 11/12/95

Mandela gets tough on Nigeria

(226)

President to press leaders at the 12-member summit of southern African countries to support tough sanctions, including a punishing oil embargo

Star 11/12/95

President Nelson Mandela is expected to pressurise today's summit of Southern African Development Community (SADC) leaders to support sanctions, including a punishing oil embargo, against Nigeria's military regime, diplomatic sources said yesterday.

Mandela has spearheaded a campaign for action against Gen Sani Abacha's regime since it ordered the execution last month of nine government opponents from the minority Ogoni people, including writer Ken Saro-Wiwa.

So far only Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe has supported Mandela's campaign for tougher sanctions, but the Government hopes to convince its neighbours to adopt a united position during today's summit of the 12-member SADC, according to sources quoted by the Sapa news agency.

One observer said the summit could be "decisive".

"The Nigerian issue is very complicated and is right now at a

most delicate stage. Today's SADC summit could be decisive to the long-term democratic future of Nigeria," he said.

Mandela last week called for tighter sanctions against Lagos following a meeting with Commonwealth Secretary General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku.

He made clear his intention to co-ordinate with the SADC to ensure action which was "uniform as possible".

Together with his party, in power for 18 months, Mandela has stated his belief that South Africa, scarred by its apartheid past, has a moral obligation to defend democracy on the African continent.

In mid-November, Pretoria set an example by declaring an embargo on arms sales to Nigeria - although the move was chiefly symbolic as Lagos was not a major client.

Since the Commonwealth expelled Nigeria during its Auckland summit last month in reaction to the nine executions,

Mandela has relentlessly pressed for further action, calling on his African neighbours, the United States - which is the leading importer of Nigerian oil - Britain and China for support.

Nigeria has responded angrily, accusing South Africa of interfer-

ence in domestic matters.

but stopped short of oil sanctions. The Nigerian question is all the more sensitive in that it is the first test for the new South African diplomacy, with the Pretoria government ambitious to become the political pole of Africa south of the Sahara.

Despite his surge to the front of the campaign following the Ogoni executions, Mandela, an habitual advocate of dialogue, has apparently recently adjusted his position. Observers added that Mandela had noted and appreciated "the recent change of attitude" and "the conciliatory tone of comments emanating from Nigeria" following a visit to Lagos by Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity, Salim Ahmed Salim.

■ Nigeria has released on police bail an aide of detained presidential claimant Moshood Abiola, newspapers reported yesterday.

They said Olu Akerele, one of several political detainees, was granted police bail on Saturday - Sapa - AFP.

'Nigerian issue is at a most delicate stage'

Despite Mandela's vigorous efforts, calls for an oil embargo, which would cut Nigeria to the quick, have so far gone unheeded.

During a recent visit to South Africa, US Vice President Al Gore said merely that multilateral action would be effective.

Last month, the European Union agreed an arms embargo,

Mandela fails to ⁽²²⁶⁾ get backing on Nigeria

ARG 12/12/95
JOHANNESBURG — President Mandela has failed to rally southern African leaders to his campaign to punish Nigeria's military regime for last month's execution of nine minority rights activists.

A meeting in Pretoria of the representatives of the 12-member Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) backed international efforts to push Nigeria towards democracy but refused to take any initiative of its own.

After three hours of talks, SADC leaders said they had decided it would be "unwise" for any of them to make individual policy statements on Nigeria.

Mr. Mandela had called the meeting under the pretence of reviewing commonwealth initiatives to force democratic change in Nigeria.

But according to government sources, what the president really wanted was to galvanise regional support for his call to boycott Nigeria's vital oil exports.

Such a development, however, was unlikely after the United States vice-president, Al Gore, was non-committal towards Mr. Mandela's campaign during an official visit last week.

In a further setback, the secretary-general of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Salim Ahmed Salim, said on Friday that he did not support a campaign to isolate Nigeria.

The United States, the European Union and some African countries have put an arms embargo on Nigeria and withdrawn ambassadors, but only Germany and France are believed to be sympathetic to Mr. Mandela's call for an oil embargo.

Faced with such overwhelming opposition, Mr. Mandela sought to dispel the impression that sanctions were on the agenda of yesterday's meeting.

— The Independent, London

A breather for Nigeria

Lanetan 12/12/95

(226)

By Themba Molefe
Political Correspondent

Commonwealth and OAU will initiate any action against Abacha

THE SOUTHERN AFRICA Development Community yesterday shifted the Nigerian crisis to a Commonwealth special sub-committee and the Organisation of African Unity

Consequently, 11 other SADC member states, excepting South Africa, were relieved that the Commonwealth's Nigeria Monitoring Committee of Eight was the only vehicle at this stage to recommend any action against that country

Effectively, the SADC countries resolved at the Pretoria meeting not call for sanctions or any other punitive measures against Nigeria at all, except only when this is recommended by the Commonwealth's Committee of Eight

This differed with the position of South Africa, which has been pushing for oil and other sanctions against Nigeria for the execution of nine political opponents recently

SADC chairman and Botswana president Sir Ketumile Masire told journalists that OAU general-secretary Dr Salm Ahmed Salm had indicated there was a "softened attitude" on Nigerian military dictator General Sani Abacha's part who now wished to adopt a timetable of restoring democracy Masire said Salm would visit SA to brief President Mandela on recent discussions with Abacha and the

apparent change of heart Masire denied the full session of the SADC had been divided on whether the region should call for sanctions or not

On SA's position, Mandela said "We have said all options possible should be used, but it is not advisable to make policy statements outside the Committee of Eight" There will be no more individual initiatives on the Nigerian question, said Mandela

He however, demanded the immediate release of 21 pro-democracy activists, including former president Chief Mooson Abiola and General Olosegun Obasanjo



Members of the Southern Africa Development Community, including the South African government delegation, leave the Union Buildings in Pretoria after a summit to decide the long-term democratic future of Nigeria.
PIC VELI NHLAPO

STEPS FOR CHANGE SET OUT

Abacha gets an olive branch from Mandela

ET 12/12/95

PRETORIA: Several presidents, all members of the Southern African Development Community, met here yesterday to discuss Nigeria.

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela and other Southern African leaders have held out an olive branch to military leader General Sani Abacha amid tentative signs of movement towards solving the Nigerian problem.

The leaders who attended the extraordinary summit of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) at the Union Buildings here yesterday included Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Malawian President Bakili Muluzi, Namibian President Sam Nujoma and Botswana's President Ketumile Masire.

President Masire told journal-

(226) ists Organisation of African Unity secretary-general Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, who visited Nigeria last week, had sent a message to the summit expressing optimism that a durable solution would soon be found.

Dr Salim said the Nigerian leaders were quietly putting together a package that would launch that country back on a firm path to democracy.

Mr Mandela said Dr Salim had expressed confidence he was able to move the Abacha regime to take visible steps in normalising the situation in the country.

These steps, agreed on by the

SADC members, include the speedy implementation of the Nigerian government's programme (announced on October 1) for the transition to democracy. Other steps are the creation of the necessary conditions for the smooth and early transition to democracy and the release of Chief Moshood Abiola (widely accepted to have won the Nigerian presidential election in 1993) and former President Olusegun Obasanjo, as well as other political prisoners.

The establishment of a credible civilian structure to oversee and implement the transition process and an agreement with the Nigerians to establish an international monitoring mechanism to assist in the transitional process are the other steps — Sapa

Chemical union and Shell resume pay talks

(226) (783)

If negotiations fail and workers embark on a strike, petrol supplies to 850 dealers in four provinces could be hit

Star 12/12/95

By JUSTICE MALALA
Labour Reporter

Oil giant Shell, already under international pressure for its operations in Nigeria, has resumed wage negotiations with the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (CWIU) after numerous failed bids to break the deadlock.

The talks will be mediated by Charles Nupen and follow a series of wildcat strikes and go-slows in several depots that left petrol stations in Gauteng dry, and others operating only a few of their pumps.

The union is demanding a 13% pay hike, while Shell South Africa has offered 10%. The main area of dispute, however, was the introduction of a new shift pattern

in the company that the union had not been consulted on, CWIU spokesman Meshack Ravuku said yesterday.

He said the union's 300 members at Shell would be balloted to determine whether they should strike if mediation failed. The strike could affect the supply of petrol to more than 850 dealers in Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal.

The talks come as new efforts to establish a centralised bargaining forum in the chemical industry began to gain speed last week following the CWIU's threat earlier in the year that its 46 000 members would embark on a strike if such a body was not formed in time for next year's wage negotiations.

The national working group

formed by the employers in the industry and by the CWIU and four other unions said last week that talks to agree on the composition of the body would take place from next month.

The unions are proposing that a statutory bargaining council with one constitution be established and that the various chemical sectors be designated as chambers of the council.

Employers are, however, proposing that a non-statutory industry bargaining forum be established and that the various sectors have their own independent constitutions.

More than 650 workers at paint maker Dulux downed tools last week in support of wage demands. The workers are demanding a 20% pay increase.

Regional leaders back off from tough initiatives on Nigeria

(226) Star 12/12/95

Mandela says future moves should be directed through Commonwealth body

Southern African leaders yesterday eased back from further confrontation with Nigeria when they said they would not take any initiative of their own against the country's military rulers

"We have refrained from taking any new initiatives as we are aware that the international community in general is addressing the issue," said Botswana President Ketumile Masire, chairman of the 12-member Southern African Development Community

President Nelson Mandela, spearheading an international campaign to punish Nigeria for its prolonged military rule and in particular the hanging last month of nine minority rights activists, said in Johannesburg that future moves should be di-

rected through a Commonwealth monitoring committee

The SADC leaders, after three hours of talks, had decided it would be "unwise" for any of them to make individual policy statements on Nigeria

Masire said regional governments were watching to see whether Nigeria would fulfil conditions laid down by the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth has suspended Nigeria, giving it two years to show it was reforming, and some aid projects have been frozen, but there has been little support for Mandela's call for a boycott of Nigeria's vital oil exports.

Asked whether he was still pursuing sanctions on Nigeria, Mandela said: "All possible options are not excluded any

such options must be through the (Commonwealth) structure"

Masire said he knew nothing of reported differences between regional states over Nigeria

African leaders are reportedly divided on the sanctions issue, with Mandela taking the strongest position on human rights and Namibia's President Sam Nujoma among those opposing sanctions

The SADC meeting had been billed as a summit, but only five of the body's 12 heads of state turned up

South African officials, who said Zambian President Frederick Chiluba was taking part in the talks, said later he was not present and was being represented by a senior official.

The SADC groups Angola,

Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia

In addition to South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana and Malawi were represented at the highest level. The others sent lower-ranking officials

The United States, the European Union and some African countries have put an arms embargo on Nigeria and withdrawn ambassadors

Mandela said before the meeting got under way that he wanted to correct the impression that sanctions would be discussed

"Today there is nothing whatsoever on sanctions on the agenda. Merely a report I can give to them," he said. - Reuters.

Nigerian step to transition

(226) CT 13/12/95

ABUJA: Nigerian military ruler General Sani Abacha yesterday swore in a 13-member body to oversee the country's transition to civilian rule in three years' time.

The Transition Implementation Committee is headed by Judge Mamman Nasir, a former president of the Federal Court of Appeal and former deputy chairman of the dissolved Constitutional Conference, which spearheaded the country's last attempt to switch from military to civilian rule.

The body is to liaise with the government, political parties and other agencies involved in the transition programme.

The transition plan, announced by Gen Abacha in October, is for the military to hand over power to an elected civilian president on October 1, 1998.

Gen Abacha urged the new committee to submit quarterly reports to the government to give it time to deal with problems that could derail the transition timetable.

Nigeria is under international pressure to restore democratic rule — Sapa-APF

DIPLOMATIC VIEW



BY JEAN-JACQUES CORNISH

Those that initially joined South Africa in outrage at the executions are strangely quiet

It is time to haul out the big stick over Nigeria

CT(DR) 14/12/95 (226)

Even a miracle country cannot be friends with everyone all the time. The new South Africa has had one of the longest international honeymoons in modern history. But after 19 months of being everyone's friend, it was inevitable South Africa would have to start falling out with some countries.

Nigeria was the first. There is no doubt it was time to make a stand against that military dictatorship. Taking a position, as South Africa undoubtedly did, gained it kudos in the Western world because that position accorded with the West's notion of morality.

There are those who hold that Nelson Mandela has pressed too hard for sanctions and other punitive measures against the Abacha junta.

The African line is one of quiet diplomacy and rigid non-interference. We know this policy well because it was the South African stance until the Nigerians killed nine minority activists in the full glare of international attention.

The overwhelming mass of OAU members have so far had nothing whatever to say about Nigeria's shameful treatment of its citizens. Those that initially joined South Africa in outrage at the executions last month have since grown strangely quieter.

Not surprisingly then, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) leaders gathered in Pretoria this week decided to ease the pressure on Nigeria to end military rule and restore democracy. They are prepared to go along with international initiatives, but there will be no regional action to help Nigerian citizens.

Once again Africa follows where it should lead. The SADC leaders, and more particularly the rest of Africa, would like Mandela to ease up on the Nigerian junta. Unfortunately for them, he has gone too far.

He has said and done too much not to lose credibility now if he backs down. His statements and threats designed to bring democracy to Nigeria have earned him credit with the West, specifically the United States. These are unlikely to endear him to his fellow African leaders.

Of course it could be argued that the people of the continent so admire the man, even their own leaders could not tarnish his halo. Abacha realises this. He has been at pains to tell his people and the world that he has nothing against Mandela and wants to become friends.



He misses the point. He should be making friends with his own people.

If there is any lever Mandela's detractors will be able to use in Africa, it is his growing friendship with the United States.

Co-sponsoring a resolution on Nigeria with the United States, as Vice-President Al Gore and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki agreed to do last week, makes perfect sense if one's objective is to hold the dictator's foot to the fire.

Abacha could not afford to ignore such a measure. The question is how will Africa react to one of their own ganging up, as it were, with the US against a fellow African?

It could create all kinds of problems for South Africa in Africa. On the other hand, it could be the dawning of a new age of diplomacy on this continent with Africans starting to take responsibility for their own affairs.

Gut feeling says it is probably worth the risk. But diplomacy does not work on gut feelings.

On Nigeria, it is too late to step back. There will be other occasions to hold back.

This is the sort of lesson South Africa will have to learn over and over again before it goes into the United Nations Security Council. There, it is practically impossible not to spoil one friendship or another on any of the issues a member must decide on.

Once, that would have meant South Africa had until early next century to get its ducks in a row.

Africa has since created a new scenario, however. This year, Libya was to have come to the council as the new African member. The problems this would have created, both for Africa and the West, were legion.

This situation was saved when Egypt and Libya struck a deal giving Egypt the seat.

The arrangement was presented to the OAU as a fait accompli. This means that if the 50-year-old order of things can be altered in this way once, it can be done again.

South Africa now stands in the queue behind Namibia for the next seat to go to sub-Saharan Africa. With things changing so fast, South Africa could well be called up earlier.

OAU secretary to brief Mandela on Nigeria

(226) *Rowe* 14/12/95

By Themba Molefe
Political Correspondent

ORGANISATION of African Unity secretary-general Dr Salim Ahmed Salim is expected to meet President Nelson Mandela by the end of this week to brief him on the Nigerian question

Salim last week met Nigerian military strongman General Sani Abacha in Abuja as international anger grew against his government's human rights violations and the execution of nine Ogoni human rights activists in defiance of worldwide appeals for clemency

This prompted several measures

against Nigeria, including its suspension from the Commonwealth and an arms embargo by the United States and the 15-nation European Union

Although Salim's office in Addis Ababa could not confirm the date of his exact departure for South Africa, it said he would probably travel directly from Paris today where he was on official business

The OAU chief's visit follows a meeting in Pretoria on Monday of the Southern Africa Development Community heads of state who referred the Nigerian crisis to a special Commonwealth monitoring committee for recommendations

Reports yesterday said Abacha on Tuesday swore in a 13-member body to oversee the country's transition to civilian rule in three years' time

The Transition Implementation Committee (TIC) is headed by Mammam Nasir, a former president of the Federal Court of Appeal and former deputy chairman of the dissolved Constitutional Conference which spearheaded the country's last attempt to switch from military to civilian rule

The transition plan, announced by Abacha in October, is scheduled to culminate in the military handing over of power to an elected civilian president on October 1 1998

The Nigerian cop-out

(226) Rowen
14/12/95

THE SOUTHERN AFRICA Development Community, ostensibly a collective of 12 heads of state in the region, can breathe easily now because a looming African crisis is out of its hands

They passed the buck At their meeting in Pretoria's Union Buildings on Monday, the heads of state referred the "Nigerian question" to the Commonwealth Monitoring Committee of Eight - appointed last month to investigate and coordinate action, if any - on the country

The Committee of Eight comprises South Africa, Namibia, Malaysia, Jamaica, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia

"There will no longer be any individual initiatives on the matter," said President Nelson Mandela on Monday

But is Mandela satisfied that, as a power bloc, the SADC decided not to take action against Nigeria's military dictatorship?

"Yes, I am happy," he said

But the point is that Mandela wanted action He even appealed to the US and UK to consider punitive sanctions against General Sani Abacha's regime This, Mandela argued, would put pressure on Abacha and his cohorts to free human rights activists and political prisoners, and adhere to an internationally monitored timetable to restore democracy in the West African country by not later than October 1998

Mandela is the first head of state of a democratic South Africa and, as such, the Nigerian question is a relatively new experience for him as is SA's international diplomacy

This does not in any way suggest the President is inexperienced, but that he has indeed become part of the Africa known to fiddle with human rights For instance, very little came out of Africa during Idi Amin's brutal repression of Ugandans Sudan still persecutes opponents And when was a voice last heard on the Rwanda and Burundi genocides?

In a nutshell, if Mandela wanted sanctions, his colleagues in SADC did not - a bitter pill made a little sweet only by the support of Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe

Nevertheless, on Nigeria, Mandela has been misinformed But not by Africa, whose silence had, until he spoke out against the Abacha regime, been noted Firstly, on hearing of the execution of nine Ogoni human rights activists on November 10, Mandela was obviously angry because his own efforts to save them had gone unheeded by the Abacha regime

What the President did then, and to the chagrin of some African leaders, was to consult US President Bill Clinton and British prime minister John Major on a joint strategy And by then he had already called for Nigeria's isolation

Clinton and Major, whose interests in Nige-

The buck has been passed and a crisis averted - but at what price? Political Correspondent **Themba Molefe** discusses the ins and outs...

ria loom larger than SA's, gave Mandela the impression they would take decisive action Therefore, through their media, the Western superpowers misinformed Mandela

Meanwhile, Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings became critical of Mandela's approach, saying "there must be an African solution to the Nigerian problem"

In fact, Mandela did want to consult, but when he did, SADC chairman and Botswana President Sir Ketumile Masire and Mugabe were abroad, hence the summit on Nigeria was held only this week

The SADC leaders returned to their countries from Monday's meeting satisfied that Abacha's attitude was softening, and it was only SA which has recalled its ambassador from Nigeria

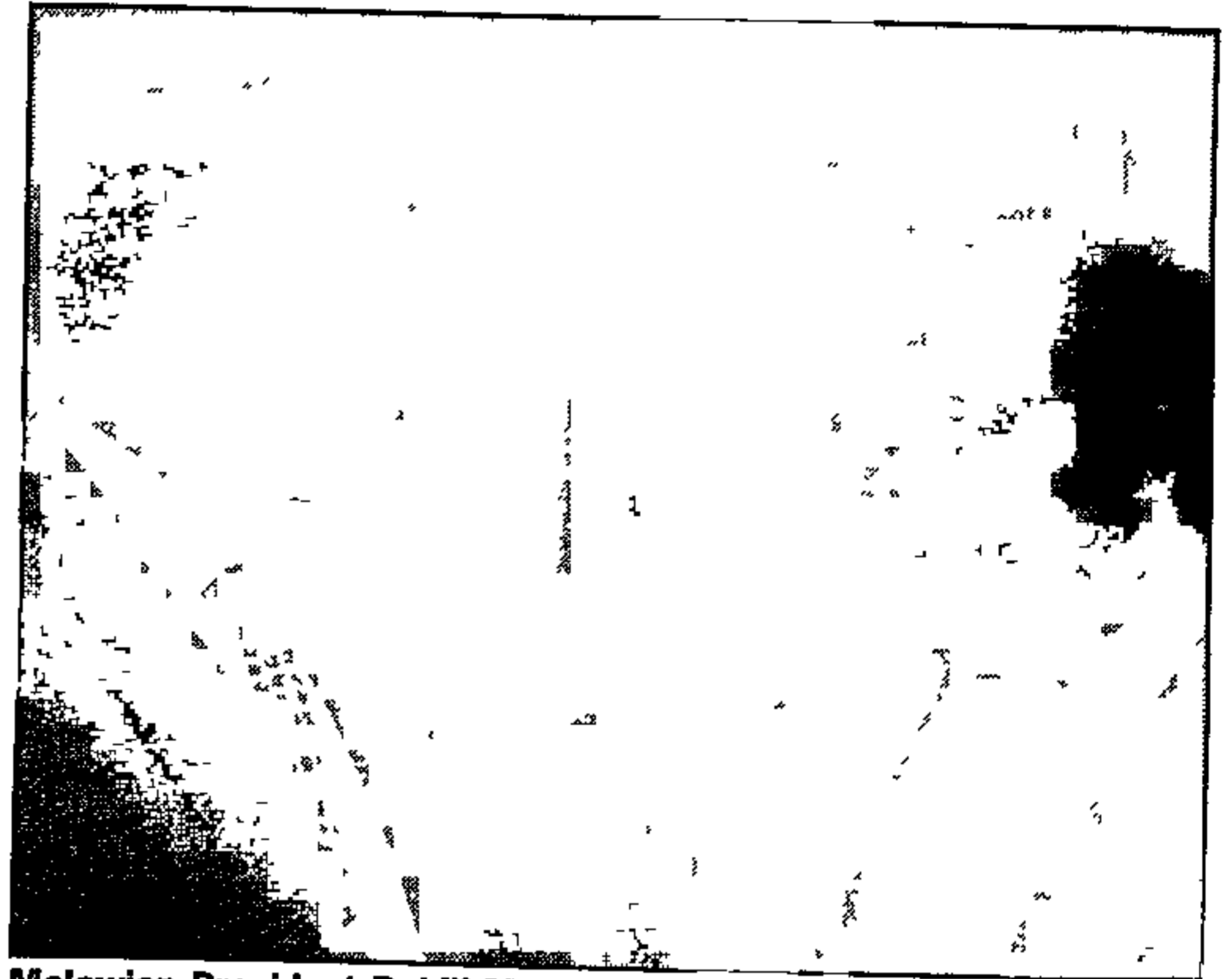
On his return from his posting as High Commissioner in Nigeria, Mr George Nene put SA's - and therefore Mandela's - policy on Nigeria in perspective

"The Government intends to have healthy bilateral relations with the people and government of Nigeria," he said "It is our wish to develop full and complete diplomatic, cultural and economic relations with Nigeria and to initiate dialogue as a measure to persuade and pressurise the military government to move to a democratic dispensation as soon as possible"

Nene pointed out that even Mandela's appeal to save the Ogoni activists, through the personal intervention of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, fell on deaf ears

Mandela himself stopped over in Abuja on his way from Morocco to appeal to Abacha to release the presumed winner of the June 1993 presidential elections, Chief Moshood Abiola

In April, Anglican Archbishop Desmond



Malawian President Bakili Muluzi (left) and Mozambican prime minister Pascoal Mocumbi during a break at the SADC meeting in Pretoria on Monday.

PIC VELI NHLAPO

Tutu went to Nigeria at Mandela's request to plead for the release of Abiola and former president General Olusegun Obasanjo and others accused of plotting a coup

In August, Mbeki and Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad followed up on Tutu's appeal with specific requests for clemency for the alleged coup plotters and to set up a transitional democracy programme

When on November 10 Mandela heard of the execution of activist and writer Mr Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight comrades, he was at the Commonwealth Heads of State Meeting in Auckland, New Zealand

Obviously angry, he called for Nigeria's expulsion but in the end went along with the decision to suspend the country pending its return to democratic rule

The President's efforts underscored his international stature and statesmanship, but he and the country are now part of the collective - the UN, OAU and SADC

It is perhaps with this in mind that he will this week meet OAU general secretary Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, who has indicated Abacha's apparent change of heart

As for the SADC leadership, Mandela's inclusion in the Africa fold is a welcome relief See page 30.

Nigeria row: ANC to boycott Shell

JOHANNESBURG. — The ANC, backed by sport and labour groups in an anti-Nigerian coalition, today announced a two-day boycott of Shell South Africa products next week.

"The South Africa Nigerian Democracy Support Group is calling on all South Africans to observe a two-day boycott of Shell products on Tuesday and Wednesday 19-20 December," the group, headed by the ANC, said in a statement

The group also said it would call for pickets at outlets of Shell SA, owned by Royal Dutch/Shell, on the two days of the boycott in an attempt to show the Nigerian government and the company that "there cannot be business as usual"

"We have decided on this course of action as a result of Shell's failure to demonstrate sufficient resolve in putting pressure on the Nigerian military government to cease its campaign of repression and to move towards democracy

"If Shell continues to defy worldwide calls to exert pressure on the (General Sani) Abacha regime, (we) will consider embarking on a protracted boycott," the group warned

Other than the ANC and its allies the SA Communist Party and Congress of South African Trade Unions, the umbrella group includes Business South Africa, South African Football Association, National Soccer League, National Olympic Committee of South Africa and Congress of South African Writers

The South African government has called for an oil boycott against Nigeria and has urged Shell to join the pro-democracy campaign

President Nelson Mandela has also called on Shell to pull out of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) project with Nigeria but Shell's executives in Johannesburg said last month they would ignore all calls to cancel the scheme, and accused critics of the project of knee-jerk reactions — Reuter.

(226)

(ARC)

ARC 15/12/95

C

The SADC backs down on Nigeria ⁽²²⁶⁾

Sowetan 15/12/93

By Themba Molefe
Political Correspondent

THE Nigerian file seems closed for the moment – at least as far as the Organisation of African Unity is concerned

At their extraordinary meeting in Pretoria on Monday, the Southern Africa Development Community heads of states said OAU secretary-general Dr Salim Ahmed Salim would meet President Nelson Mandela this week to brief him on that country

∑ OAU headquarters had earlier said Salim would travel to Pretoria, but yesterday said the secretary-general was in Paris and had not confirmed his South African visit

∑ The SADC leaders, convening on Mandela's request, washed their hands off Nigeria and instead referred the matter to the Commonwealth special monitoring committee of eight countries, including South Africa and Namibia

The SADC said its decision not to take any punitive action against Nigeria was based on reports that Salim had indicated that Nigeria's military dictator General Sani Abacha had committed his government to a time-table for restoring democracy to the country

However, Mandela's office and the OAU headquarters yesterday reiterated their ignorance of Salim's impending visit

The Abacha regime's defiant execution of nine Ogoni human rights activists on November 10 provoked international outrage and prompted several measures against Nigeria, including suspension from the Commonwealth and an arms embargo by the United States and the 15-nation European Union

South Africa is in favour of total sanctions as a form of pressure on Abacha but Mandela has said the country was part of the collective – SADC, Commonwealth, United Nations and OAU – and ruled out “any individual decision on Nigeria”

Abacha embarks on image campaign

Sowetan 15/12/95
(226)

By Tina Susman

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast – On the face of it, Nigerian ruler General Sani Abacha appears unfazed by international outrage over the hanging of nine dissidents. Behind the showmanship, however, it appears Abacha is orchestrating a major public relations campaign to stave off pariah status.

Officials within his secretive junta say the general was taken aback by the swift and fierce reaction to the November 10 executions. Some even admit he blundered by ordering the executions as Commonwealth leaders held their summit in New Zealand.

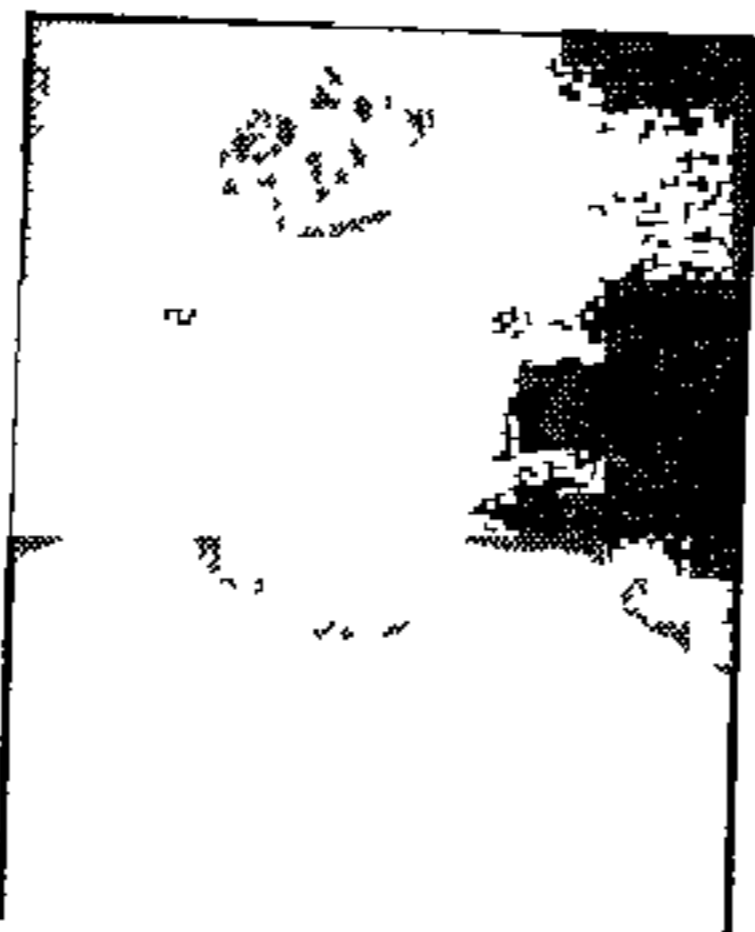
The 52-member organisation of Britain and its former colonies and dominions promptly suspended Nigeria. The United States, South Africa and 15 European countries were among those who called their ambassadors back from Nigeria, and the European Union imposed a sports embargo on Nigeria.

"The government was indeed surprised by the negative reactions," Defence Ministry spokesman Brigadier General Fred Chyuka said last week as ads defending the executions appeared in *The New York Times* and London's *Independent*.

Information Minister Walter Ogonagoro went further, accusing the government of "tactical blunders" and saying its handling of the events was "poorly done."

"The timing was faulty, and it gave room for heads of government to take a resolute stance against us," he told Nigerian editors last week.

In an attempt to head off further punishment, the Nigerian government placed a half-page ad in Johannesburg's *Sunday Times* before a summit of the 12-nation Southern African Development Community.



President Nelson Mandela supports oil sanctions against Nigeria, and while the subject was not discussed publicly at the summit on Monday, Mandela made it clear he still considers sanctions an option.

**General Sani Abacha ...
trying to regain support.**

The Johannesburg newspaper ad defended the executions of playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others as just punishment for murder. "Nigeria does not want to be a lawless state," said the ad, signed by the Nigerian High Commission, which represents the government.

The two-page ad in *The New York Times* was purportedly paid for by families of the four men allegedly slain by Saro-Wiwa and his supporters, although Abacha critics are convinced his government paid for it.

Promising to tell "the whole truth", the ad recounted in a detailed chronology the conflict that culminated in Saro-Wiwa's conviction for the 1994 murders of four political rivals.

Most striking was a letter written by Desmond Orage, the son of one of the four and a nephew of Saro-Wiwa. "When I heard of the killings and the arrest of Ken Saro-Wiwa in connection with the murders, I flew to Nigeria to conduct my own investigation," wrote Orage, who lives in Los Angeles. The letter said that despite Orage's hopes that Saro-Wiwa was innocent, he became convinced of his guilt.

A television ad highlighting Nigeria's contribution to international peacekeeping has also been appearing in the United States, another apparent prong in the campaign to rehabilitate Nigeria's image abroad.

The ad makes no mention of the executions, and Nigerian officials in Washington and New York said they had no knowledge of the ad or who had paid for it.

As the leader of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, Saro-Wiwa spearheaded a campaign for oil giants to compensate Ogonis for environmental damage.

For that, supporters say he was framed for murders he did not commit. Nigeria's government denies the charge and says its courts responded to a case of mob justice.

Legislation now being considered in Washington will ban new investment in Nigeria and, most importantly, allow Nigerian assets held outside the country to be seized. – Sapa-AP

UN condemns Nigerian executions

UNITED NATIONS · A General Assembly committee yesterday overwhelmingly condemned Nigeria's "arbitrary execution, after a flawed judicial process", of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others

By a vote of 98 to 12, with 42 abstentions, it invited the UN Human Rights Commission to "give urgent attention" to the situation in Nigeria

Secretary-General Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali was asked to hold talks with Nigeria on carrying out the resolution and in restoring democracy. — Reuter

226 OCT 15/12/95

Nigeria's golden egg left to rot

(226) M+G 15-21/12/95

Chris McGreal follows a forlorn dirt track to Oloibiri, where oil was first struck in the Niger Delta 40 years ago

A SMALL, rectangular sign on the dirt track into Oloibiri is the sole monument to the crucible of modern Nigeria

"This is Oloibiri, the goose that lays the golden egg. You are welcome," it says.

Few of the very few outsiders who venture to the town even see the sign. They usually come by river, winding for hours through narrow creeks and rainforest to the place where oil was first struck in the Niger Delta almost 40 decades ago.

The well that earned Oloibiri its place in history has long since dried up, and the oil industry's web has spread across the delta. But Oloibiri's 8,000 residents still cling to promises of roads, sea walls and cash in every pocket.

Ogoniland had Ken Saro-Wiwa to play on international disquiet at environmental destruction to campaign for his area. The Shell oil company felt the pressure and scrambled to build roads and schools in Ogoniland. But there have been no such benefits for Oloibiri.

When oil was first struck in Nigeria, Edwin Ofonh was a nine-year-old boy watching his father work as

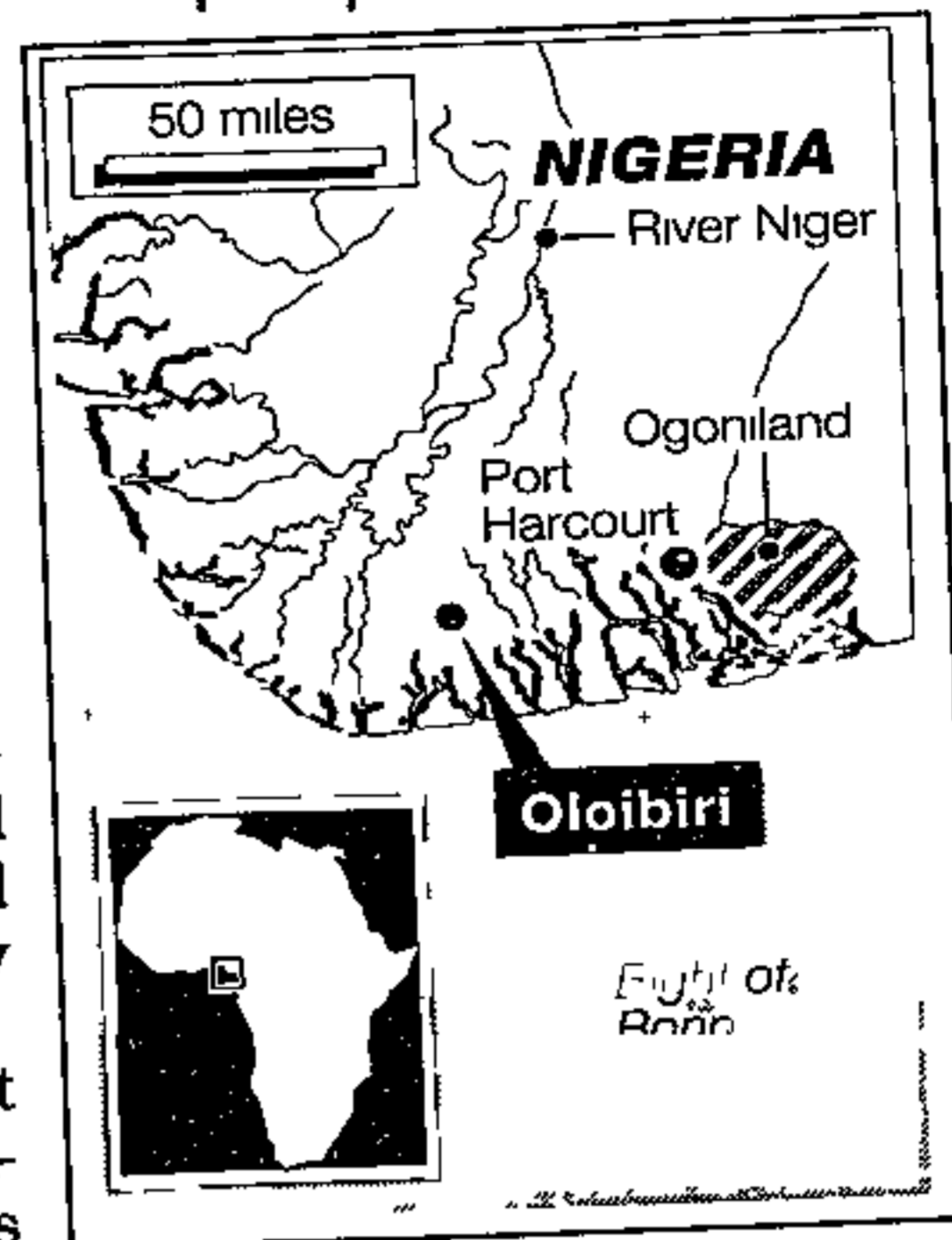
head labourer for a Shell contractor. "When oil was found, we thought we would be millionaires. We are still depressed," he says.

"Shell was the company that brought civilisation to Nigeria. I don't see why they can't bring civilisation to us. The town is very tattered. Shell promised to build schools and to make a sea wall because the town is flooded every year. Nothing was done."

Shell argued that development was the responsibility of the government to which the oil companies paid huge revenues. The townspeople saw it differently. Oil had been found on their doorstep. Shell was getting rich. Military dictatorships were getting rich. Oloibiri should get something too.

Ofonh does not blame only the oil company. "It was the big guns in Nigeria who spoilt the arrangement between us and Shell. The army and the rich politicians ate that money that Shell was to use for our development. We don't see a shadow of that money," he said.

Hope flickered in Oloibiri in 1979 when one of the area's sons, Chief Melford Okilo, was elected governor



of Rivers State. Chief Melford commissioned a road to provide a reliable route to the rest of the country. It was under construction when the military overthrew the government.

All that is left is a scar through the rain forest. By the time it reaches Oloibiri there is nothing left to show but felled trees and sand.

The chairman of Oloibiri's council, Claudius Akpalakpa, laments the loss of Chief Okilo. "We cannot do like Ken Saro-Wiwa on our own. Somebody must come up who has the strength to face the federal government. We are too weak."

Madiba gets a bad press

Chris McGreal

THE world has got Nelson Mandela all wrong. You may think of him as the epitome of decency and statesmanship providing a beacon of hope on an unsettled continent. The truth is, he is a bumbling, sex-starved old fool secretly in the pay of the white man. Or, he simply does not know what it is like to struggle against a brutal and murderous regime. Just ask a Nigerian.

Nelson Mandela's political judgment has more than once been questioned, but the Nigerians are the first to impugn his integrity.

Kabiru Offi runs a filling station in Lagos where periodic fuel shortages are a peculiarity of one of the world's major oil exporters. Ignoring the threats and insults by agitated drivers jostling to reach the pumps, Offi blames the petrol shortage on corruption and military rule. So you might think he would welcome Mandela's effort to unseat General Sani Abacha. Not at all.

In attacking Mandela, Nigerians have a tendency to attribute to him the qualities of their own leaders. Offi thinks he has been bought off, or "settled", for large amounts of cash. "Mandela's body may be free

but his mind is still chained by the white man. It is stupid to call for sanctions because we are the ones who will suffer not the military men," he said. "Why doesn't Mandela forget about Nigeria and concentrate on finding his wife again?"

One of the waiting drivers waves a newspaper in Offi's face and reads it aloud. The problem, it seems, is not sexual frustration but Mandela's age.

"Old age is taking its toll on him. That is why he has been going round making unnecessary press conferences," the newspaper states. "We want to know, who owns Nigeria? Is it the South Africans or Nigerians? If Nigeria is governed by Nigerians why then is that confused old prisoner Mandela interfering in our internal affairs?"

♦ SA off hook

(226)

Star 16/12/95

Pretoria asked for the financial waiver, although at one time President Mandela had said that, if the UN demanded, the Government should pay up

A South African representative said the country could make a voluntary financial contribution to the UN, but did not say how much



MANDELA. Would have paid up

This gesture would be in appreciation of the UN role against apartheid and in recognition of the world body's financial circumstances

The warver left South Africa still owing the UN some \$25-million, according to officials

Neither the chairman of the UN's financial watchdog group, Conrad Msele of Tanzania, nor Eric Vilchez Asher of Guatemala, chairman of the General Assembly's budgetary committee, favoured the warver when discussions began. However, support by the United States - the UN's biggest debtor - developed in a meeting in October between Mandela and President Bill Clinton - Independent Foreign Service

...susceptible, and more uniformed | President

Star 16/12/95
UN lets SA off budget hook (226)

By MIKE LITTLEJOHN

New York - United Nations budgetary assessments incurred but not paid by South Africa over two decades have been waived by a unanimous decision of the General Assembly

The decision, reached after long and difficult private discussions, relieves South Africa of an obligation amounting to more than \$93 million

This sum grew in the period when the delegation was excluded from participation. The resolution termed this exclusion "a moral and political decision" and the measure to forgive the arrears a result of "exceptional and unique circumstances". The period in question was from September 1974 to June 1994

Hiding behind Mandela (226)

It is up to democratic forces in Nigeria, not the rest of the world, to drive change in that country, writes GILL MARCUS

ST 17/12/95

THE execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Nigerian activists has raised numerous pertinent questions for both the government and people of South Africa

Banner headlines that blaze "We have failed the Nigerian people" or "Pretoria blunders while Nigeria burns" warrant that we look more carefully into our responses so far.

Are we, the South African public, not hiding behind President Mandela's moral authority as a world leader and expecting him to achieve the impossible, as if he has a magic wand?

Should we not examine whether we have abdicated our role within civil society to stand up for human rights? Have we not instead made this Mr Mandela's personal responsibility?

Are we also not transferring blame from Nigeria's dictatorship which, under General Sani Abacha, took the decision to carry out the executions in the full knowledge of where Mr Mandela, South Africa and the Commonwealth stood on the matter?

The blood of these Nigerian patriots is surely on their hands. The decision to descend into political butch-

ery is theirs alone

International solidarity can only support action taken by the democratic forces in any country. It cannot be the driving force

Therefore the nature, form and content of solidarity actions must be determined by the Nigerian democratic forces

South Africa, in concert with the rest of the world, can only be effective if it acts in support of the Nigerian people themselves

Neither Mr Mandela nor the South African government is acting in isolation

This is not a bilateral confrontation between Nigeria and South Africa. Rather, our efforts are undertaken in consultation with the Organisation of African Unity, Southern African Development Community and the Commonwealth. They also arise out of decisions taken at the recent Commonwealth Conference in New Zealand, where there was a unanimous view that stronger action was required

This false perception that South Africa has failed the Nigerian people should not be used as an excuse for the rest of the world to make the problems of Nigeria our responsibility to resolve single-handedly

The question of sanctions is now a matter for the agenda of the OAU, the UN and other international bodies

As South Africa, we are doing our best, including through the initiatives of Mr Mandela, to ensure that the most effective action is taken by these bodies

The execution of Saro-Wiwa and others should serve as a reminder that the fate of dozens more prisoners remains in the balance

Following visits to Nigeria earlier this year by Mr Mandela, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the death sentence imposed on General Olusegun Obasanjo and scores of others was commuted to life imprisonment

Despite our actions, however, Chief Mashood Abiola, who was believed to have won Nigeria's presidential election last year, remains in detention, while reports indicate that a further 23 people are scheduled to be brought to trial

We need to ask what steps must be taken to ensure the release of these and other political prisoners, what can be done to improve the conditions under which they are being held, how can further executions be prevented, and how can the return to

democracy be speeded up?

What the above also raises is the urgent need for South Africa to have a coherent foreign relations policy, particularly within the African context

This is an objective problem for South Africa, not one that hinges on which particular person is the minister

Nor can we have a foreign policy that is determined by the world's perspective of what problems are now Mr Mandela's personal responsibility to solve, whether it be East Timor, Indonesia or Nigeria

In conclusion, we also need to draw relevant lessons from Nigeria for our own situation. In particular, our response to the public executions in Nigeria should raise questions about our own attitudes to the clamour for the reintroduction of the death penalty. The Nigerian dictatorship has stated that the executions were a result of criminal behaviour, not political activity

Should we not ask who determines the difference between political and criminal offences? Who draws the line, and when?

● Gill Marcus is an ANC MP. She chairs the parliamentary finance committee

Nigeria campaigns to stave off its pariah status

CP 17/12/98 (220)

ON THE face of it, Nigerian ruler General Sani Abacha appears unfazed by international outrage over the hanging of nine dissidents

Behind the showmanship, however, it appears Abacha is orchestrating a major public relations campaign to stave off pariah status

Officials within Abacha's secretive junta say the general was taken aback by the swift and fierce reaction to the November 10 executions

Some even admit he blundered by ordering the executions as Commonwealth leaders held their summit in New Zealand

The 52-member organisation of Britain and its former colonies promptly suspended Nigeria

The United States, South Africa and 15 European countries were among those who called

their ambassadors back from Nigeria, and the European Union imposed a sports embargo against Nigeria

"The government was indeed surprised by the negative reactions," Defence Ministry spokesman Brigadier-General Fred Chijuka said last week as ads defending the executions appeared in *The New York Times* and London's *Independent*

Information Minister Walter Ogonagoro went further, accusing the government of "tactical blunders" and saying its handling of the event was "poorly done"

In an attempt to head off further punishment, the Nigerian government placed a half-page ad in Johannesburg's *Sunday Times* before a summit of the 12-nation Southern African Development Community

President Nelson Mandela supports oil sanctions against Nigeria, and while the subject was not discussed publicly at the summit this week, Mandela made it clear he still considers sanctions an option

The Johannesburg newspaper ad defended the November 10 executions of playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others as just punishment for murder

"Nigeria does not want to be a lawless state," said the ad, signed by the Nigerian High Commission, which represents the government

Thursday's two-page ad in *The New York Times* was purportedly paid for by families of the four men allegedly slain by Saro-Wiwa and his supporters, although Abacha critics are convinced his government paid for it

Most striking was a letter written by Desmond Orage, the son of one of the four and a nephew of Saro-Wiwa

"When I heard of the killings and the arrest of Ken Saro-Wiwa in connection with the murders, I flew to Nigeria to conduct my own investigation," wrote Orage, who lives in Los Angeles. The letter said that despite Orage's hope that Saro-Wiwa was innocent, he became convinced of his guilt

Saro-Wiwa, like his alleged victims and his co-defendants, was a member of the Ogoni tribe that lives in Nigeria's oil region. As the leader of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, Saro-Wiwa spearheaded a campaign for oil giants to compensate Ogonis for environmental damage

For that, supporters

say he was framed for murders he did not commit

Nigeria denies the charge and says its courts responded fairly to a case of mob justice

Mandela's call for oil sanctions has so far been met with silence, but Abacha still has plenty to fear and is worried, said Randall Robinson, whose TransAfrica lobbying group is pushing Congress to approve sanctions and other punitive measures

Legislation being considered in Washington would ban new investment in Nigeria and, most importantly, allow Nigerian assets held outside the country to be seized, Robinson said

"The moment those monies are identified and frozen, you will get the attention of the military regime," he said - SAP-AP

Shell says boycott call is unfair

BD 18/12/95

(226) (153)

THE Shell oil company said on Saturday that a call by a Nigeria democracy support group for a two-day boycott of its products in SA was unfair and discriminatory.

"There are other oil companies operating in Nigeria and South Africa," Shell SA said.

The SA Nigerian Democratic Support Group, a coalition of church, sport and labour groups led by the ANC, on Friday called for a two-day boycott of Shell products on Tuesday and Wednesday December 19 and 20 because of the company's failure to put significant pressure on the Nigerian government to make changes.

Shell said a business, no matter how large, could not take on the role of a government. "No matter how large or influential, business cannot assume the role of governments, the United Nations, military forces or the Nigerian people to change the political dispensation in Nigeria."

The pressure group said it would call for pickets at outlets of Shell SA, owned by Royal Dutch/Shell, on the two days of the boycott in an attempt to show the Nigerian government and the company that "there cannot be business as usual."

"We have decided on this course of action as a result of Shell's failure to demonstrate sufficient resolve in putting pressure on the Nigerian military government to cease its campaign of repression and to move towards democracy.

"If Shell continues to defy worldwide calls to exert pressure on the (General Sani) Abacha regime, (we) will consider embarking on a protracted boycott," the group warned.

Other than the ANC and allies, the SA Communist Party and Congress of SA Trade Unions, the umbrella group includes Business SA, the SA Football Association, National Soccer League, National Olympic Committee of SA and Congress of SA Writers.

The activist coalition, also including church groups and lawyers' organisations, was formed soon after Nigeria's military rulers hanged nine minority rights campaigners, including writer Ken Saro-Wiwa.

President Nelson Mandela has also called on Shell to pull out of a liquefied natural gas project with Nigeria, but Shell's executives in Johannesburg said last month they would ignore calls to cancel the scheme, and accused critics of knee-jerk reactions — Reuter.

Group calls for boycott of Shell

By Mzimasi Ngudle

226

Sowetan

THE South African Nigeria Democracy Support Group has called for a two-day boycott of Shell products starting from tomorrow

The call follows what the group called Shell's failure to put pressure on Nigeria for democratic reforms

In a statement, the group said it was particularly concerned about 19 Ogoni activists who were due to come before a military tribunal early next year

"We are concerned that Sani Abacha's military government is using the ruse of criminal prosecution to eliminate opposition – as was the case with Ken Saro Wiwa," they said

The group threatened to call for more boycotts of Shell products if the petroleum giant continued to defy worldwide calls to exert pressure on Abacha's regime

The group comprises, among others, the ANC-led tripartite alliance, South African Football Association, Business South Africa, National Association of Democratic Lawyers, Lawyers for Human Rights, Congress of South African Writers and the National Olympic Committee of South Africa

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'MORE SPENT ON BRIBES THAN ON COMMUNITY'

Shell 'funded military ops'

CT 18/12/95

(40) (226)

LONDON: The press here yesterday published allegedly leaked confidential documents linking the oil giant Shell to the "wasting of vocal individuals" in Nigeria.

SHELL has been accused of funding ruthless military operations in Nigeria to help it establish stable conditions for its oil interests there

Shell allegedly paid the security apparatus to protect its installations and asked for armed "assistance" against local demonstrators. It also allegedly had on its payroll a senior army officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Okuntimo, who has been accused of ordering the torture, rape and murder of Ogoni dissidents

Questioned by the Sunday Times here last week, Lt-Col Okuntimo initially admitted being paid by Shell while in charge of crushing Ogoni protests.

"Shell contributed to the logistics through financial support. To do this, we needed resources and Shell provided these." But later he denied the comments

Shell has admitted asking for help from armed police but denied paying the military

Shell did, however, tell the newspaper it planned to purge executives in Nigeria following the discovery of a "black hole of corruption" involving the payment of millions of dollars in bribes and kickbacks to tribal chiefs, community leaders and the military in the troubled Ogoni region

A European Shell executive who wanted to remain anonymous said: "I would go so far as to

say we spent more on bribes and corruption than on community development projects"

While Shell International cited £12.5 million (about R70.4m) a year spent on community projects, much of it ended up in the pockets of Shell officials, community leaders and military officers

Confidential documents leaked to the British media revealed recommendations were made in a state security memorandum for "wasting vocal individuals"

Ruthless

The memorandum headed "Law and Order in Ogoni etc" and dated May 12, 1994 was addressed to the military administrator of Rivers State from the chairman of internal security, Major Paul Okuntimo. It noted "Shell operations still impossible unless ruth-

less military operations are undertaken for smooth economic activities to commence."

Included in the recommendations were "wasting operations" during gatherings of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, to which executed author Ken Saro-Wiwa belonged

Shell said at the weekend that it was compelled by law to inform the authorities when there was a threat to oil installations and that it only called in the police when its facilities or staff were at risk. It agreed that there had been "instances where the response by the authorities has gone too far with tragic consequences"

The company added "We categorically refute that any form of input was ever provided to the military, neither would we do so if approached on such a matter" —
Own Correspondent

Mandela stands alone against Abacha

Stephen Laufer

WITTH this week's initial meeting of the Commonwealth Group of Eight on Nigeria looming large, SA diplomacy has been working overtime to bridge the gap between President Nelson Mandela's hard line and the continuing softly-softly approach of most countries involved in seeking a solution to the West African nation's crisis.

The going has been uphill, and foreign affairs insiders admit that Mandela is still isolated within the international community, despite statements to the contrary after last week's Southern Africa Development Community meeting in Pretoria.

European Union ambassadors briefed recently by Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad felt he had displayed little vision, and SA's Nigeria policy amounted to little more than crisis management. SA was trying to find partners for its approach, but did not know who to trust or how far.

This was confirmed by ANC MP Gill Marcus, writing at the weekend of the urgent need for SA to have a coherent foreign relations policy.

Nevertheless, supporters of Mandela's firm stand are able to point to several recent events which indicate both a softening of the Nigerian junta's position and a growing sense of pur-

pose among that country's fragmented opposition forces. They believe these developments are significant portents of long-term change, the result of Mandela's principled firmness coupled with new attempts at dialogue.

Mandela has worked hard in recent weeks on Nigeria, sending a forceful message to Gen Sani Abacha via the Organisation for African Unity that he should release presidential candidate Moshood Abiola and former head of state Olusegun Obasanjo as a sign of good faith, and telling opposition politicians to get their act together to create a viable alternative to Nigeria's military government.

Thursday's release of Abiola from prison to arrest in a government house, and the gathering in Lagos on the same day of 400 delegates from at least 35 political groupings to discuss moves towards democracy, will strengthen SA's argument of recent weeks. Mandela and his diplomats have been arguing that to be effective, the international community must carry the big stick of sanctions very visibly even if it is speaking softly to Abacha.

Yet Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo will be acutely aware as he sits down to dinner with his counterparts from Zimbabwe, New Zealand, Britain, Ghana, Jamaica, Canada and Malaysia, tonight in London that several members

of the group — not least Zimbabwe and Ghana — are extremely reluctant to follow Mandela's advice.

Domestic and regional security issues loom large in their calculations, with Zimbabwe's increasingly authoritarian President Robert Mugabe unhappy about creating precedents for international intervention in internal political disputes. Ghana's Jerry Rawlings, economically dependent on Nigeria, is reportedly fearful of instability affecting the whole region if Abacha is toppled and his country fragments.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, the architect of SA foreign policy, is understood to share some of Rawlings' fears. He is particularly concerned that SA could be overstretched if called upon to help stabilise a divided Nigeria on top of this country's diplomatic and military peacekeeping commitments in Angola, Mozambique and at home.

Reluctant to increase public pressure on Nigeria, but equally diffident about being seen disagreeing publicly with Mandela, diplomats of the Commonwealth grouping have resorted to their old stock in trade of procedural issues ahead of this week's gathering of the group of eight's foreign ministers. The timing and venue of the initial meeting and the question of who will chair the group of eight have been the subject of intense haggling between

the member states in the runup to the London gathering.

Apparently not sharing SA's sense of urgency on the initial meeting, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Canada and Ghana would have been happy to gather some time in January. Auckland, initially suggested as a venue, has been replaced by the more accessible London, home of the Commonwealth secretariat. What remains is a decision on who will chair the group.

New Zealand has argued that precedent should give them the chair — Canada headed the eminent persons' group on SA after it was created at a Commonwealth meeting there. But SA has been pushing for Zimbabwe or Ghana to head the group, arguing Nigeria's strong men are likely to be more responsive to initiatives fronted by fellow Africans.

Meanwhile, other groupings like the EU, the OAU and the UN will be looking to the group of eight's meeting which ends tomorrow for a lead on future Nigeria policy. SA's diplomats will be working hard to find common ground with the others and to shift the focus from Mandela to a more collective approach to the Nigerian problem.

As Pahad told the EU ambassadors in Pretoria, it would be a catastrophe for SA to go from one isolation to the next in Africa.

(226)

BD 19/12/95

Mandela stands alone against Abacha

Stephen Laufer

WITH this week's initial meeting of the Commonwealth Group of Eight on Nigeria looming large, SA diplomacy has been working overtime to bridge the gap between President Nelson Mandela's hard line and the continuing softly-softly approach of most countries involved in seeking a solution to the West African nation's crisis.

The going has been uphill, and foreign affairs insiders admit that Mandela is still isolated within the international community, despite statements to the contrary after last week's Southern Africa Development Community meeting in Pretoria.

European Union ambassadors briefed recently by Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad felt he had displayed little vision, and SA's Nigeria policy amounted to little more than crisis management. SA was trying to find partners for its approach, but did not know who to trust or how far.

This was confirmed by ANC MP Gill Marcus, writing at the weekend of the urgent need for SA to have a coherent foreign relations policy.

Nevertheless, supporters of Mandela's firm stand are able to point to several recent events which indicate both a softening of the Nigerian junta's position and a growing sense of pur-

pose among that country's fragmented opposition forces. They believe these developments are significant portents of long-term change, the result of Mandela's principled firmness coupled with new attempts at dialogue.

Mandela has worked hard in recent weeks on Nigeria, sending a forceful message to Gen Sam Abacha via the Organisation for African Unity that he should release presidential candidate Moshood Abiola and former head of state Olusegun Obasanjo as a sign of good faith, and telling opposition politicians to get their act together to create a viable alternative to Nigeria's military government.

Thursday's release of Abiola from prison to arrest in a government house, and the gathering in Lagos on the same day of 400 delegates from at least 35 political groupings to discuss moves towards democracy, will strengthen SA's argument of recent weeks. Mandela and his diplomats have been arguing that to be effective, the international community must carry the big stick of sanctions very visibly even if it is speaking softly to Abacha.

Yet Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo will be acutely aware as he sits down to dinner with his counterparts from Zimbabwe, New Zealand, Britain, Ghana, Jamaica, Canada and Malaysia tonight in London that several members

of the group — not least Zimbabwe and Ghana — are extremely reluctant to follow Mandela's advice.

Domestic and regional security issues loom large in their calculations, with Zimbabwe's increasingly authoritarian President Robert Mugabe unhappy about creating precedents for international intervention in internal political disputes. Ghana's Jerry Rawlings, economically dependent on Nigeria, is reportedly fearful of instability affecting the whole region if Abacha is toppled and his country fragments.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, the architect of SA foreign policy, is understood to share some of Rawlings' fears. He is particularly concerned that SA could be overstretched if called upon to help stabilise a divided Nigeria on top of this country's diplomatic and military peacekeeping commitments in Angola, Mozambique and at home.

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BD 19/12/95

(226)

ANC calls on motorists to boycott Shell

226
JOHANNESBURG — The ANC has appealed to South Africans to boycott Shell products today and tomorrow to urge the oil giant to help bring democracy in Nigeria

ARG 19/12/95
"The ANC and the South Africa-Nigerian Democratic Support Group (SANDSG), would like to remind all members of the public about the two-day boycott of Shell products...today and tomorrow," said ANC spokesman Carl Niehaus

"We urge holiday-makers to simply drive past Shell stations and remind Shell of the responsibilities they cannot escape.. to use its economic power to place pressure on the Sani Abacha regime."

The SANDSG, a coalition of church, sport and labour groups led by the ANC, on Friday announced a two-day boycott because of the company's failure to put significant pressure on the Nigerian government to make democratic changes.

But Shell has said a business could not take on the role of a government.

Meanwhile the Greater Johannesburg Regional Taxi Forum yesterday distanced itself from the boycott.

"The taxi industry does not see itself being used in political conflict," the forum said in a statement.

Support group accuses Shell of bad faith in Nigeria talks

(226) Star 19/12/95

A South African-based Nigeria democracy support group said yesterday it would consider intensifying its boycott of Shell products in 1996 if the oil giant failed to respond to its requests.

ANC MP Carl Niehaus, spokesman for the body, which last week called a boycott of the company's products in South Africa, accused Shell of renegeing on its promises.

Niehaus said Shell had promised to provide the South Africa Nigerian Democratic Support Group with a copy of a letter it reportedly sent to the Nigerian government condemning last month's execution of nine minority rights activists, including

writer Ken Saro-Wiwa

Niehaus said the company had also promised to show the support group, a coalition of church, sport and labour bodies, an environmental study into the effects of the exploitation of the Niger Delta.

"Shell promised to provide these documents. Almost two weeks later they haven't done so," Niehaus said.

Officials from Shell South Africa were not available for immediate comment.

Niehaus dismissed Shell's assertion that the boycott call was discriminatory.

Shell said it could not play a government role in Nigeria. — Reuter

Shell boycott call 'misguided'

(226) Power 19/12/95

A BOYCOTT of Shell South Africa in an attempt to push the international fuel company into withdrawing from Nigeria would be misguided, Shell SA chairman Mr IWM Dyer said yesterday.

Pressure against the Nigerian military junta was in the hands of the Commonwealth, not businesses, Dyer said in reaction to the South African Nigerian Democratic Support Group's (SANDSG) call for a two-day boycott of Shell this week.

The SANDSG on Friday called for

a two-day boycott today and tomorrow of the approximately 800 Shell service stations in South Africa, and asked the public to picket the stations.

This was in protest against last month's execution of nine Ogoni minority activists by the Nigerian government after a secret tribunal found them guilty of murder.

Have no control

Shell's South African service stations were operated as independent enterprises solely dependent for their

income on the sales of Shell fuel and other products, Dyer said in a letter faxed to the SANDSG, headed by African National Congress deputy general secretary Ms Cheryl Carolus.

"Our association and our members have no control or influence whatsoever over Shell's involvement in Nigeria and, although we respect your democratic freedom of expression and protest, this cannot be exercised at the expense of the equally valid right of our workers to pursue their livelihood," Dyer said.

A boycott would financially impact on Shell South Africa's 10 000 employees and their families, he said. He said the ANC's statement that "due regard" was given to this issue was regarded by Shell SA as "cynical and indicating that in truth (the ANC's) agenda does not take the livelihood of our members, their employees and their families into account."

Dyer said Shell SA reserved the right to claim damages "jointly and severally" from the SANDSG - Sapa

● See also page 8.

Focus on Nigerian rights abuses

By Pamela Dube
Political Staff

Howejan
(226) 79/12/98

THE Commonwealth Monitoring Committee of Eight that has been given the task of investigating human rights abuses in Nigeria and coordinating action against the West African country will hold its first meeting in London today.

The committee, comprising South Africa, Namibia, Malaysia, Jamaica, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, was appointed by the organisation's Heads of States Summit in New Zealand last month where Nigeria was given a one-year suspension for the execution of nine Ogoni human rights activists.

Foreign Minister Mr Alfred Nzo is one of the eight ministers of the Committee of Eight. The meeting forms an integral part of the continued fight by the international community to isolate and impose sanctions on Nigeria.

Boycott of Shell

The foreign ministers' meeting coincides with the start of a two-day boycott of Shell Oil's products in South Africa. The consumer boycott against Shell was called by the South African Nigeria Democracy Support Group last week.

However, Business South Africa yesterday distanced itself from the BSA general secretary Ms Friede Gardner said the impression given that her organisation is party to the decision to boycott Shell products "is incorrect. As a matter of principle BSA does not support consumer boycotts and (we) note with concern any inference to the contrary".

SANDCG is composed of the African National Congress-led tripartite alliance, South African Football Association, National Association of Democratic Lawyers, Congress of South African Writers and the National Olympic Committee of South Africa.

The call came after four weeks of negotiations and pleas by the international community to isolate Nigeria after South Africa's executions.

South Africa has been leading the campaign to isolate Nigeria and to institute an oil embargo.

Shell seemed to be the only option left to put pressure on General Sani Abacha to return Nigeria to democratic rule. However, the oil company has protested against the decision, saying it cannot be expected to force a government to do what other people want.



SA Prisoners' Organisation for Human Rights members were among the organisations waving placards at Shell Ultra City on the Ben Schoeman Highway to protest against Nigeria's human rights violations. Picture ROBERT BOTHA

(226) PD 20/12/95

Protesters arrested at Ultra City

Theo Rawana

ELEVEN members of the SA-Nigeria Democratic Support Group were arrested during a picket at the Shell Ultra City on the Ben Schoeman highway between Pretoria and Johannesburg yesterday.

Police said the group, which had been protesting against Shell's involvement in Nigeria, was arrested in terms of a law prohibiting people from walking on the highway.

The group had twice refused to heed warnings not to walk on the highway.

They were arrested by police officers from the Wierda Bridge police station.

The group was released and warned to appear in the Pretoria Magistrate's Court this morning.

The ANC said the boycott was a reminder of the tragic repression in Nigeria and Shell's failure to use its economic power to put pressure on the Abacha regime to

democratise Nigeria.

"We urge holidaymakers to simply drive past Shell filling stations. In this way they will be able to show their commitment to the creation of democracy in Nigeria."

Sapa reports it was business as usual at various Shell service stations on the Cape Flats yesterday, despite a call for the boycott.

In Guguletu and Mitchell's Plain the call appeared to have fallen on deaf ears.

Shell stations in Guguletu were running normally.

Supervisor Lutfiyah Benjamin said her station was the busiest in Guguletu and the effects of a boycott would have been felt by yesterday morning.

In Mitchell's Plain where petrol buyers appeared to be mainly taxi operators, business at Shell stations seemed unaffected.

A Shell spokesman said it was too early to say whether the company's sales had been affected by the boycott as figures would not be available until today.

The Middelburg Shell Ultra City reported business as usual, and Bloemfontein station owner Wilhe de Swart said sales had been good.

Most motorists interviewed knew nothing about the boycott, with one saying she had heard about the call but did not understand the issues.

Meanwhile, the Organised Taxi Industry said that it had not supported the call for a two-day boycott because the organisation felt the Commonwealth Group of Eight should resolve the Nigerian issue.

Organised Taxi Industry convener Boeti Letsoela said although the taxi industry was concerned about the executions of dissidents and violation of human rights in Nigeria, it believed that there should have been proper consultation before the boycott was embarked on.

"It would be premature for us to go on a boycott without getting the full details," Letsoela said.

Little support for Shell ban

(226) ARG 20/12/95
THE proposed boycott of Shell initiated by the SA/Nigeria Democratic Support Group (SANDSG) failed to capture the imagination and support of local motorists who continued to fill up at Shell service stations

The group had called on South Africans to stage a two-day boycott yesterday and today of the more than 800 Shell service stations in South Africa to protest against the company's involvement in Nigeria

The only visible sign of protest was at the Shell Ultra City on the Ben Schoeman highway between Johannesburg and Pretoria, where about 20 members picketed.

Members of the organisation, some with chains around their necks, stood on the side of the highway, waving

placards which said: *Shell is about blood, Shell products kill* and others bearing the names of the nine Ogoni activists executed by the Nigerian military regime.

The group's spokesman, ANC MP Carl Niehaus, had urged holidaymakers "to simply drive past Shell stations and remind it of the responsibilities they cannot escape. We want Shell to use its economic pressure on the Sani Abacha (leader of the military government) regime (in Nigeria)"

Shell is Nigeria's biggest employer and accounts for more than 50 percent of Nigerian oil

Shell spokesman Pieter Cronje said the effects of the boycott had not been widespread. — Sapa.

Nigeria obstructs

OAU rights probe

(226) *ARL 20/12/95*
KAMPALA. - Nigeria obstructed an investigation into its rights record when it appeared before the second extraordinary session of a two-day Organisation of African Unity's African Commission of Human and People's Rights

The Nigerian delegation declined to answer questions on allegations of human rights violations presented by non-governmental organisations in Nigeria

Led by Nigerian High Commissioner to Uganda Mamman Daura, the delegation maintained that the situation was normal following the execution of writer Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other activists from the Ogoni minority group last month.

Mr Daura said that Nigeria "cannot be subject to a question-and-answer session" and asked for time to prepare his answers

● In Washington American Catholic bishops urged a ban on US non-humanitarian aid to Nigeria following last month's executions

- Sapa-Reuter-AP

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11 protesters held after picket at Shell station

CT 20/12/95

(153) (216) (226)

PRETORIA: The South Africa, Nigeria Democratic Support Group (SANDSG) kicked off its two-day protest action against Shell with a placard demonstration at a Shell Ultra City service station along the Ben Schoeman Highway near here yesterday.

No incidents of protest activity were reported in the Western Cape or other parts of the country and it was business as usual at most Shell service stations, Shell spokesman Mr Pieter Cronjé said

Police arrested 11 picketers at the Shell Ultra City on the Ben Schoeman Highway for contravening the Road Traffic Act, which prohibits people from walking on the highway.

A police spokeswoman said people were not allowed to walk on a highway unless they were

forced to by circumstances beyond their control

The group, protesting against Shell's involvement in Nigeria, were warned twice not to walk on the highway

Motorists pulling into the service station were not intimidated or harassed and in most instances were unaware of the protest action

Executions

The 11 protesters were later released on a warning and told to appear in the Pretoria Magistrate's Court today

The SANDSG last week called for a national two-day boycott of about 800 Shell service stations in South Africa to start yesterday to protest against last month's execution of nine Ogoni minority

activists by the Nigerian government

Support group spokesman Mr Carl Niehaus urged holiday-makers to drive past Shell service stations, and said it was up to the multinational to use its economic clout to put pressure on the Nigerian military dictatorship of General Sani Abacha

Mr Cronjé said Shell viewed the boycott call as "unfair and discriminatory" as the company had been singled out unfairly. "There are also other oil companies operating in Nigeria

"A business cannot assume the role of a government, the United Nations or Nigeria to change the political dispensation

"We do not feel this is the role of business," Mr Cronjé said — Staff Reporter, Sapa

By Bruno Jubasi
AND NORMAN CHANDLER

Petrol protesters fail to stop motorists filling up and 'going well'

The proposed boycott of Shell, initiated by the SA-Nigeria Democratic Support Group, has apparently failed to capture the imagination of local motorists, who continued to fill up at Shell

service stations
The group had called on South Africans to stage a two-day boycott yesterday and today of the more than 800 Shell service stations in South Africa, to protest against the company's involve-

ment in Nigeria
The only visible sign of protest was at the Shell Ultra City on the Ben Schoeman highway between Johannesburg and Pretoria, where about 20 people picketed

Members of the organisation
some with chains around their necks, stood on the side of the highway, waving placards which said: "Shell is about blood", "Shell products kill", and others bearing the names of the nine Ogoni ac-

tivists executed by the Nigerian military regime
Eleven of the protesters were arrested by the police for walking on the highway
The group's spokesman, ANC MP Carl Niehaus, had urged holidaymakers to drive past Shell sta-

Shell spokesman Pieter Cronje said "We resent the fact that Shell is being singled out. This boycott is unfair and discriminatory."
The taxi industry's response was divided. The Lethabile Taxi Association supported the boycott, but the Greater Johannesburg Regional Taxi Forum ignored it.

Star 20/12/95 (226)



Cosy OAU resists Mandela's rocking of

(230) Star 21/12/95

Long-term economic self-interest may prevail, writes Peter Fabricius

President Mandela is struggling to muster African support for his campaign for sanctions against Nigeria.

OAU secretary-general Salm Salm has publicly opposed it. And last week even a rather mild SA-sponsored resolution at the United Nations condemning Nigeria's execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other dissidents could only attract the support of nine African states, though it was passed by a vote of 98-12.

It called for no specific action against Nigeria, far less for oil sanctions which would not have stood a chance.

The UN resolution sharply underscored the difficulty of breaking up the cosy club of OAU tyrants who stand by their fellow-members, regardless of their sins, because

the next time it might otherwise be their own human rights record under the microscope.

But, ironically, the resolution did in fact focus attention on the human rights records of the worst African states, by forcing them to choose. Perhaps not surprisingly, the nine countries which supported the resolution turn out to be democracies with some respect for human rights, the nine who opposed it are mostly tyrannies.

That observation was made this week by Freedom House, an American human rights organisation, when it published its annual ranking of the world's 191 nations according to their observance of basic political freedoms and civil liberties.

Freedom House ranks nations as "free", "partly free" or "not free". SA for the second year running was placed in the

"Free" category, in fact using a rung within that.

Listed here with their Freedom House rankings are the African nations that voted against the Nigerian resolution, Burundi, Chad, The Gambia, Libya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Togo (all "Not Free") and Niger ("Partly Free" but probably intimidated by its proximity to Nigeria). Those voting for the resolution were Botswana, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius and SA (all "Free") and Lesotho, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe (all "Partly Free").

SA diplomats are not disheartened by the vote. They think getting nine nations on board is not bad compared to Africa's past performance.

An important crack has been created in the monolith of African unity. As the number of African democracies grows, the crack will widen. This year, Freedom House

noted that although Africa remained the least democratic continent, democracy nonetheless did inch forward.

Mali was the only new country in the world, and the only Muslim nation, to enter the "Free" category. Eritrea, Ethiopia and Tanzania graduated from "Not Free" to "Partly Free".

There are now nine "Free" countries in Africa, and 20 "Partly Free", together representing 44% of the population, 18 of the continent's 53 nations are formal democracies.

Democracy is becoming the expectation of Africans for the first time, more democracies create great pressure on the remaining countries to become democratic.

And, in the meantime, the anti-Nigerian campaign serves to delineate the democracies from the non-democracies in the eyes of

the world.

That helps dispel the damaging notion of Africa as an undistinguished disaster area badly run by tyrants.

For SA the benefits are threefold. SA is inextricably part of Africa and suffers as long as Africa's image is so dismal.

Trade and Industry Minister Trevor Manuel has bewailed the geographic ignorance of American entrepreneurs who are keen to invest in SA but worry about being being caught up in the Rwanda debacle.

The geography may be wrong but the economic effect is the same, investment discouraged. So pure self-interest compels SA to try to shove the continent towards democracy.

SA benefits from a campaign which helps to publicise to the world that there are good guys and not only bad guys in Africa.

Africa boat
THE WASHINGTON

Nigeria given more time to start reforms

Linda Ensor

(226)
BD 21/12/95

LONDON — The Nigerian military regime has been given more time to initiate a transition to democracy by a special Commonwealth action group which met yesterday.

Nigeria was warned that failure to start change by April could see the implementation of tougher measures.

No decision was taken on what this future course of action should be.

There were suspicions that the failure of the foreign ministers of SA, Britain, Zimbabwe, New Zealand, Ghana, Malaysia, Canada and Jamaica to agree on a tougher strategy was due to disagreements within the group.

The meeting decided to send a mission of five foreign ministers, excluding SA's Alfred Nzo, "to pursue dialogue" with the Abacha regime "about the need for democratic change".

Nzo said he was satisfied with the outcome of the meeting, which was a collective decision.

Rebutting accusations that the decisions "did not amount to much", Zimbabwean foreign minister and action group chairman Stan Mudenge said the mandate was "to monitor" the situation in Nigeria.

The meeting decided that if dialogue with Nigerian authorities did not succeed in ensuring a transition to democracy, a study group would investigate possible further measures "to be applied on an incremental basis as the situation demanded".

These measures included a freeze on regime members' foreign financial assets; action to prevent new investment, including bank loans; action against export credits; a ban on the export of support equipment for the oil industry, and partial trade embargoes, including oil sanctions.

Shell sticks to planned route

BD 21/12/95

DULUEMBACHU
in Lagos

(226)

DESPITE massive international pressure put on Shell to pull out of a \$4bn liquefied natural gas project in Nigeria to protest against the government's poor human rights record, the company announced in Lagos at the weekend it has signed the final investment decision which commits it to the project.

The decision also saw the award of the liquefied natural gas plant engineering, procurement and construction contract to an international consortium comprised of Technip (France), Snamprogetti (Italy), Kellogs (US) and JGC (Japan).

President Nelson Mandela has been championing opposition to Shell's involvement in the project in the aftermath of the November 10 hanging of nine environmental activists. Not only is Shell going ahead, it also picked up an extra 1.6% stake from the 2% dropped by

the International Finance Corporation on the day of the hangings, thus raising its total stake to 25.6%, the second highest holding after the Nigerian government's 49%.

The remaining 0.4% has gone to Agip, raising its stake to 10.4% while the fourth partner, Elf, retains its 15% holding.

Shell Nigeria MD Brian Anderson offered explanations for his company's move.

"We recognise there have been calls for the project to be halted as a gesture of political protest. We respect these views, and understand the concerns they reflect. "But we cannot accept that this

would contribute to the good of Nigeria," he said.

Instead, the project "will bring big and measurable benefits to the people of Nigeria, with a marked reduction in the need to flare gas, a major environmental problem which concerns both Shell and the environmentalists".

Anderson further argued that if the contract was not signed by the end of this year, "a complex and interdependent series of other contracts, including agreements for the

export of Nigerian gas, would have collapsed. This would have terminated the project with little hope of revival".

Shell appears to have been bolstered in its decision to go ahead with the project by the tacit support of western governments whose companies are involved.

On the matter, UK Prime Minister John Major had initially demurred, saying "Quite where Shell were with their plans, what obligations they have entered into and what the impact of any action would be, is something I do not know yet."

Nevertheless, the Anglo-Dutch interests in Shell have remained the

major constraining factor on the EU's consideration of oil sanctions against the Nigerian regime.

With the deal all signed up now, the construction of the plant will follow in the next four years at the mouth of the Niger Delta. A statement issued by the Nigerian LNG company said "The contractors are obliged to follow strict regulations to ensure environmental impact protection".

Shell's interests in the project may even go beyond its 25.6% stake. It also maintains an interest in Kellogs, one of the partners in the TSKJ consortium, which has the most sophisticated liquefied natural gas technology in the world so far.

With Kellogs, Shell has built more than a dozen such plants around the world.

Mbarchu is a Nigerian journalist

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(226) BD 21/12/95
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These measures included a freeze on regime members' foreign financial assets, action to prevent new investment, including bank loans; action against export credits, a ban on the export of support equipment for the oil industry; and partial trade embargoes, including oil sanctions

SA in Commonwealth
CT 20/12/95
mission to Nigeria
(226)

LONDON: South Africa is one of several nations that will undertake a mission to Nigeria, the Commonwealth decided yesterday.

The Commonwealth said that if the military junta takes no notice it will consider tougher measures.

The decision was taken at the first meeting of a so-called action group on Nigeria set up in November by Commonwealth leaders.

The mission — which has to get Nigerian permission to visit — is due to go in January and report not later than April.

The mission will include government ministers from Zimbabwe, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia and New Zealand — Sapa-AP

South Africa sidelined in debate over Nigeria

(226)

Foreign Minister Nzo denies that exclusion from

Commonwealth action group can be seen as a snub

By ALAN ROBINSON
Star Bureau, London

South Africa will continue to play a prominent role in the Commonwealth bid to put Nigeria back on the path to democracy. But all official efforts will be channelled through a special five-man mission to Lagos.

This assurance was given by Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo at a media briefing yesterday following a two-day meeting in London of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on serious or persistent violations of the principles of the Harare Declaration.

Nzo denied there was any snub in South Africa's exclusion from the special Nigerian mission, and said the membership - Zimbabwe, New Zealand, Ghana, Ja-

maica and Malaysia - was finely balanced and tactically chosen.

He agreed that there had been differences of opinion during the London summit. It is understood that New Zealand and Canada pressed strongly for the toughest action against Lagos, including an oil boycott, while Ghana, which has close links with Nigeria, cautioned against a hard line to bring the regime to heel.

South Africa has clearly decided to curtail its earlier bilateral efforts to bring change in Nigeria in favour of a concerted Commonwealth campaign to restore democracy.

Nzo said "Perhaps too much emphasis had been placed on what South Africa should do and this may have begun to harm perceptions in Nigeria. That is why

we (the meeting) wanted a collective decision and collective action."

The Commonwealth committee warned Nigeria that although the meeting had not set out to draw up a list of punitive actions, if dialogue failed, further steps could be taken on an incremental basis.

These included

- A freeze on financial assets and bank accounts in foreign countries of members of the Nigerian regime, their families and collaborators
- Action to prevent new investment, including bank loans
- Action against export credits
- A ban on the export of support equipment for the oil industry
- Partial trade embargoes, for instance oil sanctions

Abacha regime says no to talks

Lagos - An aide to Nigeria's military ruler Gen Sani Abacha yesterday ruled out negotiations on a handover of power and said the junta would rule for three more years.

Speaking yesterday in the capital Abuja, Abacha aide Lazarus Unaogu said there was no chance of talking the government into stepping down anytime soon.

His comments came a week after hundreds of politicians held a summit to decide how best to

confront the military regime, which is under world pressure to hand power to a civilian government.

The summit, sponsored by an opposition coalition, agreed to enter talks with Abacha's government to try to persuade it to leave office. In addition, the Commonwealth on Wednesday decided to send a five-nation mission to Nigeria to encourage democratic reforms.

"We have no intention of

entering into any discussion with anyone over our handover programme," said Unaogu, who is special duties minister in Abacha's government.

Instead, he said, people should accept the three-year transition as a reality, and be partners in ensuring a "hitch-free and tension-free transition."

Abacha announced earlier this year that a civilian government would take over in October 1998 - Sapa-AP

Pressure grows on US-based oil giants over roles in Nigeria

(226) (226) Row 23/12/95

Washington - Public pressure has begun mounting on US-based oil companies - notably Mobil, Chevron and Shell Oil (as registered in the US) - to account for their activities in Nigeria, as well as their efforts to dissuade the military regime from human rights abuses.

Nigeria operations account for about a quarter of Virginia-based Mobil's worldwide operations, while the San Francisco-based Chevron is the second largest oil operator in Nigeria after the Anglo-Dutch's Shell International.

At least four groups of Mobil and Chevron shareholders have filed six resolutions with the US Securities and Exchange Commission over their Nigerian operations. The resolutions will be considered at the two companies' general meetings around April.

Shareholders include pension funds belonging to three trade unions: the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and the Service Employees Union. The fourth shareholder is Franklin Research and Development Corporation, based in Boston, which manages about \$500-million on behalf of environmental, human rights and church organisations.

Private citizens, too, have been bombarding the Houston-based Shell Oil with inquiries regarding Shell International's

operations and "its close association" with military regimes in Nigeria.

The number of calls have been so great that the company set up a special Nigeria hotline, a company spokesman said.

The pressure is forcing Shell Oil to distance itself from its international affiliate. The Shell spokesman and a voice on the hotline insist that the US company does not operate in Nigeria. It offers to forward callers' messages to Shell International in London.

Strike-breakers

The shareholders' resolutions argue that Chevron and Mobil are widely associated with "the illegitimate" and "repressive" Abacha regime that hanged Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight fellow Ogoni activists last month.

The shareholders also complain that during last year's strike by oil workers (who demanded that the military transfer power to the winner of the 1993 election Moshood Abiola), "US oil companies, including Mobil and Chevron, flew in strike-breakers to keep oil flowing." The government, they charge, "subsequently arrested protesters and sentenced many to death."

The carpenters' resolution demands of Mobil a three-point report within three months of the AGM - Sapa-IPS

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African states unwilling to vote against Nigeria

ST 24/12/95 (226)

THE United Nations on Friday condemned Nigeria's "arbitrary execution, after a flawed judicial process", of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists

By a vote of 101 to 14 with 47 abstentions, the General Assembly resolution also invited the UN Human Rights Commission to give urgent attention to the human rights situation in Nigeria.

Few of Africa's 50 states voted for the resolution. South Africa, Lesotho, Malawi and Mali were among its sponsors, and Mauritius, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe voted in favour.

Meanwhile, CYRIL MADLALA reports that formulators of South Africa's foreign policy closed ranks this week in the face of an apparent sidelining of this country as a key player in the resolution of the Nigerian impasse.

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group met for the first time in London this week and excluded South Africa from a mission of five foreign

ministers to visit Nigeria next month to persuade the military rulers to restore democracy.

This is despite President Nelson Mandela's role in mobilising the Commonwealth Heads of Government summit in New Zealand last month to suspend Nigeria.

Abdul Minty, the director general of Foreign Affairs, said the exclusion of South Africa from the mission was not a blow to this country. South Africa's view had always been that

a multilateral approach was needed.

"The issue of Nigeria is an extremely complex one, and we cannot impose solutions but encourage and persuade," he said.

This approach was paying off. The Nigerian government had established three of the five institutions it was required to set up in terms of the Commonwealth transition timetable.

However, despite appeals by the Commonwealth, Nigeria had not

freed political prisoners, and had tightened press restrictions and eroded other civil liberties.

"The strategy is very clear. We talk to them and they respond. If they don't, we look at other measures," Mr Minty said.

It was a mistake to think that because South Africa was on moral high ground it could achieve much without the co-operation of the rest of the world, and in particular the African continent.

Most countries were acutely aware of Nigeria's powerful economic and military position, and what impact interference could have.

"You can either work with the government of Nigeria, or work to destroy it. If you work too hard to undermine it, you could have another Rwanda," Mr Minty said.

Alfred Nzo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, said: "What is now called for is collective, co-ordinated action, starting with the Commonwealth mission to Nigeria pursuing dialogue with the Nigerian government."

Inferno death for Scarlett's servant

ACTRESS Butterfly McQueen, who played Scarlett O'Hara's servant in the 1939 movie classic *Gone With The Wind*, died on Friday after being caught in a fire that destroyed her small home near Augusta, Georgia.

McQueen, 84, daughter of a Florida stevedore and a domestic worker, was 13 when she joined a Harlem theatre group. Her most memorable role was that of Prissy, the squeaky-voiced slave in *Gone With The Wind*. She appeared in several films in the 40s, nearly always as a sobbing maid. Tiring of the image, she retired from films in 1947 but returned in the early 70s. — Reuter.

Dual policy on Nigeria to go on - Nzo

(22b) Star 29/12/95

South Africa will continue its "two-track" policy of discussions with Nigeria's military rulers while keeping up international pressure, Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said yesterday.

"The South African Government is acutely aware of the importance of having a clear, consistent policy towards Nigeria," Nzo said in his New Year's message.

"Discussions with the Nigerian military will have to continue, while maintaining international pressure on Nigeria."

"This two-track policy by South Africa is being pursued in consultation with the Southern African Development Community, the Organisation of African Unity, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group and individual major powers."

The Government has urged Nigeria to free jailed activists and called for an oil boycott after its rulers hanged nine minority rights campaigners, including writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, last month.

The Commonwealth has given Nigeria two years to make reforms or be permanently expelled - Reuters

Nigerian reconciliation body slammed

(226)

Lagos - Nigerian commentators said the 13 members of a reconciliation committee that was scheduled to be sworn in yesterday were cronies of the country's military ruler incapable of reaching out to his opponents

Gen Sani Abacha's government claims that the committee is crucial for a smooth implementation of his programme to restore democracy in three years' time

"The fact is that most of the people in this committee are friends of Abacha," Ezuiche Ubani, political editor of the independent This Day newspaper, wrote yesterday

"This is not the committee everybody expected"

The committee's job will be to facilitate reconciliation between the military government and various opposition groups - Reuters

Star 29/12/98

SA policy on Nigeria needs to be clear, says Nzo

(226) ARG 30/12/95

THE government was acutely aware of the importance of having a clear, consistent policy on Nigeria, Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said in a New Year message. Talks with the Nigerian military would have to continue while international pressure was maintained. — Sapa.

OECD predicts modest global economic upturn

ALTHOUGH world growth is forecast to pick up next year, this will have only a slight impact on unemployment rates, according to the latest forecasts from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Unemployment is expected to rise slightly in Japan and the US next year but it should remain as it is in Germany, according to the organisation, which acts as a think-tank for 26 of the world's industrialised nations

The Paris-based group demes that there is any danger of a world recession, even though the possibility has been discussed by some private sector

By GILLIAN TETT

economists Despite the recent dip in growth in many countries, the OECD insists fundamentals remain relatively strong It expects to see growth pick up in most parts of the world, amid a healthy climate of low inflation

But it admitted that growth this year — about 2,4% — had been weaker than expected For next year, growth of just over 2,6% in the real gross domestic product of the organisation's members has been forecast

The organisation has also reduced some of its forecasts In the case of Ger-

Graphic: FIONA KRISCH

many, it admitted that its predictions made as recently as November were too optimistic

The 1995 growth projection for Japan is down from 1,3% for 1995 to 0,3% for next year

The growth of the Asian tigers is projected to fall from this year's rate of 7,8% expansion to 7% in 1996 and 6,4% in 1997.

However, the Japanese economy is expected to pick up next year, partly as a result of the recent monetary loosening and stabilisation of the yen

With imports in the US expected to slow, world trade is projected to expand less rapidly next year and the trade of manufactured goods is expected to grow by 8,5% next year

This may affect European trade patterns, with net exports not expected to

make any contribution

Nevertheless, rising consumer expenditure and business investment is still expected to push the growth rate higher, particularly if Germany rebounds

The one economy which has escaped a downgrade in its growth forecast is the US

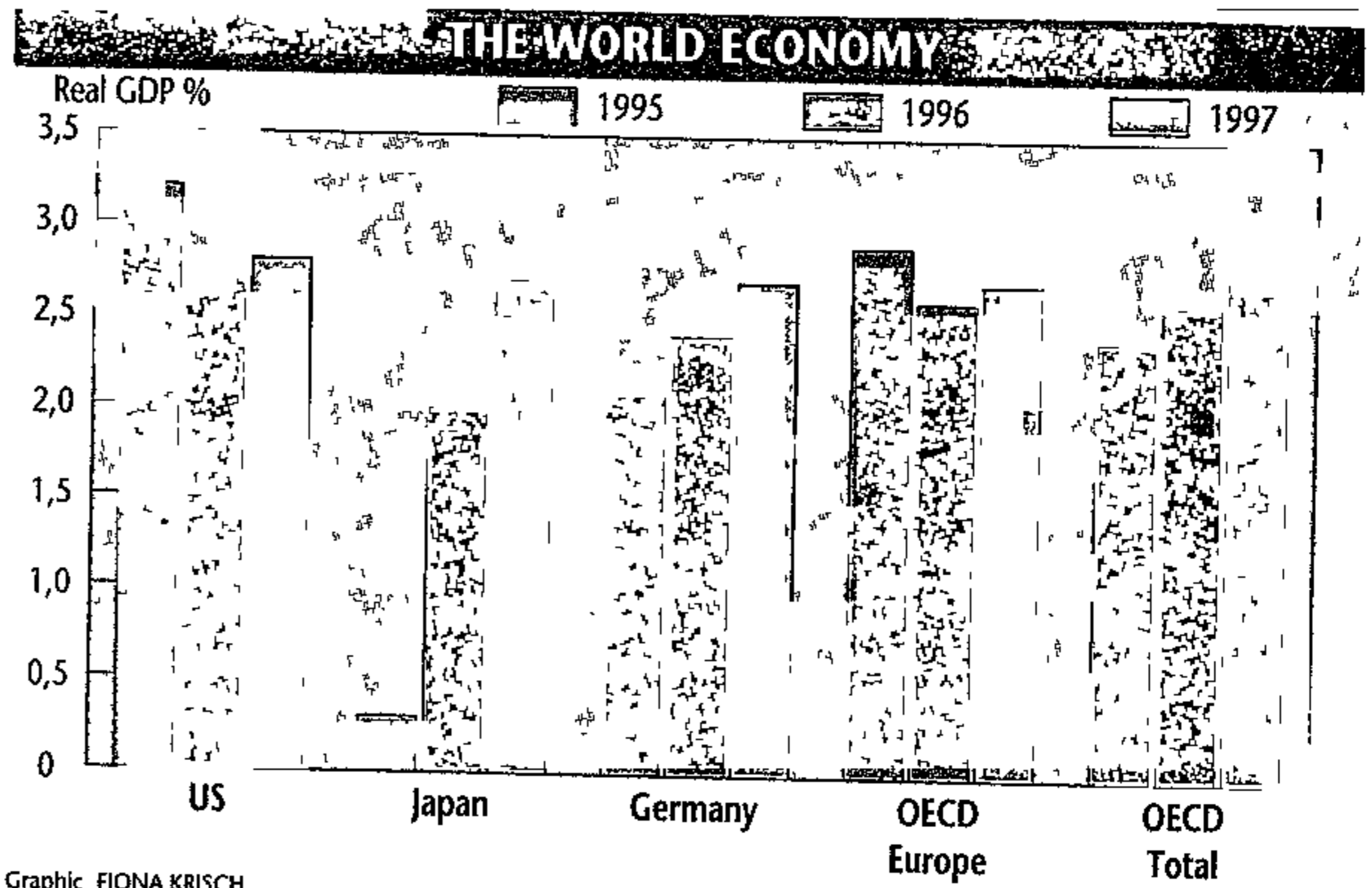
Although the OECD says it overestimated growth in the first half of the year, it now believes that it has underestimated it in the second half. As businesses finally shake off the impact of excess stocks, growth is expected to be fairly steady

However, the organisation acknowledged that the pick-up in growth was partly dependent on the world avoiding the type of currency turmoil seen early in 1995

The group's chief economist, Kumiharu Shigehara, said "The economic fundamentals are good But the crucial question is whether these will be reflected in business and consumer confidence An improvement in confidence is now crucial"

This confidence is unlikely to be boosted by the labour markets. The organisation projects that overall unemployment will decline from 7,8% in 1995 to only 7,7% next year in its member countries.

However, the steady price growth might help sentiment But slower growth may make it even harder for some countries to address one of the organisation's longest standing pleas the need for governments to reduce budget deficits — *Financial Times*



Source: OECD

NIGERIA — GENERAL

1996

JANUARY — JULY

Nigerian regime denies dissidents' claims

(226) Star 3/1/96

London - Nigeria tried yesterday to repair its tattered human rights record, saying dissidents living in Britain were maligning the military regime for their own ends.

The military government also denied any involvement with the disappearance of Abdul Onibiyo, a Nigerian father of five who was deported to Lagos from London in October and has not been heard of since.

Relatives fear a similar fate for his son. Twenty-year-old Ade is currently being held in a British detention camp awaiting deportation.

The Nigerian high commission dismissed these concerns in a national press advertisement, saying dissidents were simply scare-mongering to avoid deportation

from Britain

The advertisement was placed to counter "malicious accusations" being peddled by Nigerians living in Britain, said a commission official. Other adverts could follow.

Nigeria's human rights record suffered a severe blow in November when it executed nine minority-rights activists, including writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, on charges of inciting murder.

Activists say the nine were hanged for political reasons, and Nigerians have been ostracised on the world stage ever since.

The West has urged the military regime to introduce democracy or risk diplomatic and economic isolation.

With a large Nigerian commu-

nity based in London, the hangings have also drawn attention to the plight of Nigerian exiles sent back home by the British government, which is clamping down on immigrants seeking asylum.

Specifically, the Nigerian regime's campaign sought to clear up controversy over Onibiyo, who was deported in October.

Campaigners say he may have been arrested in Nigeria as a result of his "so-called pro-democracy activities", said the advertisement.

But Nigeria denies holding political prisoners and used the advert to state "unequivocally" that Onibiyo was not being held by any branch of the Nigerian law enforcement or security services.

- Reuters

Swindle hits squatters

Kevin O'Grady

RESIDENTS of squatter settlements in Durban have allegedly been fleeced of more than R1m by fly-by-night organisations offering bursaries, career training and job placement

The latest scheme which has come to light asks students to send a R100 application fee to a Mayville post office box address in order to be considered for a tertiary education bursary, according to a Durban woman who works in squatter settlements

The organisation, the SA Education Research Council, claims to be affiliated to the "British Research Institute" and says it has received R12,3m to allocate to disadvantaged students

Neither the British consulate nor the SA education department had any knowledge yesterday of a genuine scheme involving the organisations, and ministry spokesman Lincoln Mali said it appeared likely the scheme was a fraud

The Durban woman, who asked not to be named, said details she had obtained about the post office box address used by the organisation were false, and no record could be found of the British Research Institute in London

She said she had come across many similar schemes in Durban squatter settlements

Durban police spokesman Supt Bala Naidoo said no complaint had yet been laid and there was no investigation under way

SA govt handling of Nigeria crisis slated

(226) BDS 1/1/96

Wyndham Hartley

CAPE TOWN — Criticism of SA's foreign policy, which has been described as a bureaucratic nightmare, has been mounting with this week's crisis over Nigeria's withdrawal from the African Nations Cup football tournament

Reuter reports that Nigeria yesterday said it was not changing its decision to pull out of the tournament, despite an ultimatum from African soccer's governing body to play or risk a six-year ban

"There is no change at all in our position. It remains the same and we are not going to SA," Nigerian Sports Minister Jim Nwobodo said

Opposition political parties and academics yesterday commented that after tough demands for sanctions and isolation after the execution of nine Ogoni activists in November, this week was characterised by attempts to get Nigeria to reverse the decision to boycott this month's football tournament

Cape Town University politics head Robert Schrire said the single biggest problem was that there had not been a high level review of SA foreign policy — "they simply move from crisis to crisis"

Schrire remarked that if SA's relations with Taiwan and Nigeria were compared it was apparent that there "is no clear idea of the image which is wanted throughout the world"

He said that foreign policy in SA was ad hoc, played as an élite game by top ANC members, and it was a "bureaucratic nightmare"

NP foreign affairs spokesman Boy Geldenhuys said SA should not have asked Nigeria to review its decision not to come to the football tournament (due to start next week in Johannesburg). He said he did not want to punish the Nigerian football team or Nigeria's general population, but the ANC's soft diplomacy had not worked

He said the NP did not support trade sanctions against Nigeria, but fully backed its diplomatic isolation

This followed a statement by the NP

accusing ANC policy of a lack of consistency — "just two weeks ago the ANC tried to organise a boycott of Shell Service Stations. This week they beg Nigeria to play in the African Nations Cup. It makes no sense whatsoever. The ANC's foreign policy is not only based on selective morality but seems a total confusion"

The ANC this week accused Nigeria and its leader Gen Sani Abacha of using its football team as a political pawn to prevent movement towards democracy. It said the Nigerian government was trying to portray SA as aggressively anti-Nigerian for having taken a strong stand against Abacha

□ Sapa reports that the ANC yesterday reacted strongly to NP criticism

ANC policy on Nigeria was both consistent and principled, said the ANC's information and publicity department

The ANC did not want to isolate the ordinary Nigerian people. It was in this context that it had continued to maintain contact with pro-democracy forces in an effort to bring about a speedy movement towards democracy

"It is only through consultation with these pro-democracy groups that we have arrived at the approach we now have," the ANC said

The ANC's support of the involvement of the Nigerian national soccer team in the forthcoming Africa Nations Cup should be understood in this context, the party said

The ANC had consistently sought to draw a distinction between the military regime led by Abacha, and the people of Nigeria

It was firmly committed to promoting, nationally and internationally, the restoration of democracy, the release of all political prisoners and an end to all political executions

To achieve this, the ANC had always sought to put pressure on Abacha's regime to move towards democracy, while seeking to promote the interests of ordinary Nigerians

See Back Page

NP has no room to criticise our Nigeria policy – ANC

(226) *stan 5/1/96*
The National Party's suggestion that ANC policy on Nigeria was inconsistent should be rejected as a figment of the imagination, the ANC said yesterday

Its policy on Nigeria was both consistent and principled, the ANC's department of information and publicity said.

The ANC did not want to isolate the ordinary Nigerian people. It was in this context that it had continued to maintain contact with pro-democracy forces in an effort to bring about a speedy movement towards democracy.

"It is only through consultation with these pro-democracy groups that we have arrived at the approach we now have," the ANC said

Its support of the involvement of the Nigerian national soccer team in the forthcoming Africa Nations' Cup should be understood in this context, it added.

The ANC said it would continue to support efforts by Sports Minister Steve Tshwete and the sporting fraternity to resolve the matter

"We have yet to see the NP

make any contribution towards the achievement of democracy in Nigeria. In fact, we have yet to see the NP make any constructive contribution to the development of foreign policy at all," it said

At its meeting last month, the ANC's national executive committee had reviewed its international relations and reaffirmed its view of the important links between advancing South Africa's interests and upholding the basic principles of democracy, human rights and socio-economic development

The ANC had consistently sought to draw a distinction between the military regime led by Gen Sani Abacha and the people of Nigeria

It was firmly committed to promoting the restoration of democracy, the release of all political prisoners and an end to all political executions

To achieve this, the ANC had always sought to put pressure on Abacha's regime to move towards democracy, while seeking to promote the interests of ordinary Nigerians – Sapa

Nigeria: Will it ever find democracy?

(226) ET 5/1/96

COLIN LEGUM

FEN before the international campaign against the Abacha regime is fully under way, Eurocentric critics, cynics and racists have begun to spread doubts about whether Nigeria can ever become a democratic state

Even journalists such as Anthony Daniels - who, at least, has personal knowledge of Nigeria - have written pessimistically about whether it is possible to produce functioning parliamentary democracies in Africa

Daniels writes: "Perhaps the reality is that no known system of government works on the continent" (Sunday Times, London, November 19, 1995)

The only conclusion one can come to from such a view (by no means confined to Daniels) is that not only Nigeria but also countries such as South Africa, Ethiopia and a score of others are condemned to live forever beyond the pale of democracy. Writing about the return of civilian rule to Nigeria Daniels forecasts that "it will probably be less deliberately brutal than the present regime but, if past experience is anything to go by, it will be every bit as corrupt"

As corrupt as Italy over the past half century? Or Spain or Belgium, where the former chief of Nato is under investigation for being at the centre of a rake-off in an arms deal, or France, where a former senior minister has just been sent to prison and where other scandals during the Mitterand years have come to light and where the present Prime Minister has cheated by securing cheap housing for himself and his family, or the US, with its decades of corruption involving a president, a vice-president and prominent

political figures and businessmen, or Japan, where successive governments have fallen over corruption, or South Korea, where a recent president is in prison over corruption charges involving millions, or even Britain, where the government is under a cloud because of sleaze and allowing decent businessmen to go to prison in order to cover up their own secret deals with Iraq?

It is often argued that the corruption in Western and Asian countries proportionate to GDP is less heinous and damaging than in an African country such as Nigeria. But the point is that nobody, to my knowledge, has ever suggested that because of corruption - which in the case of Italy permeated the entire political and economic system - Western countries are not capable of governing themselves on democratic lines

Yet, whenever discussion turns to democracy in Africa, the first argument one usually hears revolves around corruption. Nobody will deny that corruption is a major feature of many African countries - but the evidence is that corruption flourishes on an extensive scale in direct proportion to the absence of democratic checks and balances

Obligations

Corruption in countries such as Nigeria and Zaire can be curbed only through creating democratic institutions

Let us turn now to examining the reasons given by Anthony Daniels and others for their bleak forecasts about achieving democracy in Nigeria. The first point they make is that the country is ethnically very diverse "The social obligations people feel are not to the state, but to their families, villages and ethnic groups" This is true, but it

was also true of virtually every modern Western country before they became integrated nation-states

A second point made by Daniels is that because the attractions of Western standards of living in a very poor country are so immense, "the quickest means to achieve this standard in Africa is by becoming a member of the government, which explains the desperation of the struggle for power and position on the continent"

Nobody with the slightest knowledge of Africa would accept such an over-simplification of the power struggle that has occurred on the continent since independence. While it is true that the thin layer of emerging elites have engaged in power struggles, it requires a much deeper analysis of the cases of conflicts - such as regional conflicts, conflicts over access to resources, the universal struggle between haves and have-nots, the challenge to domination by minority communities, and the revisionism against authoritarian rule corrupt governments and the abuses of human rights

Yet another negative factor usually mentioned in the case of Nigeria is that it is impossible to maintain the unity of people as diverse as the Hausa-Fulani, Yorubas, Ibos, Benis and 70 minority groups

Virtually all Third World countries are passing through the historic phase of creating harmonious nation-states - a phase through which the northern democracies passed less than two centuries ago. This historic process is inescapable in the evolution of nation-states which, judging by the history of modern societies, is the essential prerequisite for the incremental growth of democratic societies. What are the conditions needed to

achieve harmonious, democratic societies in multi-ethnic societies?

Ironically, Nigeria is a good example. The country has succeeded in establishing a constitution that balances the interests of its diverse communities through a federal system which is a model for other countries. Having started at independence with a federation based on three states (Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo) it has through the years (and after a bitter civil war) succeeded in creating the structures for a federation based on 26 states

This basis has survived all the upheavals of recent years. What has not yet been achieved in Nigeria is the accommodation of the 70-odd minority communities (such as Ken Saro-Wiwa's Ogonis) located in the 26 states

Experiments

Another example is what is being attempted in Ethiopia, a country with as many diverse communities as Nigeria. Its federation constitution is based on the recognition of ethnicity as a major source of conflict

The problem of minorities within the nine large ethnic states has been met by creating zones within them where smaller communities have control over such affairs as education, language, culture and local government. It is one of the most exciting and important constitutional experiments being conducted in Africa, although it cannot be considered as a model for all countries on the continent

If the Ethiopian approach had been followed in Yugoslavia after the collapse of Tito's centralised state, the country could

have been saved the horrendous ethnic and religious wars of the past five years

Finally, there is South Africa - a country that was polarised not only between white and black but also within those two communities. The new constitution enshrines the rights of its diverse communities and their sharply different economic and social interests through a federal type constitution with built-in safeguards protected by an independent Constitutional Court. Major problems - such as demands by Afrikaners and Zulus - still need to be resolved

While it is too early to forecast the final outcome of the constitutional arrangements in South Africa, it is not being over-optimistic to suggest that they offer a reasonable chance of success

To sum up, democracy is a universal demand and the right of all peoples. The form that democratic systems take will vary from country to country. Their achievement will take time - measured in terms of historic epochs - but its appeal is irresistible. Over-simplifications and generalisations based on the current crisis in Nigeria obscure the realities of the problems involved in the creation of democratic nation-states

In the brief space of three years, the formerly 45 single-party and military states in Africa have been reduced to 23 which can be classified as semi-democratic or transitional democratic states based on political pluralism. It is a start. The Western democracies can assist its further development by helping to underpin these fledgling democracies through aid and trade policies based on the recognition - in the words of the seminal Brandt Commission - that the interests between the developed and the developing countries are inextricably intertwined

Nigerian sanctions gather steam

ROSE UMOREN of International Press Services reports from Washington.

(226)

ARC 8/1/96

OAKLAND, California, has started what human rights activists hope will become a trend. The city, located on the eastern edge of the San Francisco Bay, is the first US municipality to boycott a firm associated with the Sami Abacha regime in Nigeria.

Last month the Oakland City Council cancelled its R400 000-a-year contract with the regime's leading lobbyist, Washington and Christian, a Washington-based public relations firm.

"Oakland people do not want to be associated with a firm that does business with the current Nigerian government, especially public relations business," says Jay Leonhardy, chief of staff for city council

member Henry Chang.

"The people of Oakland decided that we should have nothing to do with a firm that puts a happy face on a government that has just executed Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his fellow Ogoni minority activists."

Abuja pays Washington and Christian and its subsidiary, Washington Strategic Consulting Group, some R7-million annually, according to US Justice Department records.

Although the public relations firm's four-year-old Oakland contract was for much less money — R36 000 a month plus expenses — it may have an impact beyond the city. Oakland is a major US industrial centre and port. Its industries

range from shipbuilding to biotechnology and many major US firms have regional offices there.

Oakland's decision came on the heels of a similar action by Toronto, the first city to punish a firm for associating with Nigeria. In early December the Canadian city's government cancelled a R4-million petrol supply contract with Shell Canada.

New York City may be next. At the end of January the City Council is expected to pass a resolution calling for Nigeria to release all political prisoners and supporting two Nigeria bills currently before Congress.

The two companion bills in the House and Senate call for a ban on

any new US investments in Nigeria, a freeze on the regime's assets, and an oil embargo if the situation does not improve "significantly" within three months after a reconciled version of the bills becomes law.

The New York City Council will hold a hearing on the resolution on January 25. Among those expected to testify is former New York Mayor David Dinkins, who along with other prominent African Americans has been campaigning for tougher sanctions against the regime.

The November hangings have given the campaign for a democratic Nigeria a higher profile in the United States. "I can't get off the phone fast enough to answer questions," says Mike Flesherman of the New York City-based Africa Fund.

"We had to pound and pound on doors to get attention," before the hangings. Now, he says, hardly a day passes without some anti-regime event — rallies, memorial services, workshops and the like — happening across the country.

Human rights groups and related NGOs are hoping that the momentum against the regime will build from city governments and prod Washington foreign policy experts into action.

Meanwhile, national officials of such NGOs as TransAfrica, Greenpeace and Amnesty, as well as labour unions, are touring the country to bolster the efforts of their branches and small grassroots NGOs — Sapa-IPS.

Nigerian rulers say they will talk to end crisis

(226) AAG 9/11/96

ABUJA. — Nigeria's military government says it is open for discussions with any group that will end nearly three years of political crisis.

"Government is willing and prepared at all times to meet with responsible individuals and groups to discuss concrete suggestions for moving the nation forward," the information ministry said in a statement.

The statement denied a report by the independent Vanguard newspaper on Thursday which quoted information minister Walter Ofonogoro as saying the government would not take up an offer by politicians for talks to end army rule

Mr Ofonogoro had said the government would press on with its three-year programme for transition to civil rule and that politicians had no "locus standi (recognised status) to negotiate with the government".

The "All-politicians Summit" in Lagos last month decided to set up a 19-member committee to discuss with the government a handover of control to civilians.

The Abuja statement said: "The All-Politicians Summit was a meeting of politicians from various associations, to discuss issues affecting the nation's political life.

"In this respect it is to be commended, especially with regards to its efforts to agree on ground rules that would purge corrupt practices which have in the past marred efforts of previous regimes to entrench civilian democracy."

The remarks are a significant departure from those previously made by Mr Ofonogoro to describe the meeting.

Nigeria has been in crisis since June 1993 when the army annulled a vote that would have restored democracy.

Moshood Abiola, the wealthy businessman believed to have won the vote, has been in jail in Abuja since June 1994.

Recently nine political detainees were freed following intense pressure on military ruler General Sani Abacha to restore democracy after executions in November of nine minority rights activists.

FOCUS ON AFRICA

30 years of hell:

Nigeria's sad tale

Lagos - NIGERIANS held a sombre anniversary on Monday to mark the first military coup 30 years ago that began the country's decline into political and economic chaos.

"Today our lives are worse for it," said 57-year-old Ayo Adigun, a bank worker who watched from his Lagos home as army tanks rolled past on January 15 1966 and began dismantling the new democracy.

Prime minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was assassinated, along with several loyal cabinet ministers and army officers.

Military rulers

Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi became the first of seven military rulers to try his hand at controlling Africa's most populous country.

The current military junta led by General Sani Abacha said the anniversary would be quiet, without the parades and fireworks that have been held in the past. Nigerians have little to celebrate now. Under Abacha, their country has become a pariah state condemned for human rights abuses.

More than a dozen Western

Sowetan 17/1/96
Civilians were glum as Abacha declared quiet 'celebrations'

countries pulled their ambassadors out of Nigeria after the November 10 hangings of nine dissidents last year, and the European Community imposed sanctions that included barring Nigerian leaders from European Union countries.

As a result, the country's foreign affairs minister was denied a visa to attend the funeral last week in France of former President Francois Mitterand.

Nigeria is also missing the chance to defend its title in the African Cup of Nations soccer tournament in South Africa. Abacha ordered a team boycott of the event after President Nelson Mandela called for oil sanctions against Nigeria because of the executions.

"The last 30 years can be summed up in one word - waste," said Alfred Ilene, secretary-general of the Ethnic Minority Rights Organisation, which represents the minority groups living in Nigeria's oil-producing regions.

Lagos newspapers published

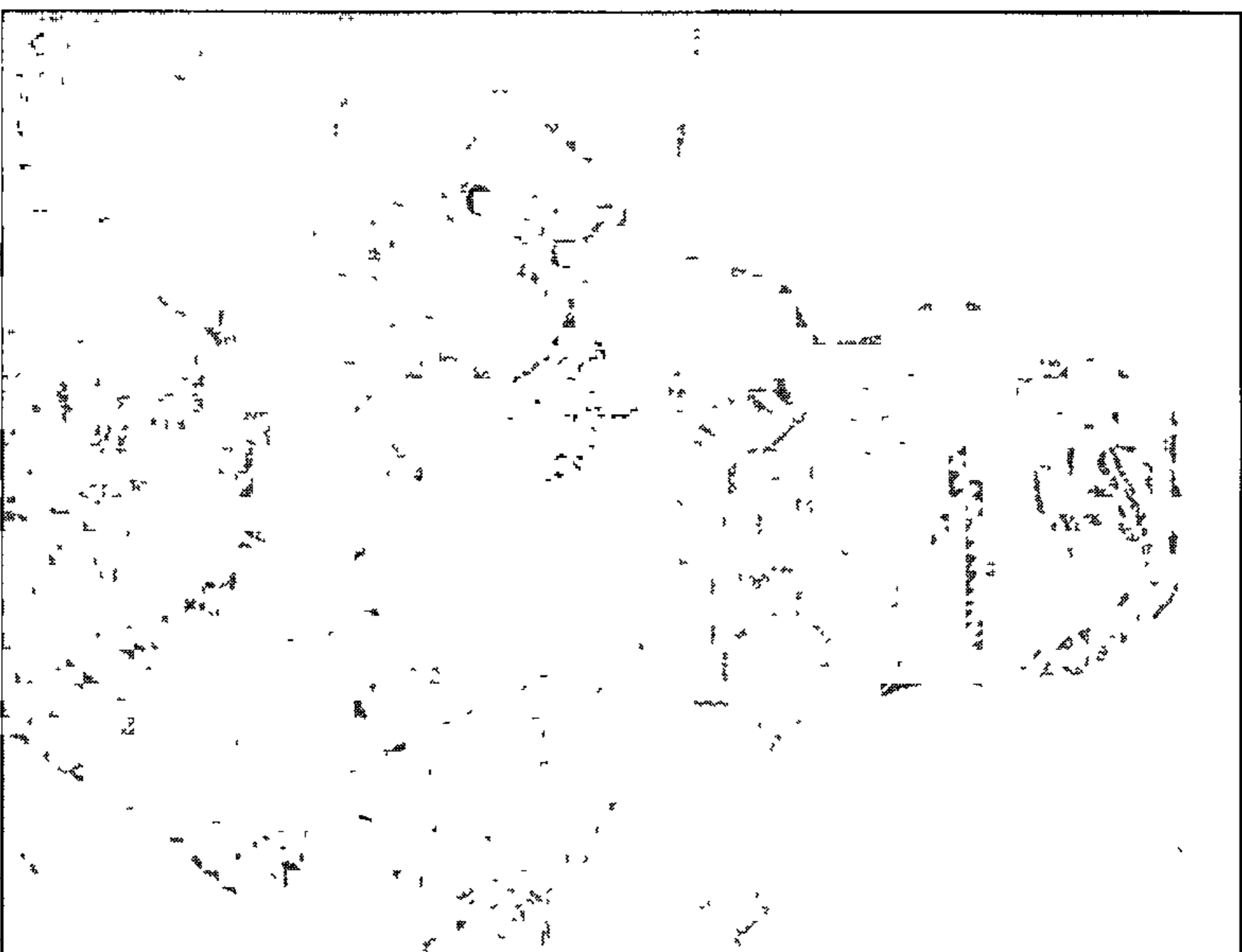
front-page editorials urging Abacha to speed up the transition to civilian rule, now scheduled for October 1998.

"It has never been this bad with our country," a newspaper said. "Our foreign minister could not secure a visa to attend the burial of the former president of a once-friendly nation."

African Nations cup

"Two former heads of state were denied visas by a once-friendly nation, and our own national team could not defend the African Nations Cup it won two years ago. Only pariahs are so treated."

Abacha took power in a November 1993 coup, shortly after his predecessors reneged on promises to return the country to civilian rule. Since then he has jailed scores of political opponents, including the presumed winner of the aborted 1993 presidential election, businessman Moshood Abiola - *Sapa-AP*



Another victim of military rule in Nigeria ... Moshood Abiola, the winner of the aborted presidential election in 1993, is still in jail.

Black or white, dictatorship must be opposed

By DALE LAUTENBACH
Foreign Editor

From her influential position in the chair of the US senate foreign relations sub-committee on Africa, Republican Nancy Kassebaum has urged American oil companies to bring pressure to bear on the intransigent Nigerian military regime

Stronger than sanctions, she believes, would be a clear message from US oil investors in Nigeria that they were unhappy with the regime's behaviour and would be unwilling to invest further unless this changed

"Obviously that's wishful thinking," she says, with a sharp laugh. Obviously too, she says, those same oil companies are not particularly happy with legislation she has introduced in the senate proposing "steps towards sanctions".

Kassebaum was in South Africa this week on the last leg of an intensive two-week African tour. She and President Mandela discussed the Nigerian problem and she expressed deep appreciation for his strong stand.

"Whether a white or a black dictatorship, it has to be addressed

for the future wellbeing of a country," she says. On the Africa sub-committee since 1981, either in the chair or as the ranking member in the opposition, Kassebaum has done her fair share of soul-searching on the subject of sanctions

Initially she questioned the effectiveness of sanctions against South Africa but the intransigence of the white regime hardened her position. She openly changed heart and supported the sanctions package contained in the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act which her president, Ronald Reagan, had vetoed and which congress subsequently overrode

Wishing that oil interests would do more in the case of Nigeria, she still worries about the real effectiveness of sanctions. "If you could enforce (an oil embargo against Nigeria) it would be a powerful message," she says. "But it's if you can enforce it that's the key."

Long acknowledged as a moderate Republican with an appreciation for international issues, Kassebaum has been right at the rockface of the Republican revolution and its impact on foreign aid. The aid-allergic figure of Jesse Helms is her chairman on the senate foreign relations committee



Nancy Kassebaum ... still worries about sanctions.

and one imagines that she has had to do her fair share of battling

"We're going through our own structural adjustment programme, so to speak," she acknowledges. "Foreign aid gets scrunched in any budget reductions but African aid has remained as strong and viable as possible. It has been reduced but it could have been worse"

She describes South Africa as the "flagship of Africa" and the main beneficiary of US aid, with US\$600-million (about R2 160-million) having been received over three years

"I don't think Africa will be marginalised any further than any other foreign aid component," she insists, acknowledging when pressed, though, the enormous frustrations of aid distribution in some African countries

South Africa is on the starting blocks with a much greater advantage, obviously. "There is still great interest in South Africa and hopes for southern Africa"

She urges a reform of aid thinking, co-ordination among donor countries, and comments a little wryly that the French get so concerned about US activities in Francophone Africa. "Donor co-ordination strengthens everyone's ability to be a partner"

The new US ambassador to South Africa, James Joseph, arrived in Pretoria this week, his coming long held up by the effects of the Republican revolution and, latterly, by snowstorms. He was lucky to have the Africa-supportive voice of Kassebaum in town when he touched down.

For her part, Kassebaum returns to the US with a strong message for investors that investment is what South Africa needs most and that we're a good bet - Independent Foreign Service

Still going well

despite boycott

MHG 22/12/95-4/1/96
(22b)

The planned boycott of Shell filling stations didn't have much effect, but activists are still hopeful of getting support for their campaign, writes

Rehana Rossouw

SHELL South Africa has emerged from this week's two-day boycott of its 850 filling stations as an untouchable company — not the first time a call for action against Shell has failed to take root locally

The boycott, called by the South African Nigerian Democracy Support Group, was intended to show displeasure with the company's refusal to push the Nigerian government to stop human rights violations against minority Ogoni activists

But South African consumers largely ignored the call to boycott Shell filling stations on Tuesday and Wednesday

Shell spokesman Pieter Cronje said though it was too early to say

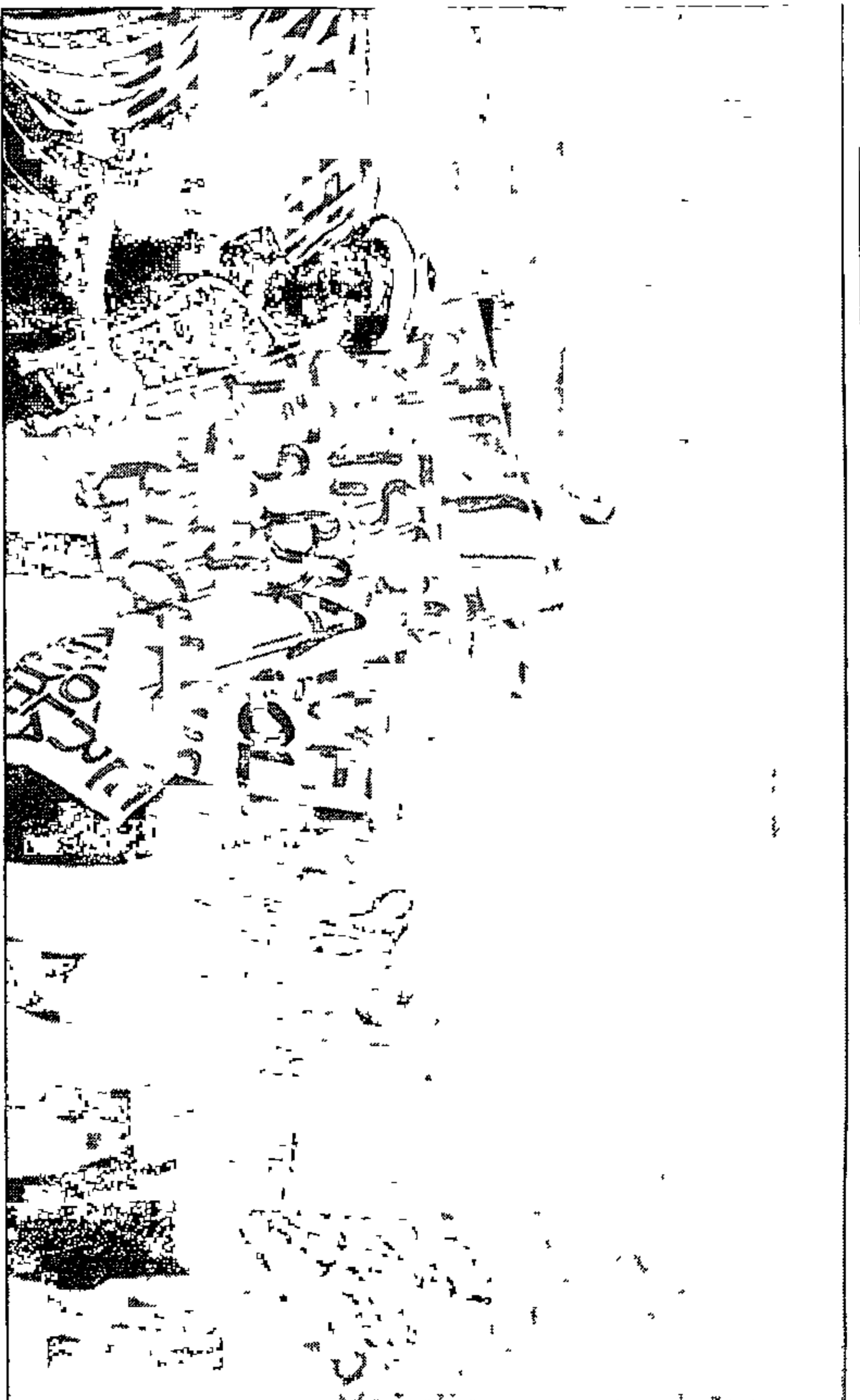
whether sales had been affected, he estimated it would be minimal

The only picket reported nationwide was at Shell's Ben Schoeman Highway Ultra City between Johannesburg and Pretoria where 11 activists were arrested on a law prohibiting people from walking on a freeway

The poor response to the boycott call makes a mockery of executed Nigerian activist Ken Saro-Wiwa's address to a military court shortly before he was sentenced to death, in which he promised retribution for Shell's alleged ravaging of his native Ogoniland and complicity with the Nigerian military dictatorship

"I and my colleagues are not the only ones on trial," Saro-Wiwa told the court. "Shell is here on trial and it is well that it is represented by counsel said to be holding a watching brief"

"Its day will surely come and the lessons learnt here may prove useful to it for there is no doubt in my mind that the ecological war that the company has waged in the Delta will be called into question sooner rather than later and the crimes of that war will be duly punished. The crime of



Shell shocked: A small group of protesters outside the Highway Ultra City near Johannesburg

PHOTOGRAPH HENNER FRANKENFELD

the company's dirty wars against the Ogoni people will also be punished". In the late 1980s, Shell also escaped "punishment" in South Africa when local activists failed to respond to calls from Dutch anti-apartheid groupings to target the company in an attempt to force it to disinvest from South Africa

At the time, consumer boycotts called locally during protest campaigns were mostly successful. While Shell's headquarters in Hol-

land were picketed and its petrol stations there sabotaged by anti-apartheid activists, the company — like in Nigeria today — quietly pumped millions of rands into anti-apartheid work, funding human rights, education and community-building initiatives — work which some branded "window dressing" and others applauded

South African-based Nigerian democracy activist Emma Idighejo said he was not disappointed at the response to the boycott. "Our attitude is that this struggle is going to take some time and we will be using several tactics and methods along the way, for which our South African brothers have pledged their support," he said

"What is significant about this boycott is not how many people did not fill up with Shell, but that it was a consciousness-raising exercise, and in that regard I would say it was a success"

Saro-Wiwa trial 'downright dishonest'

Stefans Brimmer

A BRITISH human rights lawyer has released a report highly scathing of the tribunal which condemned Nigerian activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and others to death, branding it a political charade and "downright dishonest".

Michael Birnbaum QC, who last year attended the Saro-Wiwa trial as an observer for two British legal bodies, bases his criticism on an analysis of the recently published tribunal judgment. He says it appears the "Civil Disturbances Special Tribunal", a military court with wide

powers, "first decided on its verdicts and then sought for arguments to justify them. No barrel was too deep to be scraped".

Saro-Wiwa and eight others were hanged last November — sparking an international outcry against Nigeria — after the tribunal convicted them of the 1994 murder of four pro-government chiefs. The four pro-government chiefs — the tribunal claimed had been instigated by Saro-Wiwa's Ogoniland independence movement, Mosop, and its youth wing, Nycop.

Three of the condemned men stood trial with Saro-Wiwa, while five were

convicted at a separate but concurrent trial, of which the judgment was not made available to Birnbaum.

Among the legal acrobatics Birnbaum says the tribunal indulged in the following:

● The tribunal ruled it did not have to apply Nigeria's ordinary law of murder. "Instead, it invented a new law of murder based on guilt by association".

● The tribunal held that senior members of Mosop and Nycop could be convicted "on the basis of alleged threats of violence or killing made at meetings where they were not even present".

226) M+G 26/1-1/2/96

● A senior position in Mosop (or Nycop) was taken as evidence of guilt.

● The burden of proof was reversed. Evidence was taken as true where a defendant had not called a witness to challenge it, and whenever evidence was ambiguous it was interpreted to the advantage of the prosecution.

● The tribunal did not deal with statements from two prosecution witnesses that they and other state witnesses had been bribed to lie.

Birnbaum shows how Saro-Wiwa was convicted through, in the evidence accepted by the tribunal, only a single witness had implicated him

in incitement to kill.

The testimony was ambiguous — the witness, according to the judgment, alternatively spoke of Saro-Wiwa having urged youths at a rally to "deal with" or "kill" pro-government figures — but the tribunal chose the interpretation less advantageous to Saro-Wiwa.

The tribunal found that of the four accused, only Barbor Bera was present at the killings. Birnbaum says the tribunal abused its already wide powers by a "judicial sleight of hand" to find that where any of the other accused contributed to the "civil disturbances" they were by association responsible for the murders. Senior membership of a "movement or association" (in this case Mosop and Nycop) was counted as a contributing factor.

Oil for troubled waters?

SELDOM IN international affairs has a gauntlet been thrown down so arrogantly, and picked up so indecisively. Commonwealth leaders meeting in Auckland last November were lost for an effective answer when Nigeria's military regime presented them with their greatest challenge since apartheid.

General Sam Abacha made clear his contempt for the Commonwealth by choosing the eve of the summit to confirm the death sentence on the Nigerian minority rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa. And on the opening day, Nigeria's military leader put the sentence into effect, hanging Saro-Wiwa and other eight campaigners found guilty of murder - by what was widely regarded as a kangaroo court. Uniquely placed to intervene in the Nigerian crisis - by virtue of the insights and access that Commonwealth ties provide - its leaders have behaved instead like eunuchs in a harem, well-placed to observe, privy to the intimacies, but unable to perform.

The association that boasts of its "vanguard" role in the battle against apartheid, seemed to be caught in total confusion, not so much in the frontline of the struggle for democracy in Nigeria, as in the rear.

Nothing that has happened since the Auckland summit suggests that the Commonwealth has a clear and co-ordinated view as to how its commitment to democratic values, set out at the Harare summit in 1991, can be put into effect.

Neither the Commonwealth nor President Mandela and his colleagues have emerged with any credit over the Nigerian issue.

And ever since the Auckland summit, Pretoria's policy towards Nigeria has been driven by moral outrage, but frequently lacking in logic, and shows little insight into what is a complex problem.

The case for sanctions, which President Mandela is so vigorously urging Western leaders to adopt has not got off the ground.

Nor has the case for a boycott of Shell in South Africa been cogently made.

But there is a diplomatic opportunity which South Africa can still put into good use.

Commonwealth leaders in Auckland announced the creation of an eight-country ministerial mission - comprising Britain, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Malaysia, Canada, New Zealand and Jam-

NIGERIA has lost the capacity to manage its own recovery and needs both material and diplomatic assistance, according to MICHAEL HOLMAN, Africa editor of the London Financial Times

He also argues that President Mandela's policy of trying to convince the Western powers to employ sanctions against Nigeria to topple Gen Abacha could destroy it's already fragile society and that a more diplomatic course is now in order - if Nigeria is ever to be returned to democracy.

This article appears in the latest edition of Frontiers of Freedom, published by the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Africa - to monitor developments in Nigeria and to encourage the regime to return to democracy within two years.

Rather than pursue its advocacy of sanctions, Pretoria should be making this commission the vehicle for a policy which employs carrots, rather than the big stick of sanctions.

There are several reasons why the oil embargo South Africa has called for may be inappropriate. Firstly, Nigeria's execution of Saro-Wiwa, contemptible though it was, does not constitute the threat to peace that requires UN military action.

Vulnerable though Nigeria is to an oil embargo, which if properly applied and policed could cripple its already weak economy in months, is it necessarily the best or safest way of returning a country in the hands of a man like General Abacha to democracy?

Thirty-five years of mismanagement since independence in 1960 have taken a dreadful toll and sanctions could induce a trauma Nigeria might not survive.

Its civil institutions are so weakened by neglect



MILITARY STRONGMAN... Gen Abacha of Nigeria still holds onto power, and his opposition is still in jail.

and corruption, that the country has lost the capacity to manage its own recovery, or be trusted with the receipts from the 1.4 million barrels of oil a day that are its main export.

The nature of the problem also makes parallels with the use of sanctions against South Africa doubtful.

The ruling minority in Nigeria, a predominantly northern elite exercises political power through its control of the army. Its economic opportunities depend on the patronage this power provides - whether kickbacks from contracts, appointments to state-controlled institutions, or diverting oil revenue into offshore accounts.

Unlike South Africa's minority, which when forced to surrender political power could derive com-

'Shouldn't Mandela now try the carrot instead of the stick to solve the Nigerian debacle?'

penation from some financial control of the economy the Nigerian regime and its supporters have no such safety net.

Furthermore, the country is polarised between north and south, the former dominated by the mainly Moslem Hausa-Fulani the latter by the mainly Christian Yoruba.

Chief Moshood Abiola, winner of the last general election, and jailed for his efforts to pursue his claim on the office managed to bridge the divide during his campaign, for although a Yoruba he is also a Moslem.

But it would be surprising if he has retained his support in the north as the polarisation sharpened, although he may yet play a key role in the months ahead.

Reconciling Nigeria's politicians, and convincing them to pool their talents will be no easy task. But the first step the Commonwealth can take is to offer to convene an externally located conference under a Commonwealth chairman, which would bring civilians and soldiers together.

Through its position on the Commonwealth contact group South Africa should be prepared to sponsor and host such a conference, to try and win agreement on a coalition for democracy.

But more than politics has to be on the agenda if it is to win the support of politicians and soldiers alike. And although the sanctions' stick should be kept open as an option, a big carrot could well be more effective.

The most enticing carrot would be more substantial and rapidly delivered relief on an external debt approaching billions of rands.

The Commonwealth should be in the forefront of efforts to convince creditors that a radical review is needed if Africa's second largest economy is ever to recover.

(226) 281196

return for rapid, phased, but substantial debt relief Nigeria must do more than implement an economic reform programme. It must allow on-the-spot monitoring of key ministries - oil, finance and central bank.

And however distasteful the prospect the army must be party to the process. A demobilisation fund drawing off receipts which are currently diverted into army pockets, should be used to win the soldiers' support for Commonwealth monitored elections.

The army will co-operate only if there is a well-funded programme to help reduce the size of the army by retraining those who want to leave improve living quarters and above all, provide golden handshakes to officers who want to leave and provide retirement gratuities for those who stay.

Its faults notwithstanding, the Commonwealth is well equipped to play the role of convenor and honest broker.

But this scenario assumes that the gravity of the crisis will encourage Nigeria's civilian leaders to bury their differences and set aside personal ambitions. So far there is little evidence of this.

If President Mandela can win the agreement of Chief Abiola to forgo his claim to the presidency, it would be an important first step.

But it also requires the passion and the fervour that the Commonwealth brought to its campaign to end apartheid. Ken Saro-Wiwa's death should have helped rekindle it. Instead, their attention now seems to be drifting away.

If anyone can keep Nigeria on the international agenda it is Mandela - but he needs to offer something more constructive than moral outrage, an ill-considered call for sanctions and a boycott of Shell products in South Africa.

Shell imported guns for Nigerian police

(226)

CT 29/1/96

OWN CORRESPONDENT

LONDON: Multinational oil giant Shell has admitted importing weapons into Nigeria to help arm the police, the Observer revealed yesterday

The paper quotes the company as saying the weapons are to help protect its oil installations.

"However, activists accuse Shell of arming the death squads who have been brutally suppressing the Ogoni people."

The admission follows reports that Shell placed tenders in Nigeria for the importation of arms

The paper quotes Shell spokesman Mr Eric Nickson as saying "Shell has purchased sidearms — handguns — on behalf of the Nigerian police force who guard Shell's facilities. But once imported, the arms remain the property

of the Nigerian police," he insisted. He said the Nigerian police could not afford to equip themselves

Mr Nickson said the practice was carried out by a "wide range of companies in Nigeria, who employ the police to guard their facilities".

But the Observer quotes highly respected former Chief of Defence Staff in Nigeria, Lt-Gen Alan Akinnade, as saying the Nigerian police were "armed to the teeth"

"There is no excuse for anyone to have a private army in Nigeria," he said "They don't need it."

Shell's admission, the paper suggests, will confirm the worst fears of the Ogoni people of south-eastern Nigeria, many of whom have been killed and maimed while protesting against environmental devastation on Ogoni lands

Shell admits importing arms on behalf of Nigerian police

(226) Star 29/1/96

London - The Anglo-Dutch oil company Shell has admitted that it was importing arms to Nigeria to equip police forces guarding the company's facilities, the weekly Observer reported yesterday.

"Shell has purchased sidearms - handguns - on behalf of the Nigerian police force who guard Shell's facilities," said Eric Nickson, a spokesman for Shell International, quoted by the paper.

"But once imported, the arms remain the property of the Nigerian police, who store, guard and use them," he added, justifying the company's role by saying "The Nigerian police do not have the sufficient funds to equip themselves."

"We purchase the weapons on their behalf. But Shell does not have arms itself," he insisted, while specifying neither the size of the imports nor their origin.

He claimed that the practice was widely used by big companies with operations in Nigeria who need the surveillance of the local police.

But according to a former Nigerian joint chief of staff, Lt Gen Alan Akinrinade, "the Nigerian police are well equipped and do not need anyone to import arms for them.

"There is no excuse for anyone to have a private army in Nigeria. They don't need it," the lieutenant general told the Observer. - Sapa-AFP.

'No aid offer by SA against Sani Abacha'

(226) APR 30/1996

Political Correspondent

A SPOKESMAN for President Mandela's office today dismissed as "absolute rubbish" claims by Nigerian state television that the leaders of South Africa and Burkina Faso had offered help to opposition groups committed to toppling General Sani Abacha's government.

Parks Mankahlana said he had no idea what the motivation had been for disseminating the story.

The president's office would not be issuing a formal rebuttal to the allegations because they did not warrant such a response, Mr Mankahlana said.

The station, NTA, said Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore had offered a military training camp in his country to the umbrella National Democratic Coalition (Nadeco) and its overseas arm the National Liberation Council (Nalicon) at a meeting with the two groups.

It said that at the meeting, attended for the Nigerian opposition by exiled Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, President Compaore accused Nigeria of using oil to blackmail African countries for support and urged Nadeco to pressure France and Germany to impose extra sanctions against Nigeria.

NTA said President Mandela had, at a meeting with the Nadeco team in Johannesburg, donated R2 000 000 to the Nigerian opposition.

"At the meeting, Mr Mandela promised his government's continued assistance to the groups whose stated aim is the forceful removal of Nigeria's government," it said.

Relations between Nigeria and South Africa have soured since November last year when President Abacha's government defied international opinion and hanged nine minority rights campaigners, who included writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, for murder.

President Mandela is leading a campaign to impose tougher sanctions against Nigeria, including an embargo on its main export, crude oil, as punishment for the hanging and to hasten the restoration of democracy — Reuter.

● A lawyer critical of the Nigerian government was arrested today by state security agents, Reuter reports.

"Chief Gani Fawehinmi was arrested at his home by the SSS (State Security Service)," said Femi Aborishade, director of organisation of the Fawehinmi-led National Conscience Party (NCP).

Chief Fawehinmi, who has been calling for an end to military rule, was due to address a rally later today at the University of Lagos campus.

"No reason was given for his arrest nor was any warrant produced but we believe it is to undermine the rally," said Mr Aborishade.

"In spite of this the rally will go ahead," he said. But journalists at the advertised venue in the university compound said there was no sign that any rally was about to take place.

Mandela denies helping Nigerian opposition ^(22b)

Star 31/1/96

The President did not fund pro-democracy bodies, says his office, while the ANC says it is unapologetic about its stance

By JOVIAL RANTAO
Political Reporter

President Nelson Mandela's office and the ANC yesterday rejected reported claims by the Nigerian government that Mandela had aided opposition groups planning to overthrow the military regime in Abuja

Presidential spokesman Parks Mankahlana said reports that Mandela had donated R2-million and made office space available to Nigerian organisations opposing Gen Sani Abacha's government were devoid of truth.

Mankahlana believes that Mandela's statement that international pressure to force Nigeria towards democracy must be supported by democratic initiatives within Nigeria had been misinterpreted

"South Africa is part of the group of ministers appointed by the Commonwealth to deal with the Nigerian issue. There is no way we can act outside that group," Mankahlana said

The ANC dismissed the accusations, saying the claims were a malicious attempt to project the legitimate efforts of the ANC to promote democracy in Nigeria as something sinister.

"The ANC remains unapologetic about the stand it has taken on Nigeria. The cause to which we have lent our support is both legitimate and serves the interests of the people of Nigeria

"The ANC is in contact with many of the pro-democracy groups in Nigeria, both inside Nigeria and in exile. Through our participation in the South African Democratic Nigerian Support

Group, we have held discussions with representatives of these groups with a view to broadening our solidarity work," the organisation said

It added it had not abandoned the approach of direct dialogue with the Nigerian government, if the exercise would achieve the desired results

There have been reports in Nigeria that South Africa and Burkina Faso have offered aid to opposition groups. They claimed South Africa had assisted with funds and office space while Burkina Faso had offered a military training camp

On Monday, oil multinational Shell denied it had armed Nigerian police, but admitted buying 107 handguns 15 years ago for police who protected its residences, offices and industrial areas

1716

ANC denies Nigerian claims of funding opposition groups

ET 31/1/96
(226)

JOHANNESBURG: The ANC denied yesterday that it was bankrolling pro-democracy groups in Nigeria, but said it would continue giving moral support to opposition groups against the military government of General Sani Abacha

ANC deputy secretary-general Ms Cheryl Carolus rejected allegations broadcast on Nigerian state television that President Nelson Mandela had given R2 million to the Nigerian opposition at a meeting here with members of the National Democratic Coalition

The television also alleged on Monday that the ANC had given a Johannesburg building to the National Democratic Coalition

and its overseas arm, the National Liberation Council, for use as an office

"The claims are nothing more than a malicious attempt to project the legitimate efforts of the ANC to promote the cause of democracy in Nigeria as something altogether more sinister," Carolus said

The ANC was in contact with opposition groups in Nigeria and in exile and would continue to campaign for democracy, Carolus said

Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said on Monday he would not raise the question of Nigeria at a ministerial meeting of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) next

month

"South Africa is dealing with the Nigerian issue strictly within the context of the Commonwealth initiative," he said

Nigeria has been suspended from the Commonwealth, which has given it two years to implement reforms

● Mr Gani Fawehinmi, a radical opposition lawyer, was arrested in Lagos by security agents at dawn yesterday, hours before he was to have addressed a student rally organised by his National Conscience Party. No reason was given for his arrest

Hundreds of University of Lagos students went ahead with the rally on the campus — Reuter

Nigeria's military ruler says he has no political ambition

Lagos - Nigeria's military ruler Gen Sani Abacha said in an interview reported here yesterday that he has no political ambition and only wants to usher in a lasting democracy for his beleaguered country

"I am not a politician," said Abacha in the current edition of the New York-based magazine Leaders, reported in the government-owned Daily Times newspaper

"I view my responsibility not as an extension of my official duties, but as an extension of my professional responsibility to my country," said the Nigerian ruler, who has rarely given press interviews since he seized power in November 1993

"We are irrevocably committed to democracy, which is the current trend all over the world,"

he added

Abacha seized power during the political crisis triggered when a previous military government annulled an election meant to have ended army rule in Africa's most populous country

He has set out a three-year transition to civil rule, starting with a local council vote next month, which his critics have condemned as being too long

But Abacha defended this, saying "We believe that democracy is a known and reliable system and each country should develop and evolve its own type of democracy suitable for its people"

He said he could not understand why relations between his country and the United States and Britain remained strained, adding that there was no reason for any misunderstanding - Reuters.

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Star 1/2/96

Internal Confidential

NIGERIAN EXILE WANTS 'MORAL COALITION'

Mandela urged to lead Abacha fight

ET 1/2/96

(226)

A LEADING Nigerian dissident has appealed for support for the opponents of General Abacha's regime.

Call to halt Norwegian oil production in Nigeria

EVELYN JOHN HOLTZHAUSEN

Monday, February 12

EXILED Nigerian Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka urged President Nelson Mandela yesterday to lead a worldwide moral coalition against the military government in his country.

OSLO The Norwegian Council for Africa has urged President Nelson Mandela to put pressure on Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland to halt Norwegian oil production in Nigeria.

Yesterday Norwegian Foreign Minister Bjorn Tore Feil told me in an interview that Norway would collaborate actively with SA on moves to persuade the Nigerian government to move towards democracy.

"We have got to form a broad coalition, a rainbow coalition of moral authority right across the globe against regimes such as the Nigerian one.

The council called on Mrs Brundtland, in an open letter yesterday, to take this action, and sent a copy of the letter to Mandela.

He said Norway would join other governments in imposing sanctions but would not act alone nor be "led" by any other country.

"We hope, we expect, President Mandela to take the lead and to have by his side other morally motivated governments," the writer said in an interview.

Brundtland, accompanied by the Norwegian Minister of Defence and other high-ranking government officials, is due in South Africa on Sunday on a state visit that will end on

"I believe that Norway and SA can do a lot together."

Soyinka said he would call in South Africa for a renewal of the sanctions campaign against the multinational Shell Oil, which has been accused of exploiting Nigeria's Ogoni minority.

He confirmed that Nigeria would be high on the agenda in talks between the delegation and SA leaders.

"We are targeting the trade unions now. We expect Cosatu (Congress of SA Trade Unions) to play a very important role, telling their workers not to handle Nigerian crude or shipping — not to touch Nigerian oil," he said.

Soyinka said he met Mandela in Johannesburg on Monday.

He said he appealed for financial, moral and active support for the exiled and domestic opposition to Nigerian military leader General Sani Abacha's government.

Soyinka said the situation in Nigeria had deteriorated since November last year, when the government executed dissident Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists.

Presidential spokesman Mr Parks Mankahlana said Mandela had met Soyinka and would take account of his appeal.

"The opposition must be both punitive and moral. African sanctions are also essential. We are moving towards an agreement that sanctions should begin right here on the continent of Africa," he said.

He dismissed last year's Commonwealth decision to give Abacha two years in which to hand power to a democratic government as "a slap on the wrist".

"But the President is part of a joint Commonwealth initiative on Nigeria and he would not do anything to undermine that," he said.

Soyinka denied an allegation by Abacha on Tuesday that Mandela had given the Nigerian opposition funding or that Burkina Faso had given opposition activists military training.

"That was a disastrous ultimatum, no ultimatum at all. Abacha's timetable for a transfer of power has not fooled anyone. Abacha must have been laughing down his evil gullet."

Cosatu international relations officer Mr Bangumzi Sifingo said the powerful union alliance would listen to Soyinka and do what it could to help, but he added "We want to be part of a worldwide movement against Nigeria and we want to know that anything we do has the support of the Nigerian workers."

"The story put out by Abacha's regime is false in every particular. Of course we will be asking for help but we have not received a single cent," he said.

Abacha seized power in November 1993 amid confusion over the military's scrapping of a presidential election widely believed to have been won by business tycoon Moshood Abiola.

In Cape Town for a meeting of a United Nations group looking at the rights of children in war,

Abiola is now in detention pending trial on treason charges. — Reuter

ing "We believe that democracy is a known and reliable system and each country should develop and evolve its own type of democracy suitable for its people." He said he could not understand why relations between his country and the United States and Britain remained strained. Relations between Nigeria and both countries soured after last year's hangings of nine minority rights activists in defiance of world opinion. — Reuter

interviews since he seized power in November 1993 during the political crisis triggered when a previous military government annulled an election meant to have ended army rule in Africa's most populous country. He has set out a three-year transition to civil rule, starting with a local council vote in March, which his critics at home and abroad have condemned as being too long. But Abacha defended this, say-

LAGOS Nigeria's military ruler General Sani Abacha says he has no political ambition and only wants to usher in a lasting democracy for his country. In the current edition of New York-based magazine Leaders, quoted yesterday by Nigeria's majority government-owned Daily Times newspaper, he says "We are irrevocably committed to democracy, which is the current trend all over the world." Abacha has rarely given press

General 'has no political ambition'

Shell Nigeria defends plans to reduce staff

FROM REUTERS

Lagos — The Shell Petroleum Nigeria Development Company has defended its plan to reduce staff

"The aim is to improve the company's performance and remain competitive with the rest of the Nigerian oil industry," Brian Anderson, the managing director of the Royal Dutch Shell subsidiary, said at a meeting with staff representatives.

"It will also create space for the development of staff with potential and for the recruitment of new staff," he said.

Shell is the biggest oil operator in Nigeria. Its move caused anxious workers to picket the company's Freeman House head office in central Lagos on Monday.

Anderson told the staff representatives that the "staff severance scheme" was voluntary. Generous packages would be offered to about

500 people approaching retirement or whose jobs were affected by technical or organisational changes.

"Those who do not wish to accept the offer will continue in employment. This is not a retrenchment exercise. It is motivated by the need to upgrade quality, skills and efficiency and there will be no coercion," he said.

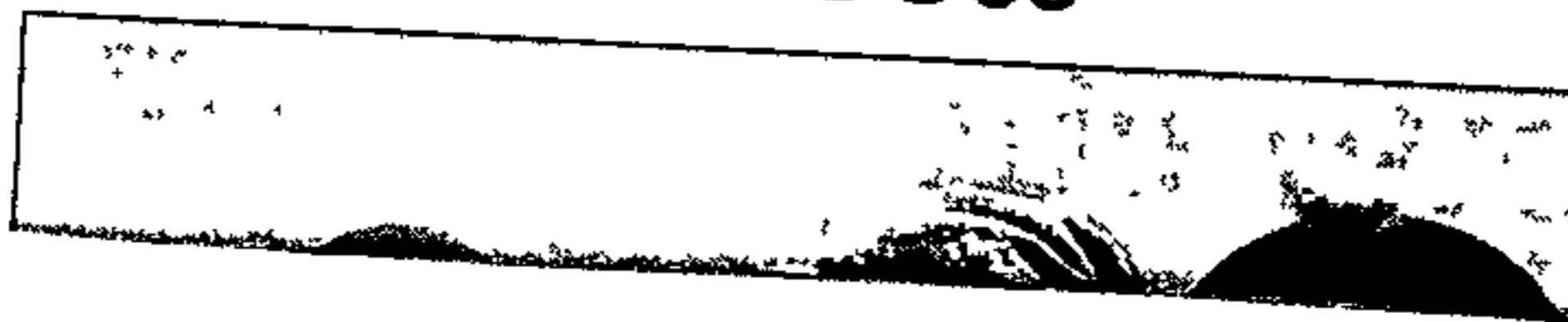
Anderson said the exercise would begin this week and be completed by the end of February.

Shell has been in trouble in Nigeria since last November's hanging of nine minority rights activists for murder.

Western pressure groups have urged Shell to shut down its operations in the West African country in protest at the hangings, but it has resisted the pressure.

Shell would also go ahead with a \$4 billion liquefied natural gas project, which would be the largest in Africa, the company said.

NEW BOSS



Nobel laureate calls on unions for Shell boycott

ARG 1/2/96

(226)

LINDSAY BARNES, Staff Reporter

TRADE unions in South Africa are to be called on to lead a boycott of Nigerian crude oil in protest against Nigeria's Abacha government

The organisations will be asked to lobby their members to "refuse to touch Nigerian oil, no matter who is carrying it," said Nigerian Nobel literature laureate, Wole Soyinka

Support for a boycott of Shell products would also be sought in South Africa

Mr Soyinka, known for his vigorous opposition to Nigeria's military government, is in South Africa for discussions on the protection of children in wartime.

He said Nigerian president Sani Abacha had turned the country into a virtual prison and funds and "sustained international action" were needed to fight the regime

Mr Soyinka said President Mandela had not given money

to Mr Abacha's opposition groups

"Not one rand has changed hands," he said.

Meanwhile, the situation in Nigeria has gone from bad to worse, he said

On January 4, which was the Ogoni National Day, a peaceful protest was "brutally interrupted" and a number of people were killed by Mr Abacha's forces

"Abacha's ridiculous transformation programme (to democracy) has not fooled anyone"

A president-elect was in prison. The situation was not acceptable, he said.

He alleged that the level of bribery in the Nigerian government had escalated 100-fold since Mr Abacha had taken over

"Nigeria's oil resources are going down the drain. The money goes to diplomats all over the world, to foreign ministers and heads of state."

Nigerian dictatorship worse than apartheid, says Soyinka

(226)

Arar 3/2/96

Nigerian poet and activist Wole Soyinka said yesterday he was distressed by the Southern African Development Community's approach to the crisis in his country.

Military dictator Sani Abacha's reign of terror since his November 1993 coup after democratic elections in the oil-rich west African country had been "more pernicious than apartheid", Soyinka said.

He was speaking after meeting the South Africa-Nigeria Democratic Support Group (SANDSC) at the ANC's headquarters in Johannesburg.

"In South Africa during the apartheid years, the opposition received fairer trials," Soyinka said, referring to the imprisonment and execution of hundreds of Nigerian minority rights activists, including poet Ken Saro-Wiwa.

The Nigerian military class was the most corrupt in Africa, Soyinka added.

Nigerian opposition groups were constantly reviewing their position on armed resistance against Abacha's junta.

Soyinka denied rumours that he had already called for armed struggle. "I said that if I called for armed struggle, it would be on Nigerian soil."

The SANDSC had reasserted its commitment to the fight against military dictatorship in Nigeria, said group members.

This would include added pressure on Shell South Africa and Shell International.

"The support group rejects Shell's claims that they have no involvement in political developments in Nigeria (and) their denial of collusion with the military junta," said Raks Seakhoa of the Congress of South African Writers.

Shell International this week admitted supplying arms to the Nigerian police, an admission which Seakhoa said had "far-reaching implications" and was "the tip of the iceberg".

The SANDSC was collating information for the South African Government to make informed decisions on how to resist Abacha's regime.

Although there was "less noise in the newspapers", governments worldwide were aware of the ongoing crisis in Nigeria and had promised support, said Soyinka.

He said countries' strategies on handling the crisis differed and the international community had to be careful not to apply the wrong one.

"We must not let incorrect strategy lead to more deaths."

Soyinka also criticised the world for not giving President Nelson Mandela the support he deserved in his initial reaction to the crisis. - Sapa

Norway looks to Mandela for help

(226) ARG 3/2/96

OSLO — An influential group demanding that Norway's state oil company Statoil withdraw from Nigeria to protest against human rights violations has turned to President Nelson Mandela for help.

The Norwegian Council for Africa, an umbrella organization for 30 groups, is pressing for an oil boycott of Nigeria following the execution last year of dissident writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists. It wants state-owned Statoil to pull out immediately.

In a letter to Mr. Mandela released this week, the council said it "is hoping to see a dynamic coalition between our two countries in a joint effort to promote a valid political solution, democratic rights and respect for human rights in Nigeria."

The council said it asked Mr. Mandela to raise the issue with Norwegian prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland when she makes an official visit to South Africa in February.

The group said Mr. Mandela could influence Oslo to take the lead in boycotting Nigeria because of his special relationship with Norway. Mr. Mandela and deputy president F. W. de Klerk shared the Nobel Peace Prize, which is chosen and awarded in Norway, in 1993.

"If Norway is ready for a boycott — Norway is just waiting for the EU — then it should prepare for it by pulling out Statoil," said council spokesman Patrik Eklof.

Statoil has been reluctant to withdraw unless there is an official boycott, and the Norwegian government is hesitant to impose unilateral sanctions. Instead, Oslo has urged a possible international boycott of Nigeria's military regime.

Other oil companies around the world also have resisted an outright boycott of Nigeria over the executions. — Sapa-AP

Concern for health of Abiola

LAGOS — Nigerian doctors have expressed fresh concern about the health of detained opposition leader Chief Moshood Abiola.

In a statement, the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) alleged the millionaire politician was being denied the attention of doctors.

It said Chief Abiola was not getting regular medication and that his heart condition "remains unattended to". This left him open to "ischaemic heart disease which could lead to sudden death", said the NMA.

ARG 5/2/96
Ischaemia is temporary lack of blood in an organ or tissue or local anemia

The NMA said it stood by its earlier diagnosis that Chief Abiola was suffering from "radiculopathy", a neurological problem

Chief Abiola has been detained since June 1994 on charges of treason, after he proclaimed himself president on the basis of elections held in June 1993 and which he was believed to have won before they were cancelled by the military

— Sapa-AFP. (226)

Jailed chief denied medical care, say doctors

Lagos - Nigerian doctors have expressed concern about the health of detained opposition leader Chief Moshood Abiola

The Nigerian Medical Association alleged at the weekend that the millionaire politician was being denied medical care

It said Abiola was not getting regular medication and that his heart condition "remains unattended to" This left him open to "ischaemic heart disease which

Star 6/2/96
could lead to sudden death", said the association

It called for the unconditional release of Abiola

Abiola was detained in June 1994 on charges of treason after he proclaimed himself president on the basis of elections held in June 1993, and which he was believed to have won before they were cancelled by the military

■ A policeman was hurt when a bomb exploded near police head-

(226)
quarters in the city of Zaria on Saturday A local newspaper said 10 people were held for questioning The blast was the third in Nigeria in three weeks

■ Alex Ibru (50), Publisher of The Guardian newspaper in Lagos, was flown to London on Sunday for further treatment after he was attacked on Friday night.

He was shot in the head and both hands, but is reported to be in a stable condition. - Sapa-AFP

Nigerian opposition groups will meet in SA next month

BD 7/2/96

(226)

Stephen Laufer

NIGERIAN opposition groups will stage a pro-democracy meeting in SA next month in an effort to unify 14 major organisations seeking the downfall of Gen Sani Abacha's regime

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who met representatives of the National Liberation Council of Nigeria (Nahcon) yesterday, said he would open the conference, provided truth and reconciliation commission duties allowed him to do so

The agenda will include the intensification of boycott calls against Nigeria, and whether to move opposition group headquarters to SA.

Despite the advantages to relocating in an African country, finances would be an issue, Nahcon spokesman Kayode Fayemi said

Recent accusations by the Abacha regime that President Nelson Mandela had donated R2m to opposition groups had been a tactic to embarrass foreign governments and make them reluctant to finance the Nigerian opposition

Forcing a denial from the president's office, the regime had damaged fundraising efforts

Owens Wiwa, the brother of executed activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, yesterday called for a

boycott of Royal Dutch Shell, saying the oil company was meddling in Nigerian politics

Shell was still taking its cue from the military, Fayemi said

"Instead of taking the executions (of Saro-Wiwa and eight others) as the starting point for a new approach, Shell continues to be belligerent and unapologetic"

The oil company liked the Nigerian regime's authoritarianism, Fayemi said, because it was a system without checks and balances "All you need is to buy the man at the top. It's cheap and efficient, because he can send his soldiers to protect your oil fields"

The issue of armed struggle — mainstream democratic groups report — is likely to be a subject for corridor discussion at next month's conference in SA

Reports from Nigeria indicated that the recent death of Abacha's son in a plane crash had been the result of sabotage

"We share the goal of a democratic Nigeria, but our tactics differ," Fayemi said.

"We are aware that some groups are beginning to discuss armed opposition, but we don't want to lose our international support by being labelled terrorist"

Leading members of Nahcon, including Nobel

laureate Wole Soyinka and his son Ola, a medical publisher in London, have been in SA for several days soliciting support for Nigeria's pro-democracy struggle

Wole Soyinka's meeting last week with Mandela had been "brilliant", the author's son said "He promised support as far as SA can go. What we don't know yet, is how far that is"

The Nahcon representatives had been struck by the level of grassroots support in SA for the Nigerian democracy movement

The DP, PAC, and the IFP had been supportive in meetings yesterday in Cape Town

The same was true of the ANC, "but the higher you go in government, the more cautious the responses," he said

Identifying Deputy President Thabo Mbeki as key to SA foreign policy, the Nigerian opposition had been attempting to assess his position, Fayemi said

"He was very close to Baba Kinjibe — now Abacha's internal affairs minister — while at Sussex University" Opposition activists wondered whether this friendship was colouring the deputy president's perceptions

Kinjibe initially ran for vice-president alongside Moshood Abiola — widely believed to have

won Nigeria's last democratic election and now held in detention

SA's high commissioner in Abuja, George Nene, had not helped the pro-democracy movement in Nigeria, Fayemi said. He had refused to meet opposition figures but passed information on the opposition to the foreign ministry which played a role in Pretoria's policy formulation

Nigeria was an issue for all of Africa, Fayemi said. The Abacha regime was spreading a coup culture across West Africa and was a threat to regional stability.

"Nigeria puts pressure on its neighbours with cheap oil and through its troops serving in regional peace-keeping forces." With the biggest military in the region, the regime had given its blessing to both the Sierra Leone and Niger coups

Nigeria: DP urges action

ET 7/2/96

POLITICAL WRITER

The government should be more vigorous and proactive in pressuring Nigeria to return to democracy and the rule of law. The Democratic Party studies centre

We believe that the South African government should support the force of democratic conviction in a statement after DP leader Dr Tony Leon and foreign affairs spokesman Mr Colin Eglin met the director of information for the National Liberation Council of Nigeria

Dr Fayode Eremi, a Nigerian academic. Protes of Folokun, Oso

The DP wishes to reiterate its support for the force of democracy in Nigeria. All the Nigerians, outside the country, fight to establish a democratic state in Nigeria

The party would raise the issue in Parliament during the coming session and when the African Council of Liberal International of which the DP was a member met in Cape Town at the end of February. The statement said

FRIDAY
FEBRUARY 9, 1996 ★

'MILITARY WAY' NECESSARY

Give Nigerian dictator a chance — Farrakhan

2/9/96 (226)

NAIROBI: Radical US black leader Louis Farrakhan, who is in Nigeria, has compared that country's military dictator with Moses.

A NIGERIAN human rights group yesterday slammed US black activist Mr Louis Farrakhan for saying in Nigeria that its military government should be given a chance to return the nation to democratic rule

Farrakhan asserted that Nigeria was in trouble and needed tough leadership, according to a report by the BBC

Using several biblical references, Farrakhan drew a comparison between Moses and Abacha, saying Moses was also a dictator and adding there were times when "stern discipline" was needed

"Only in that military kind of way can a nation that has been down come up and get going"

But a brief statement released



AFRICAN TOUR: Louis Farrakhan wants a united states of Africa

last night by Nigeria's Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR) said "The CDHR condemns without reservation the unabashed pro-military stance of, and the provocative immoral endorsement of the General Sani

Abacha-led military junta by the visiting American black muslim leader"

The BBC report said Farrakhan also called for the release of Moshood Abiola, jailed a year after emerging victorious in June 1993 presidential elections

During his week-long visit, Farrakhan visited Abiola and toured Ogoniland, where activists have accused the multinational Shell oil company for disregarding local people and environmental concerns and have also charged the central Nigerian government with failing to expend oil revenues in the oil-rich region

Farrakhan attacked white imperialism in Africa

But he also criticised African leaders for maintaining foreign bank accounts and showing poor leadership, the BBC said

Farrakhan outlined his vision of a united states of Africa which would govern itself — Sapa-Reuter-DPA

Meningitis strikes in Nigeria again

Kano, Nigeria - A meningitis epidemic, which has already claimed more than 500 lives in northern Nigeria, has broken out again in areas where it was believed contained, health officials here have warned.

State Commissioner for Health Hajia Nofisat Kabir told journalists in the northern city on Thursday "We are experiencing a second wave of the epidemic

"Reports from five districts around Kano show a resurgence after it was initially contained. Unless efforts are intensified to contain the dreadful epidemic, we will be faced with a human tragedy"

She said meningitis had already killed 273 people in Kano state in the past two months. Health officials on Wednesday said 270 people had died of the disease in neighbouring Bauchi state

"This is the season of meningitis and many lives have been lost, although we

are containing the situation," said a senior official at the health ministry in Lagos on Wednesday

On Tuesday, the News Agency of Nigeria quoted Dr Jalo Dauda, the commissioner for health in Bauchi state, as saying that most of the victims were children and adolescents

The health official said there had been an outbreak in Sokoto state in the north-west in December which claimed 52 lives but that the outbreak had been brought under control by mid-January

He said another epidemic was reported in January in Katsina, also in the north, in which about 10 people died

Meningitis - inflammation of the brain and spinal cord - is prevalent in the arid areas of west Africa during the dry season. The disease comes as an annual epidemic mainly in the dry months of January, February and March -

Reuters

(226) Star 10/2/96

Nigeria urged to welcome monitors

□ SA high commissioner appeals for rethink

ARG 14/2/96 (226)

LAGOS — South African High Commissioner to Nigeria George Nene has urged the Nigerian government to rescind its decision not to welcome a delegation of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) charged with monitoring the situation in Nigeria

"The South African government regrets the federal government's rejection of the CMAG initiative. Together with the other members of the CMAG, South Africa therefore wishes to reiterate its appeal to Nigeria to reconsider its denial of access to the CMAG delegation," Mr Nene said at a press conference here

The press conference is his

first public statement since returning to Nigeria on Sunday, three months after he was recalled by President Mandela in protest against the "summary execution" of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his companions

On December 22, the Nigerian government rejected the visit of the Commonwealth mission on the grounds the Commonwealth might be biased against Nigeria and that it had interfered in its domestic affairs

Following the execution of Mr Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues, the Commonwealth suspended Nigeria from its fold and threatened to expel the

West African nation if it did not embrace democracy within two years

The CMAG was set up at the instance of the recent Commonwealth summit in Auckland, New Zealand, to monitor the progress of Nigeria towards democracy and look into its human rights record

The group, made up of foreign ministers of eight Commonwealth countries, including South Africa, had proposed to send a mission to Nigeria to hold talks at the highest level. The high commissioner said there had been "stumbling blocks" created by Nigeria as regards the mission, which had to be addressed. — Sapa-AFP

Nigeria sees mixed benefit from economic reform

BD 15/2/96

(226)

LAGOS — Six months after introducing new laws easing out barriers to foreign investment, Nigeria has reaped a mixed bag in place of expected benefits

With lingering political crises aggravated by Gen Sani Abacha's poor human rights records, incoming investments have tended to go only to the oil and gas sector, steering clear of the other sectors

Two new laws promulgated in August — the Nigerian Investment Decree and the Foreign Exchange Decree — have repealed aspects of older laws, the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree and the Foreign Exchange Control Act, which restricted foreigners to maximum equity ownership of 40% in Nigerian enterprises

While the new laws were expected to usher in a flood of foreign investment, the response has remained lukewarm. This is despite the fact that the Nigerian Stock Exchange quickly issued administrative guidelines stating clearly the simple procedures now required of foreign investors in the stock market

Soon after the laws came into being, Citibank of New York initiated talks with other stakeholders in Nigerian International Bank, intending to raise its holding from the current 40% to 75%. By early November it had concluded talks with 27 Nigerian shareholders to acquire additional shares in direct response to the new investment laws, which allow 100% foreign ownership of businesses in Nigeria

However, following the execution of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni environmental activists on November 10 last year, Citibank suspended its plan

to raise its stake in the Nigerian International Bank (NIB). If the acquisition had gone ahead the name of the bank would have changed to Citibank Nigeria

A Citibank official who was in Nigeria recently said the bank intended to maintain its current 40% stake while it waited for international hostility towards Nigeria to blow over. He confirmed that the NIB was "consistently the most profitable bank in Nigeria, with non-performing debts of less than 1%"

It is the bank most used by oil firms in Nigeria

Prior to the decision by Citibank to stay further investments in Nigeria, another US bank, First Fidelity Bank, reviewed its business relations with Nigeria, cutting off correspondence services previously offered to several Nigerian banks.

Similarly, South African investors keen on the solid minerals sector decided to stay action until further notice. According to Stephen Akinwale, director-general of the Nigeria-SA Chamber of Commerce "Nigeria will lose about \$1bn in investment funds following the withdrawal of 30 South African firms from the solid minerals sector"

At least in one known instance, Nigeria's loss has turned to SA's gain. A \$650m personal computer plant initially planned for Nigeria by the US's International Business Machines (IBM) was moved to SA after the lingering political troubles that followed the annulled 1993 elections

According to Raymond Bello of Data Processing Maintenance Services (formerly a subsidiary of IBM), who participated in the fea-

sibility studies, the plant was to be located in the export processing zone at Calabar Port in southeastern Nigeria.

"The choice of Nigeria was influenced by the size of the Nigerian computer market, the biggest on the continent, and the apparent potential to dominate the African market through Nigeria," Bello said. The project, which should have materialised by late 1993, was "redirected to SA because IBM does not want to invest in a crisis-prone economy", he explained

The plant in SA, he said, was producing the IBM PC 100. This was now being imported into Nigeria, where it had become a market leader

Most of the investment funds entering Nigeria recently have been going to the oil and gas sector. Despite pressure spearheaded by President Nelson Mandela and brought to bear on Shell, the company went ahead with a \$4bn gas project, expected to be on stream in four years. Other partners in the project include Elf of France and Agip of Italy

US, French, Italian and Japanese contractors are also working on the project, despite their governments' diplomatic telling-off of the Nigerian regime

Chevron Oil Corporation of the US is investing in a gas venture worth more than \$1bn with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation

"We've been here for more than 30 years," says Chevron Nigeria public affairs manager Sola Omole. "We would like to be here for another 40 to 60 years. We believe in the long-term survival of this country." — Financial Times

Jailed Ogonis plead for help

MITG 9-15/2/96

(22b)

**Chris McGreal in
Port Harcourt**

NINETEEN Ogonis facing trial and the gallows for allegedly participating in the same murders for which Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other men were hanged in November have smuggled a letter out of prison pleading for the Commonwealth to secure their freedom.

The appeal, headed "SOS" and signed by all 19 men, is addressed to a Commonwealth ministerial delegation appointed to urge Nigeria's military regime to restore democracy and respect human rights.

"We are hereby calling on you all, through your offices and humanness, come quickly to our aid and save our lives — cause our freedom, for we have suffered a lot," says the letter, handwritten on a page torn from an exercise book.

The 19 Ogonis are held in harsh conditions at Port Harcourt prison. They are split between severely overcrowded cells, each with dozens of inmates. All sleep on the floor. They are let out for a few minutes each morning to wash from a bucket in a neighbouring field. Family visits are allowed once a month, but are more frequent if bribes are paid. Payment is also expected for food. Malnourishment and disease are common among the prison population.

We are grossly underfed coupled with the complete lack of medical care. As a result we are becoming malnourished and anaemic. These conditions have contributed to the death of one of us," the letter said. Clement Tusima died last August from untreated diabetes, according to Amnesty International. The mechanic, aged 40, was taken briefly to hospital and chained to the bed, but he was returned to prison where he died.

Lawyers say the men's best hope is that the regime will not risk further international condemnation and will put the trial on hold indefinitely.

Meanwhile, posters threatening the life of the exiled Nigerian Nobel literature prize winner, Wole Soyinka, were plastered across Lagos two days after a government minister implicated him in bomb attacks.

West 'condoles' Abacha

(226) M-G 16-22/2/96

The death of the Nigerian dictator's son has shown the transience of world outrage at the execution of

Ken Saro-Wiwa, reports
Chris McGreal

THREE weeks after General Sani Abacha's eldest son was killed in a plane crash, newspapers are still flooded with full-page adverts mourning Ibrahim's "home call", as Nigerians refer to death. Businessmen, politicians, state officials, even the Lagos Polo Club, have competed in the fulsome praise their sympathy for the military ruler and praise for his lost son.

The Koda shipping firm's notice was typical: "Like a meteor descending the firmaments you shone brightly," it said of Ibrahim Abacha.

It was the minimum required of Nigerians jockeying to win Abacha's favour, avoid his wrath, or just do business. But he got more comfort than he might have expected from another quarter. Foreign diplomats, who left en masse in December,

haranguing him for executing the Ogoniland activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, were also on hand.

What is known in Nigeria as

the "condoling" of Abacha opened the door to renewed foreign contact with a regime that three months ago was deemed the new pariah of Africa. The Commonwealth's suspension of Nigeria in November heralded a flood of warnings and threats by Brussels and Washington against the latest in a long line of military governments.

British High Commissioner Thorold Masefield was among the first to pay a personal call to offer his sympathy to Abacha. State-run newspapers were not alone in interpreting his visit as evidence that pressure on the regime was waning. Masefield had arrived back in Lagos days earlier along with most of the European Union (EU) envoys. They denied that their return was a climbdown. "Part of the Commonwealth's message is the need for direct dialogue to get these points across to the Nigerian government and, in support of that, it seems right to us to have our top man there," the British Foreign Office said.

This was deemed particularly important since a delegation of Commonwealth foreign ministers was expected to press for a more rapid transition to democracy and greater respect for human rights. Except there was no Commonwealth visit. Abacha effectively banned the delegation by refusing to meet it, let alone negotiate. Shortly after the hanging of Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogonis, Prime Minister John Major described the executions as "judicial murder, callous and brutal... a direct challenge to the Commonwealth".

The Commonwealth, like the rest of the inter-

national community, failed to rise to the challenge despite Nelson Mandela's efforts to cajole Major and President Bill Clinton into imposing the kind of sanctions used against apartheid South Africa.

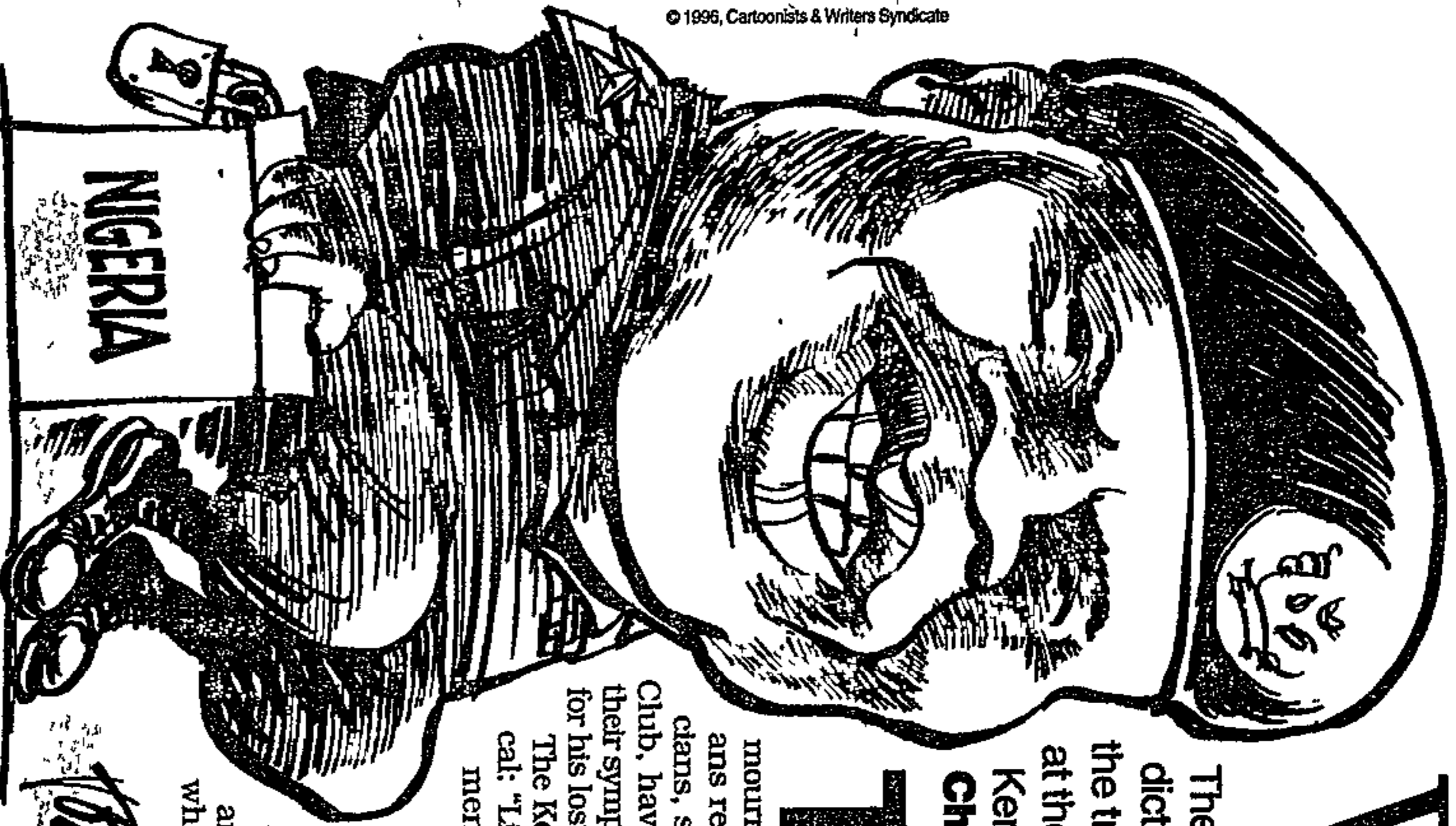
Britain joined an EU ban on arms sales to Nigeria; Abacha and his cronies can no longer go shopping in Europe or the US, and Nigeria's foreign minister was forbidden to attend Francois Mitterrand's funeral.

These are inconveniences but hardly likely to persuade a group of power-hungry soldiers, channeling a significant chunk of the country's wealth into their bank accounts, to mend their ways.

Flying in the face of Commonwealth demands, Abacha continues to round up opponents and insist he will stay in power until October 1998, or whenever he sees fit, to ensure a civilian government to the military's liking.

The regime's plans for non-political local elections next month include the "open ballot system" whereby voters publicly identify their favoured candidate. Even then they are only choosing delegates who in turn will elect the councils, presumably under the soldiers' scrutiny.

Yet it seems the Commonwealth and EU have decided that they have gone as far as they are prepared to. The US Congress is still debating a sanctions Bill which would freeze the bank accounts of Abacha and those close to him, if they have been foolish enough not to hide their money. But there is no serious consideration of the one sanction that could have an impact — an embargo on the oil which pro-



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NIGERIA

Chris McGreal

Star 17/2/96

Concern over SA envoy's remarks (226) about Nigeria

Remarks by SA's high commissioner to Nigeria, George Nene, that the Nigerian government had made progress towards a civilian government, was a matter of concern, the SA Nigeria Democratic Support Group said yesterday.

Nene reportedly said this before returning to Nigeria this week.

The group said in a statement it found the remark "extremely disturbing" because information indicated that human rights violations continued unabated in Nigeria with no signs from the military government that it was willing to restore democracy.

"The repressive military campaign against the people of Ogoniland continues, while many of the pro-democracy leaders in that country are either languishing in prison or have been forced into exile."

The group said a particular concern was the upcoming trial of 19 Ogoni activists arrested in the first half of last year, one of whom had died in prison.

They had been charged with murder and would be tried by a special military tribunal - the same court in which the late Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other human rights activists were sentenced to death last year.

"We call on Mr George Nene to intervene on behalf of those 19 detainees," the group said.

- Sapa

Nigeria on reform path

(226)
LAGOS. — Nigeria will press on with economic reforms launched in 1995 and with a controlled deregulation of the foreign exchange market, military ruler Sani Abacha has said.

He said Nigeria, which derives more than 90 per cent of its revenue from oil, had based its budget for 1996 on a price of \$16 a barrel. Last year's budget was based on \$15 a barrel.

The official exchange rate of 22 Naira for one US dollar will be retained exclusively for transactions made by the government, he said.

Other transactions will use the bank rate which is currently 85 Naira to a dollar.

ARG 17/2/96
Banks are authorised to do business in hard currency, but the central bank will intervene once a month to regulate the market.

Oil revenue for 1996 is estimated, on the basis of 22 Naira to the dollar, at 214 billion Naira (R36 billion).

General Abacha said the increase in Nigeria's debt was due to accumulated arrears and a depreciation of the dollar against other currencies.

He also reaffirmed his intention to hand over to a democratically-elected president in 1998. — Sapa-AFP.

OPINION & ANALYSIS

It's time to repay a favour

CF 19/2/96

DEMOCRATIC MP COLIN EGLIN, speaking in the opening debate of the Parliamentary session last week, urged President Mandela and the South African government to take up the case of General Obasanjo and other democrats imprisoned in Nigeria.

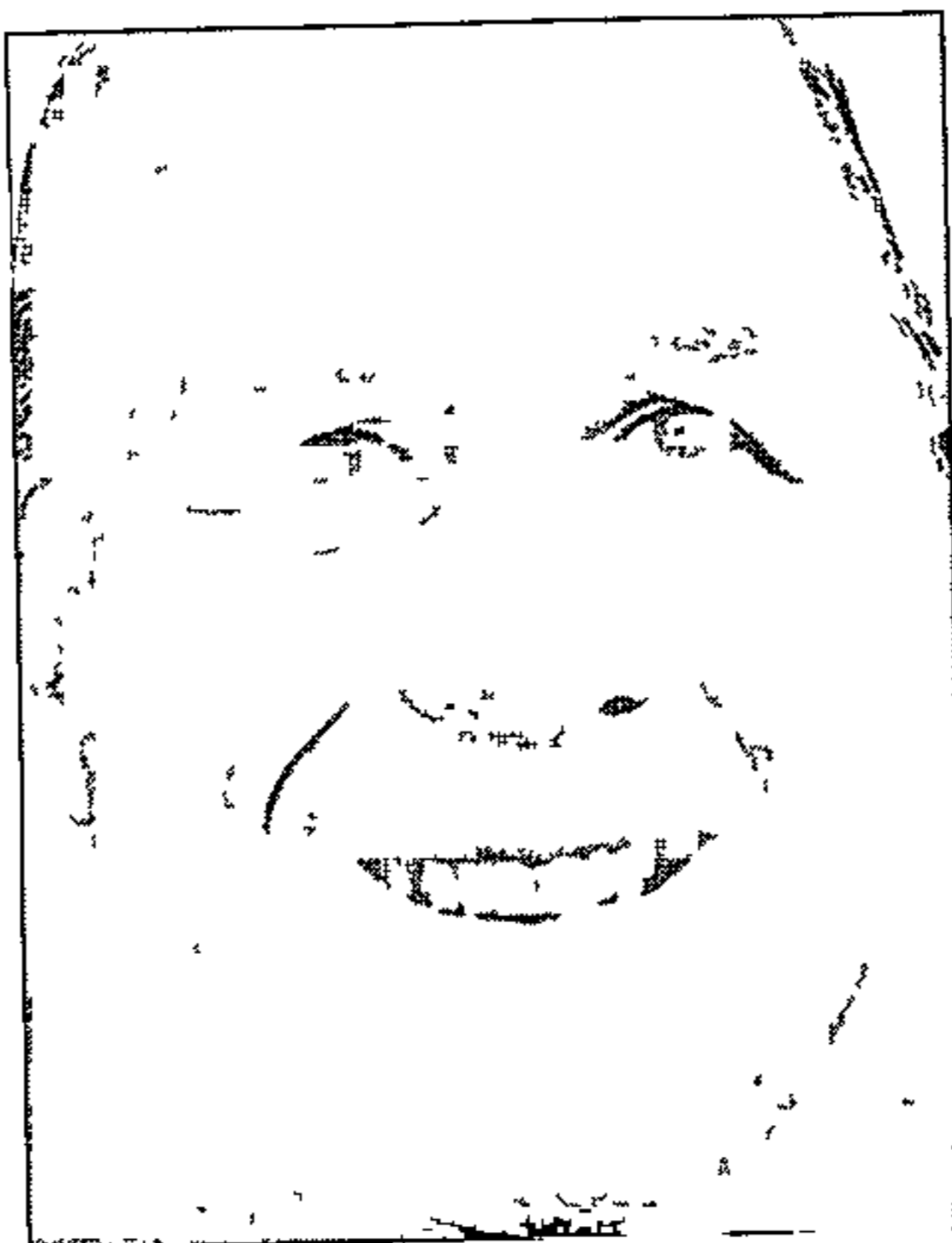
WHEN Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight Ogoni tribesmen were hanged by General Abacha's military government, President Mandela gave an immediate and forceful lead to the Commonwealth Heads of Government assembled in New Zealand. For a moment the Commonwealth appeared to be galvanised into action. But here in Africa, and indeed elsewhere in the world, many leaders have failed to share President Mandela's forthrightness.

In the case of Nigeria, as in other countries with military rulers, we have come to learn it will not be easy to induce a return to democracy from outside. We must continue to do what we can to speed up that process - but at the same time, we must focus on specific violations of human rights and attempt to have them put right.

I draw the President's attention in particular to the violation of human rights in respect of General Olusegun Obasanjo, the former Head of State, a leader who in 1979 of his own volition returned Nigeria to democracy and civilian rule.

Today he is languishing as a political prisoner, together with common criminals in the notorious prison in the town of Jos.

Obasanjo is no power seeker. He is no revolutionary. He has spent the last 15 years trying to resolve conflict and promote democracy and development in Africa.



MP COLIN EGLIN: Recently called to light the plight of former Nigerian military ruler General Obasanjo who is imprisoned in Nigeria.

Only last year, he was awarded the Indra Ghandi International Prize for Peace and Development.

Obasanjo is a democrat to his fingertips, whose "crime" is to keep alive, in the face of an authoritarian regime, a faith in democracy and human rights.

It was Obasanjo who, as Head of State in the late 1970s rallied the people of Nigeria in support of South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle.

I went to Nigeria in January 1979 when Obasanjo was Head of State. There I met young South Africans who had gone into exile after the 1976 student uprising.

I saw how Obasanjo's government had

given them a base from which to operate.

I learnt of how his government was giving MK both moral and material support.

I heard how his government was rallying his people in the call for the release of Nelson Mandela.

And in 1986, when the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group came to South Africa, he as vice-chairman insisted the EPG should talk with Mandela.

Today, Obasanjo is held prisoner by a military regime that is neither representative nor democratic.

I believe that we South Africans owe it to the General and we owe it to our own commitment to human rights to do what we can to have him released from prison.

I ask myself: Have I done enough in this regard?

I wrote to President Mandela on March 15 last year when Obasanjo was first imprisoned.

I spoke to Deputy Minister Pahad about the issue on a couple of occasions. But frankly, I have not done enough. I ask the GNU whether it has done enough to support Obasanjo morally or to press for his release from prison.

I ask Mandela whether he has done enough to stand by this man who, when he was in power, stood by him in his struggle.

I believe that the South African Government, indeed the South African people, should campaign in a well-thought-out way for the release of Obasanjo - and other democrats - who are imprisoned in Nigeria.

Obasanjo's release would be a triumph for justice, and for the democracy that will one day be restored to his country.

It will also show that, to South Africans, a commitment to human rights is not a ritual, but a willingness to stand by persons who are the victims of authoritarianism and oppression wherever they may be.

AFRICA

Kenyan universities are 'silently dying'

Own Correspondent

NAIROBI — When Kenyan academics meet to discuss the state of the country's public universities, they normally do so in secret.

Their union is banned, its leaders have been sacked from their university posts, others have been arrested for holding illegal gatherings, or intimidated into silence.

But those still brave enough to criticise the system say universities are in danger of collapse because of the suffocating effect of heavy-handed government interference.

"This is the lowest we have ever sunk to," said Kivutha Kibwana, law professor at Nairobi University, where he has taught for 20 years. "Nothing meaningful goes on here any more, no research, no scholarship, no teaching. To call it a shell of an institution is too generous. It's a ruin."

As chancellor of all five public universities, President Daniel arap Moi appoints the vice-chancellors, the senior administrators, who in turn control a bureaucracy reaching down to every department.

Most faculties have dispensed with elections for dean because of pressure from above. Last August, Kibwana, dean of the law faculty, was arrested and manhandled on campus by a dozen policemen after discussing politics with two former students over tea in the senior common room. He later resigned as dean in protest. Elections for his successor were then annulled by the vice-chancellor.

On top of the academic frustration, poor salaries are a source of bitterness. A senior lecturer's pre-tax earnings are less than £2 000 pounds a year. "Even buying a shirt is a family decision," said Smokin Wanjala, a senior law lecturer. Many have opted to supplement their incomes in moonlighting activities ranging from consultancies to running a kiosk.

Students say they miss up to a third of all teaching hours as many lecturers put in only "technical appearances", arriving late, if at all, and leaving early to pursue their outside interests.

Despite a \$55m World Bank investment project, there is not enough money to sustain basic facilities. Chalk and paper are usually unavailable; some lecturers pay their own office telephone bills. Books in the libraries are mostly outdated and many of the shelves are empty.

Movements for change continue to be frustrated by the government. A nine-month strike by the Universities Academic Staff Union was crushed in September 1994, after 24 of its leaders were dismissed, evicted from their university houses, and some arrested.

Moi publicly declared the union illegal. Staff union chairman Korwa Adar, one of those sacked, now faces criminal charges of addressing an illegal meeting and inciting students to violence in February 1994. Court cases filed by the union challenging the government's refusal to register the union and its dismissal of the lecturers have been thrown out or deferred.

Gibson Kamau Kuria, one of Kenya's most distinguished human rights lawyers, said: "These cases are a clear indication that the government is not telling the truth when it says it is committed to political reforms." Since the strike fear and despondency have set in. One lecturer said: "We were fighting for better standards of education and for the integrity of this place. Nobody dares make a noise now, and I would not go through all that again. There's been a silent death of the universities."

The malaise has spread to the 40 000-strong student population.

University closures are frequent and have caused chaos in the academic calendar. Police are permanently based on all campuses and do not hesitate to use violence to quell student unrest.

Education Minister Joseph Kamotho says: "There is absolute freedom of movement and freedom of research, there is no muzzling whatsoever of academics in this country," he said. "They (the union) are part of the opposition and that is why they make so much noise" — © Telegraph plc.

Nigerian minister rules out talks

(226) WINDHOEK — Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi yesterday ruled out talks with the Commonwealth on his country's suspension from the organisation.

He also said Nigeria's military ruler, Gen Sani Abacha, would visit Namibia "at a time appropriate" in response to an invitation last year by Namibian President Sam Nujoma, but gave no details.

Ikimi, on a two-day visit to Namibia, said his government rejected what he termed the "infamous decision" by a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November to suspend Nigeria after author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists were executed on November 10, the eve of the Commonwealth summit in New Zealand.

Ikimi said his government would not meet members of an eight-nation committee of Commonwealth foreign ministers to monitor Nigeria's adherence to democratic principles.

Five committee members — the foreign ministers of Ghana, Jamaica, New Zealand, Malaysia and Zimbabwe — have been hoping to visit Nigeria for talks on a return to democracy. The other members are Britain, Canada and SA.

Ikimi, who arrived in Namibia on Monday, said he had brought a personal message from Abacha to Nujoma, thanking the Namibian leader for "his understanding of the Nigerian situation".

Nujoma went along with the Commonwealth decision to suspend Nigeria, but has refused to condemn the hangings, maintaining that Nigeria is "a friendly country".

Ikimi, who was due to leave Namibia late yesterday for Botswana, is on a tour of southern Africa in a bid to "enlighten" countries. "If administrations such as SA's become more aware of the facts of the Saro-Wiwa saga, they will modify their views," Ikimi said, referring to SA's leading role in the campaign to impose sanctions against Nigeria.

Ikimi will also visit Mozambique, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Zaire before arriving in Addis Ababa for an OAU council of ministers meeting from February 26 to 28. — Sapa-AFP.

**Saro-Wiwa's brother
asks US to put ban
on oil from Nigeria
(226) CT (PR) 24/2/96**

By ROSE UMOREN

Washington —Owens Saro-Wiwa, Ken Saro-Wiwa's younger brother, has begun a tour of North America to push for sanctions against Nigerian oil

Saro-Wiwa, who escaped from Nigeria shortly after his brother's execution in November, could cause headaches for Shell International and the Nigerian government of Sani Abacha

He has already met Tim Wirth, the American undersecretary of state for global issues, and is scheduled to meet various lawmakers from Congress where several anti-Abacha measures are now pending

Washington and other western nations have the power to free Nigeria of military dictatorship and oppression by multinational oil companies through an oil embargo, a freeze on the foreign assets of the military and their collaborators, and a consumer boycott of Shell, said Saro-Wiwa, a physician and leader in the Ogoni movement

Ken Saro-Wiwa, an internationally recognised author, was the founder and leader of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People.

The Ogoni are a small ethnic minority whose traditional lands have been despoiled by 35 years of Shell operations according to the movement and

international environmental groups like Greenpeace and the Sierra Club

Saro-Wiwa's second message is that Shell is in league with the Abacha regime, going as far as to buy arms for the military.

He also said that Shell paid witnesses to testify against his brother and eight other activists

Saro-Wiwa told a press conference on Tuesday that last April he had begged Shell Nigeria's managing director, Brian Anderson, to intervene and stop his brother's trial

Anderson replied that stopping the trial, though difficult, was "not impossible," said Saro-Wiwa

He claimed Anderson said the price of his intervention would be the publication of a press release from the movement saying that there was no environmental devastation as a result of Shell's activities in Ogoniland

Saro-Wiwa refused to issue the press release Anderson asked for.

By 1993, when it was forced by

growing protests to halt its operations in Ogoniland, Shell had removed 900 million barrels of oil and also an unknown amount of gas, said Saro-Wiwa

At today's prices, the oil alone would fetch \$15.3 billion

For objecting to this, said Saro-Wiwa, the Ogoni have suffered grave abuses of human rights at the hands of Nigeria's security forces

Some 2 000 have been killed, and 27 Ogoni villages have been destroyed, he said

Earlier this month, security agents killed six Ogoni, injured 15 and detained 22 others while breaking up what Saro-Wiwa said was a peaceful gathering of some 100 000 Ogoni to mourn their dead compatriots

Even Saro-Wiwa's mother was detained for 14 hours for wearing black after her son's execution, he said

"In all this, the Abacha dictatorship has the active support of Shell International," claimed Saro-Wiwa

Citing a recent article in the London Observer, Saro-Wiwa said Shell has admitted "supplying arms to the Nigerian security forces"

He said that the company "has been and is still involved in influencing and supporting the outcome" of the military tribunal which hanged his brother

Two witnesses, he said, "have signed sworn affidavits that

they were bribed by officials of the military and Shell to give false testimony"

To restore democracy in Nigeria, Saro-Wiwa puts the responsibility squarely on the Americans.

"The United States has been at the forefront of the most positive changes in Africa. If the United States says Abacha should stop killing people, he will stop," said Saro-Wiwa

The most effective course is for the Americans to put an embargo on Nigerian oil, he said

"The United States is the largest consumer of Nigerian oil, but oil from that country represents just 3.5 percent of America's total consumption," he said

"It is both economically possible and morally imperative that you respond by instituting an embargo on Nigeria's oil

"The decisions you make here may change the double standards of one of the biggest multinationals," Saro-Wiwa said — Sapa-IPS

**2 000
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destroyed**

OT 27/2/96
Nigeria to close
nine missions (226)

ABUJA: Nigeria will close nine of its foreign diplomatic missions this year, sources at the foreign affairs ministry said yesterday

The missions are in Gabon, Somalia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Kuwait, Botswana, Hong Kong and Belgrade

Sources said the closures are due to a shortage of money for the foreign affairs ministry and the high cost of some of the missions.

Nigeria takes stock of cost of fighting apartheid

Dulue Mbachu (22b)

LAGOS—The diplomatic face-off between SA and Nigeria over the human rights record of Gen Sani Abacha's regime has hastened the winding up of Nigeria's remaining anti-apartheid body and led to a general stock-taking of Nigeria's entire southern African liberation efforts

Officials from the capital Abuja have visited the Lagos headquarters of the National Committee Against Apartheid (Nacap) to determine the extent of Nigeria's involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle. Nacap has been dormant since the ANC came to power in 1994.

Provisional estimates indicate well over \$1bn

BD 4/3/96
may have been spent towards the liberation of southern Africa. This does not include contributions made by Nigeria between 1989 and 1994.

Nigeria channelled assistance to SA through Nacap or the SA Relief Fund (Sarf), which ran educational and training programmes. It was scrapped in 1992 and its activities taken over by Nacap. No final figures have been produced on the extent of Nigeria's financial involvement in the liberation of SA.

The number of SA students on government scholarship in Nigeria has dwindled from thousands in the late 1970s to a mere 13.

Assistance to liberation movements in southern Africa peaked during the regimes of Gen Murtala Mohammed and Gen Olusegun Obasanjo between 1975 and 1979. It was during this period that direct assistance started.

Previously, the Tafawa Balewa regime spent £100 000 in 1963-64, and £74 000 in 1965-66 as contributions to the Organisation of African Unity liberation commit-

tee. It also spearheaded the expulsion of SA from the Commonwealth.

In 1972 Nigeria paid £126 000 into the liberation fund and another £180 000 in 1973. In the same year it contributed about \$1.3m to Frelimo.

Apart from regular contributions through the OAU, Nigeria gave about \$20m to the liberation movements in southern Africa between 1975 and 1976. Within this period, Frelimo received an additional \$28.5m and the ANC received \$7m. In 1977, the MPLA in Angola received \$100m and Zimbabwean liberation forces received \$250 000.

An official from the presidency in Abuja said: "We believe there is as yet insufficient knowledge on how much we committed to the struggle to end apartheid. It is necessary for people to know this and know too that the campaign for sanctions spearheaded by Mandela is unwarranted, whatever might have been involved."

□ Mbachu is a journalist based in Lagos.

Talks may enable Nigerian debt relief

FROM REUTERS

Lagos — Nigeria and the World Bank have resumed discussions on the country's economic programme to enable debt relief, Anthony Ani, the finance minister, said yesterday.

He said that he had met a three-strong World Bank team in Lagos on Saturday for exploratory discussions. The team included the bank's director for West Africa.

"We discussed last year's budget, this year's budget and our plans to resume discussions on our medium-term economic programme," said Ani.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suspended talks with Nigeria last year after it defied world opinion and hanged nine minority-rights activists for murder.

"The IMF and World Bank were due to look at our track record in November and see what we are trying to do, but because of the events in the country that mission was broken off," Ani said.

Nigeria needs the endorsement of its so-called "home-grown" free-market policies by the two finance agencies before it can reschedule \$32.6 billion of debt repayments to Western creditors.

"There is no doubt that we can repay our debt. I'm not repudiating our debt. Nigeria borrowed and should repay," Ani said.

"We have the manpower and the wealth to repay, but we need a breathing space in repaying to plan our economy."

For the past five years, debt repayment has been pegged at \$2 billion annually out of an aver-

age revenue of \$8 billion.

Nigeria complained that this left it with too little to fund other development projects. It wants IMF approval of its economic programme to enable it to reschedule its debts.

The programme was worked out by Nigeria, instead of the standard practice where the IMF prescribes the economic measures implemented by a debtor nation.

Its main plank is a "guided deregulation" of the foreign-exchange market whereby the local currency would trade freely side-by-side with an official rate for a few government transactions.

"The happy thing is that the IMF and World Bank appreciate our own position and we appreciate their own and we respect ourselves," Ani said.

CF(BR) 5/3/96 (226) bf

Nigeria, Cameroon take oil fight to court

(226) ET 7/3/96

THE HAGUE: Nigeria yesterday said it was committed to pursuing a peaceful solution to its dispute with Cameroon over the oil-rich Bakassi peninsula and claimed that any violence in the region would stem from Cameroon aggression.

Justice Minister Michael Agbamuche told a hearing at the International Court of Justice here that Cameroon had launched a six-hour bombardment against Nigerian troops in the area last month in which civilians and soldiers were killed.

The two nations have long been at loggerheads over the swamp-ridden 50km² peninsula in the Gulf of Guinea, with both claiming sovereignty over the area's oil and fishing resources.

"Nigeria wants to resolve the Bakassi issues by peaceful means. It is Cameroon that continues to use force," Agbamuche said.

He said the violence was orchestrated at the highest political level. "Cameroon's actions

seem not to have been trigger-happy border guards . but cold-blooded political decisions taken at a high level."

Cameroon laid claim to the peninsula and told the court the Nigerian attacks were aimed at gaining control of its oil riches.

Cameroon first took the dispute to the International Court of Justice in February 1994, asking it to rule that Cameroon had sovereignty over the peninsula and that Nigeria should withdraw its troops and pay reparations.

The hearings follow a request by Cameroon for an interim ruling under which Nigeria would have to withdraw its troops to positions held before February — before the latest outbreak of violence.

But Nigeria's representative Professor Ian Brownlie said that, given there had been no advance by Nigerian forces, it followed there could be no withdrawal.

An interim ruling is expected in several weeks — Reuter



LOCKED OUT General Mathieu Kerekou, presidential candidate and former dictator of Benin walks among supporters Benin's presidential election on March 3 ended in a stalemate

PHOTO AP

Nigerian presidency closes (226) country's borders with Benin

FROM REUTER

Lagos — Nigeria had closed its border posts with Benin, the state-owned News Agency of Nigeria reported yesterday

It said the presidency in the capital, Abuja, had ordered the closure of the Seme and Owode border posts

The agency said security officials at the border had turned back travellers, including diplomats. The duration and official reason for the

closure, carried out on Monday, were not given.

Benin closed its border with Nigeria last week because of last Sunday's presidential poll but it reopened the border on Monday after the poll ended

The agency said the closure could be a reaction to the failure of the Benin authorities to inform the Nigerian government before shutting its side of the border last week.

Nigeria is scheduled to hold local council elections on March 16,

CT (BR) 8/3/96
the first in a series of polls the military government says will lead to full democracy in 1998

Nigerians travelling abroad have used the footpaths to Benin to avoid detection. The agency said additional policemen had been drafted to the border to police the illegal routes

The closure of the border will also affect businessmen who import goods through Benin ports to beat high port charges and delays in clearing goods at the Lagos wharf

Shell discovers more oil off Nigerian coast

(226) CT 13/3/96

LONDON: Royal Dutch Shell, which has been criticised by human rights groups for its operations in Nigeria, has made a potentially significant discovery of oil in a deep-water area off the coast of the West African country, according to the oil company's officials

A 5 010-metre well has been drilled in an exploration area called Bongo One off the coast of the Niger Delta, where most of Nigeria's on-shore wells are located. Tests are being conducted to see how large the discovery is and whether production is commercially feasible.

The find could be politically significant for both Shell and the military government because of widespread unrest among the Ogoni people over existing on-shore wells in the delta.

The Ogoni turned to political activism out of outrage over damage to their land by years of oil seepage and flaring.

The unrest led to the deaths of as many as 2 000 Ogonis, human rights activists

have said, when the government sent in troops and police officers at the request of the oil company to fight sabotage at its installations in 1992 and 1993.

In November, the government hanged Ken Saro-Wiwa, the leader of the Ogoni movement, and eight other Ogonis after a murder trial widely condemned as a sham.

The executions prompted international condemnation, with the United States saying it was considering imposing sanctions against Nigeria, and various human rights groups calling for a consumer boycott of Shell.

Production of oil off-shore, though more expensive, could sidestep the political problems caused by on-shore production.

But groups opposed to the military government in Nigeria said they would not lessen their campaign "because oil money is being used to finance tyranny" — New York Times

Nigeria disqualifies 35 Ogoni candidates

(226) ET 14/3/96

LAGOS: Thirty-five would-be candidates from the Ogoni oil-producing area have been disqualified from contesting Nigeria's local council elections, the Vanguard newspaper reported yesterday.

It said they were suspected of belonging to the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni Peoples (Mosop), nine of whose members were hanged for murder last November.

Vanguard said only seven people were cleared to contest the local council poll in Ogoniland.

The aspirants said they were asked about their relationship with Mosop when they appeared before the poll's screening panel.

Mosop has long been demanding self-determination for the Ogonis and compensation from oil firms for decades of oil exploitation which they say has ruined the environment in their area.

Hundreds of people from other

parts of the country have also been disqualified.

The council poll scheduled for Saturday is the first since the military annulled presidential elections in 1993.

The government says the election is the first step in its plan to restore democracy and has issued a decree making it an offence to obstruct the transition to civil rule programme leading to the installation of an elected president in 1998.

Police said the former governor of Kano state had been held for questioning over the poll.

"Kabiru Gaya had openly accused the federal government of unnecessary spending of public funds in the name of the local government election, as well as trying to incite the people by alleging that his candidates were disqualified unduly," Kano state police commissioner Lawan Mashi said.

— Reuter

'Democratic call to boycott Nigerian polls

LAGOS: A Nigerian pro-democracy group yesterday called for a boycott of local elections which the military government has organised for tomorrow.

"We are calling on people to frustrate the elections — to make a nonsense of the polls," said Yinka Odumakin of the Joint Action Committee (JAC), which claims to represent all Nigeria's human rights groups.

The military government, seen as a pariah by much of the international community, says the local council elections — in which no parties will be allowed to take part — are the first step in its programme to return Nigeria to democracy by 1998.

Nigeria has been in political crisis since 1993, when a previous military government annulled the results of a presidential election.

At a secret news conference, Odumakin said the JAC had called for nationwide pro-democracy rallies tomorrow (22b)

He would not say whether he favoured violent opposition to the poll CT15/3/96

It is not clear how much support the group has.

The two main JAC leaders are locked up — Reuter

Nigeria overhauls customs (22b)

CF (BR) 15/3/96
FROM REUTER

Lagos — Under new rules issued by the military government, all imports and exports must be inspected before they are shipped, a finance ministry official said yesterday.

"From April 1 1996 all goods coming in or leaving Nigeria must be examined before they are shipped to ensure they are what the accompanying documents say they are," said the official.

"A Clean Report of Finding and import duty report will be issued after inspection," he added.

The guidelines were issued in Abuja on Wednesday by Anthony Ani, the finance minister, and were part of new measures being taken to streamline the operations of the ports, he said.

"All containerised and non-containerised goods, irrespective of value, will be subject to pre-shipment inspection.

"All personal effects will also be subject to pre-shipment inspection, but will be imported under zero duty as certified by the pre-shipment inspection agents," the guidelines said.

A ban on clearing goods from Nigeria's seaports has been implemented until April 1, when the new measures will come into effect.

On Tuesday, Ani told importers in Abuja that though losses could be expected during the ban, both the government and business would be better off as a result of the new rules.

MASSIVE TURNOUT OF VOTERS

Four die in Nigerian municipal elections

(226)

CT 18/3/96

LAGOS: Nigerians have shown their wish for elected government by voting massively in council polls, which could increase pressure on its army rulers to restore democracy.

UP to four people were killed in violence during Nigeria's municipal polls, the first step in the country's latest programme of transition to democracy, newspapers said yesterday.

The independent Guardian reported that a voter was stabbed to death and several others injured in the northern Kaduna state during clashes between youths and voters at a polling station.

Other newspapers said up to four people died in the fracas unleashed when a large number of under-aged people tried to vote in the Saturday poll and that a number of people were arrested.

Nigerians have shown their wish for elected government by voting massively in council polls and this could strengthen the foreign pressure on its army rulers to

restore democracy, diplomats and analysts said yesterday.

The poll on Saturday marked the first major step in a programme unveiled by military ruler General Sani Abacha last October to hand over to an elected president in 1998.

A senior European Union diplomat said: "It reinforces the need to keep up the pressure for change in Nigeria because this is evidence that democracy is what the Nigerian people themselves want."

The West has imposed a variety of sanctions against Nigeria since 1993 when the army cancelled a presidential vote that would have ended a long period of army rule.

Businessman Mr Moshood Abiola, the undeclared winner of the scrapped poll, has been detained

since June 1994, when he proclaimed himself president in defiance of the military rulers. Worldwide appeals for his release have been rebuffed.

The West's patience with Abacha wore thin last November when nine minority rights activists from the Ogoni tribe, including the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, were hanged for murder.

This drew unprecedented international action against Nigeria, including its suspension from the Commonwealth, made up of Britain and its former colonies.

The Commonwealth set a deadline of two years for Abacha, the seventh army general to rule Nigeria, to show evidence that he is moving towards democracy in the country. Saturday's vote is the first since the poll cancellation.

Western diplomats said that despite the election they still had doubts that Abacha genuinely intended to hand over in 1998. — Reuter

AFRICA

Nigeria's budget offers no direction

BY BRUCE WALKER (22b)

FROM THE ECONOMIST

Lagos—Why did it take them so long? Nigeria's budget, a month and a half late, offered nothing new. As local cynics put it, all they had to do was cross out last year's date and change it to this year's.

The economy is in recession, social services are collapsing. The only rising statistics are for inflation, now around 40 percent, unemployment and violent crime. A new round of sanctions led by the United States may well hurt the economy.

However, despite all the pot-holes visible on the roads, the budget offered no new policy direction.

The eldest son of the head of state, General Sanu Abacha, died in a plane crash in mid-January. His death lengthened the delay in completing the budget. During that time the advocates of state economic regulation tried to get the government to turn the clock back to the sixties. They failed, but so did the businessmen demanding deregulation and other policies advocated by the World Bank, the IMF and the Paris Club of Nigeria's official creditors abroad.

This budget was about the survival of the regime and that means retaining a stranglehold on most parts of the economy. Private industry in Nigeria has come to

Tighter international sanctions looming

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Oil exports (\$bn)	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Oil imports (\$bn)	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Oil balance (\$bn)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Oil exports (% of GDP)	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Oil imports (% of GDP)	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Oil balance (% of GDP)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

realise that it cannot compete with such imperatives and that any hope of a budget producing good economic policy and management is unrealistic. This one ducked all the big issues.

Though the real exchange rate, acknowledged by the central bank in its sales of foreign currency to industry, is about 85 nairas to the dollar, the official rate of 22 to the dollar remains for "government transactions."

Since the naira is freely convertible at the market rate, this does little harm, apart from clouding the government's accounts and

keeping Nigeria off the IMF's visiting list.

Pegging of interest rates at 21 percent, about half the inflation rate, is more damaging. Not only does it rule out prospects of a deal with the IMF and the World Bank, it inhibits domestic savings, distorts the money market and removes a vital instrument in the battle against inflation.

Anthony Anu, the finance minister, has fought instead to restrain government spending, a large weight in the economy. This has worked he managed to halve inflation during the second half of last year. But

the collapse of consumer demand by up to a third in some sectors has forced manufacturers to cut output and jobs sharply. This cannot be sustained for another year without severe social cost.

Among the virtues that Anu claims for his budget is greater fiscal openness. Indeed? The use of two exchange rates for one budget defies analysis and he offered no detailed accounting of oil revenue, the largest source of income.

A sharp rise in the pump price of petrol is a sign of economic realism, like last year's acceptance of market rates for currency sales. But where will the extra revenue from the state-owned oil company go? There was only a partial indication of how the \$15 billion due to flow into the government's coffers this year will be spent.

The best news for business was tax breaks for capital investment to modernise plant and equipment. This, Anu hopes, will encourage investment but given the recession, that may be doubtful.

And then in his budget speech Anu headed into fantasy-land. "Tourism is a great potential earner for the country," he declared. One day, conceivably. Bad hotels, the risks of air and road travel and a wave of violent crime in big cities today put Nigeria in the same holiday league as Haiti

Nigerian call to the West

(22b) BD 19/3/96

LAGOS.—Nigeria's military government said yesterday Western nations should stop supporting opposition elements and back its own democracy programme after the huge turnout in weekend polls.

"The massive turnout of voters in defiance of the call for boycott by so-called activists should tell the international community that an overwhelming majority of Nigerians accept the head of state's transition to civil rule programme," said Information Minister Walter Ofonagoro.

Ofonagoro said the number of voters was being collated and would be made public — Reuter

Triumph for Abacha

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(226) sawetan 20/3/96

Opposition groups in Nigeria came out second best in last weekend's elections which marked the first step in the country's return to democracy, writes **Remi Oyo...**

LAGOS – General Sami Abacha must be a relieved man. Despite boycott calls from the opposition and gloomy predictions over turnout, Nigeria's local government elections turned out to be something of a triumph for the military leader.

Voters turned up in large numbers at polling centres across the country last Saturday – stunning critics – and the headlines in Nigeria's normally caustic Press have been largely positive over the poll.

"I was actually surprised at the turnout. I first thought it must have been some stunt," noted Obafemi Adewale, a member of last year's constitutional conference. The turnout was against a lot of expectations."

The polls were not without incident, though. There were at least four deaths, including a two-month-old baby, as a result of political clashes.

Political clashes

More than 70 people were arrested nationwide over allegations of bribing voters, abducting electoral officials and beating up policemen, and are likely to face an Election Malpractice Tribunal (which has the power to hand down a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment).

But in a country used to political skirmishing and vote-buying, that hardly registered.

By-elections are planned for those areas where elections did not take place because of violence or the threat of violence. Saturday's no-party poll, the first election since the military annulment of the 1993 presidential poll, was the start of a complicated three-phase process.

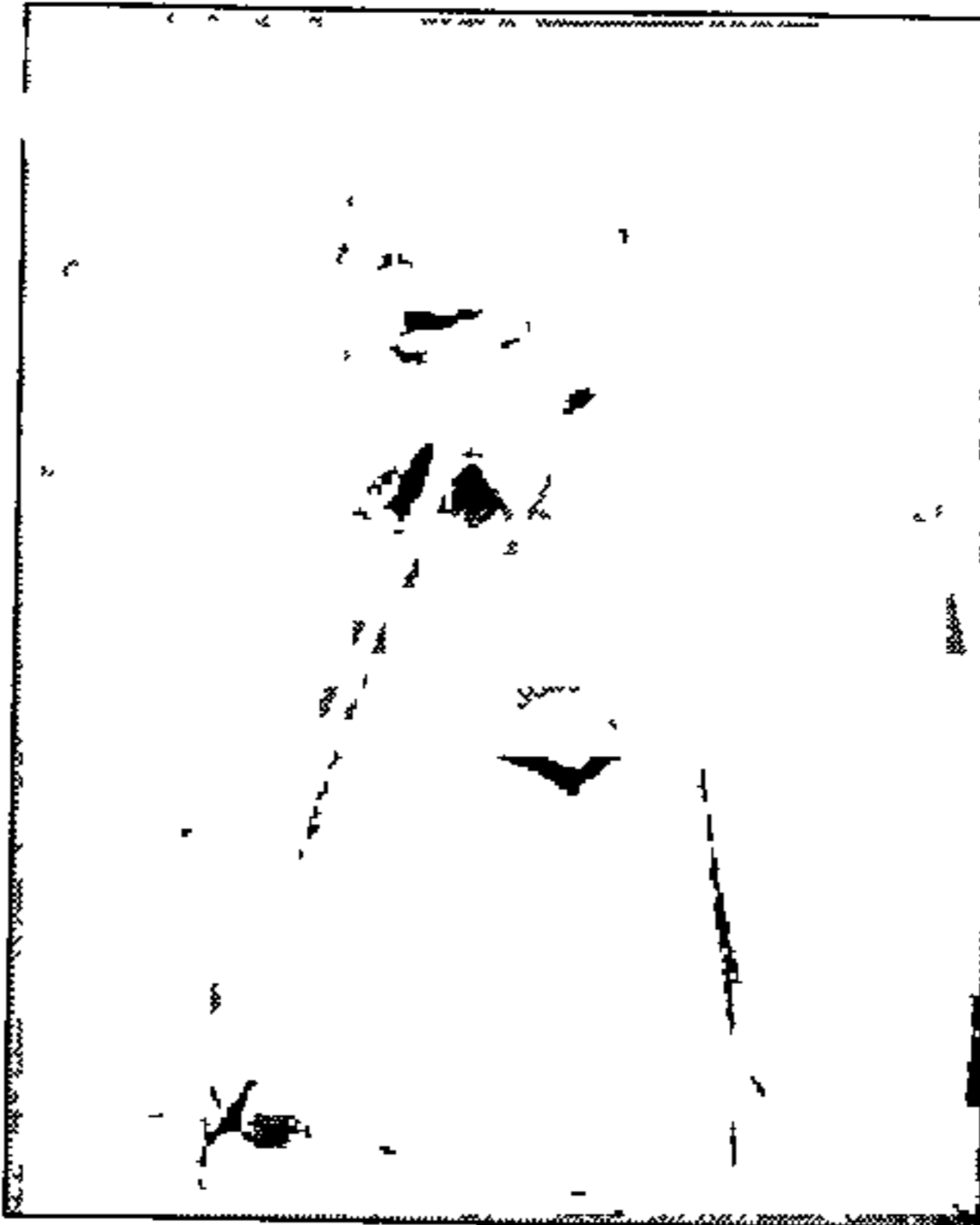
Its aim was to choose delegates in 593 local government areas to an electoral college. On March 23 the delegates will vote for local government councillors, and the councillors in turn will select local government chairs on March 25. The elections will be run again in October on a party basis.

The poll marked the start of Nigeria's long road to presidential elections and the swearing in of a civilian head of state in January 1998, as laid down by Abacha late last year.

Abacha will hope the public's positive response to this beginning of his transition programme may wrong-foot the US urging sceptical European partners into stiffer sanctions against the Nigerian military to increase the pace of democratisation.

Interviewed on television, German ambassador Johannes Lohse seemed full of praise for the government effort. "It (was a) test (for) the transition programme. We are asking the government to sustain this new zeal in bringing Nigeria back to the good old days."

The pro-democracy opposition, on the face of it, appears to have come off second best in



Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi ... resisting pressure to negotiate change.

their attempt to promote a boycott.

Their argument is that the entire transition process is void as the country had a valid presidential election in 1993, which the military annulled and jailed the winner, wealthy businessman Moshood Abiola.

Political sources say however that opposition groups, mainly based in Abiola's home region of the southwest, had given a quiet nod to candidates who had sought their approval to stand in the local government poll.

One opposition chieftain confirmed to *IPS* that the strategy was to ensure that "we do not make the mistakes of the past where we left the terrain for government apologists."

He was referring to the boycott of elections of delegates to the constitutional conference which last year drafted the country's controversial new constitution.

Last week at least three government ministers were accused by the government's own Transition Implementation Committee of interfering with candidate selection.

The opposition chieftain, however, acknowledged the inherent fears of some opposition groups that the strategy could be misconstrued as a betrayal of the Abiola cause.

"Any such misunderstandings will certainly be disastrous considering some of us still have political ambitions and cannot afford to hurt our

constituencies in the southwest," he said.

In separate advertorials published on Monday, the Human Rights Africa group and the Civil Liberties Organisation appealed directly to the Nigerian electorate not to be swayed by Abacha's transition programme.

"What happened to the votes cast in this country on June 12 1993?" the CLO asked. "Have you been given any convincing reason why that transition was aborted by the military government?"

● Nigeria could face calls for an oil embargo, the freezing of assets and banning of all new investment if Abacha refuses to meet a Commonwealth task group in the next few weeks, reports *The Times* (London).

The eight-member group was set up at the Commonwealth summit last November to persuade Nigeria to return to democracy. Punitive measures are already being considered by the US, which has circulated proposals to force Abacha to move towards democracy.

So far, however, it has been refused all access to Abacha. Next month the eight will meet again in London to see what fresh effort should be made to begin a dialogue.

International reaction

The Commonwealth warned Nigeria that if democracy is not restored within two years, it faces expulsion from the 53-nation group. Nigeria has accused the Commonwealth of double standards, denounced the suspension of its membership and angrily refused to negotiate.

Sources say the task force is nearing the time when it must decide whether it will ever obtain access to Abacha. Unofficial emissaries have been sent, warning him of the strong international reaction to his stance, but there has been no response.

The Nigerian position has, if anything, hardened since the Auckland summit. Tom Ikimi, the foreign minister who was excluded from the summit discussions, is seen as an advocate of a tough response to foreign pressure.

If the ministers are not given a chance to make their case, the Commonwealth will consider toughening the measures agreed last year.

This would include a freeze on foreign bank assets of members of the government and their collaborators, action to stop bank credits and action against the granting of export credits, a ban of the export of support equipment for the oil industry, and a partial trade embargo, including an oil embargo – *IPS-Sapa*

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Abacha empowers himself to sack 'erring' politicians

LAGOS -Nigerian military ruler Sani Abacha has given himself new powers to sack democratically-elected local government leaders if they fail to toe the line

The radio report came five days after the first round of local government elections billed by the military regime as the first phase of a three-year transition to civilian rule

The "local government election decree of 1996" empowers the military leader to remove "erring" chairmen or vice-chairmen of any local government council or dissolve the council completely

The radio did not specify the offences that could constitute "errors" for which these officials could be removed

The same decree empowers General Abacha to appoint an administrator to manage the affairs of a dissolved council pending the organisation of new elections, the radio said

Local government elections began on Saturday with the election of ward delegates who will vote in the second round of the polls tomorrow

Security will be tight

The local government chairmen to be elected on Monday in the final round of the election are expected to take office at the end of this month

The decree, which was hitherto a secret, provides for the establishment of a local government election tribunal in each of Nigeria's 30 states and in Abuja, the federal capital - Sapa-AFP

(226)

ARG 22/3/96

Abacha grants himself even wider powers

(226) STAN 22/3/96

Now democratically elected local leaders can be sacked if they don't toe the line

LAGOS
Sapa-AFP

Nigerian military ruler General Sani Abacha has given himself new powers to sack democratically-elected local government leaders if they fail to toe the line, official radio Nigeria said yesterday.

The report came five days after the first round of local government elections billed by the military regime as the first phase of a three-year transition to civilian rule.

The "local government election decree of 1996" empowers the military leader to remove "erring" chairmen or vice-chairmen of any local government council or dissolve the council completely, the radio said.

The radio did not specify the offences that could constitute "errors" for which these officials could be removed.

The same decree empowers Abacha to appoint an administrator to manage the affairs of a dissolved council pending the organisation of new elections, the radio said.

Local government elections began last Saturday with the election of ward delegates who will vote in the second round of the polls tomorrow. The local government chairmen to be elected on Monday in the final round of the election are due to take office

at the end of March. The decree which had not been mentioned before the radio reported it, provides for the establishment of a local government election tribunal in each of Nigeria's 30 states and in Abuja, the federal capital.

The tribunals will have jurisdiction to determine whether any person has been properly elected or not, the report said.

Some officials at the headquarters of the national electoral commission of Nigeria (Necon) in Abuja, contacted by AFP, claimed to know nothing about the existence of such a law.

The Necon is the agency responsible for conducting elections during the three-year transition programme put in place by the military.

The programme, being implemented in phases, is scheduled to culminate in the military handing over power, on October 1 1998, to an elected civilian president.

The opposition has denounced the entire programme and has instead called for the departure of the military and recognition of June 1993 presidential election, which millionaire politician Chief Moshood Abiola claimed to have won.

He is currently detained on charges of treason for declaring himself president on the basis of that election, declared void by the military.

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(Greek Sporting Club in Senderterday. Each woman represents
Picture: GARTH LUMLEY

Toyota and Numsa reach provisional agreement

Bonille Ngqiyaza

BD 25/3/96
rands in wages

THE National Union of Metalworkers of SA and Toyota SA have agreed on "certain issues" which could lead to the resolution of the illegal three-week strike by thousands of union members, Numsa's general secretary Enoch Godongwana said yesterday

However, there was disagreement between the parties on whether the agreement — signed on Friday night — was "formal and binding"

Toyota SA spokesman Andrew Bowren said as far as he was concerned, an agreement had been signed but "they (Numsa) always work on the basis that they have to go back to the workers"

The union maintained yesterday the strike's termination would be subject to ratification by its 6 000 members today

The strike cost Toyota "millions of rands" in lost production and union members several million

Godongwana criticised Toyota's announcement that the strike had been resolved as "irresponsible at this stage", as the parties had agreed not to deal through the media. He declined to discuss the settlement before the union had met its members

Toyota said Numsa had agreed its members would return to work "no later" than tomorrow

They agreed to implement a lost productions recovery programme over the next 10 weeks, which would pay bonuses on the achievement of production targets beyond normal production.

The parties had agreed no further payments would be made under Toyota's 1995 incentive scheme.

Toyota said the "unacceptable behaviour by a small group" of employees would be addressed through a disciplinary process under the auspices of Independent Mediation Services of SA.

ANC's stance on Africa explained

(226) BD 25/3/96

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela "burnt his fingers" by not criticising human rights violations in Nigeria for fear of upsetting "our other friends during the liberation struggle", according to Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale, in an address to Gauteng university and technikon rectors whom he asked to help with policy formulation and research.

"We didn't want to tell them about violations of human rights because we knew that our other friends during the liberation struggle — if we had criticised Nigeria — would have told us: pack up your things and go"

Sexwale said the expelled ANC was expelled twice by African coun-

tries. Kenneth Kaunda had booted them out of Zambia for criticising his government. ANC president Oliver Tambo had issued an instruction that "nobody speaks about what they see in Africa" as it would delay their return to SA.

"But now we are home, so we talk. And we tell them, human rights, social justice, economic rights, that is what we are saying. But we say them the wrong way"

"The president burnt his fingers in Nigeria because we are not told how to approach Africa"

"Africa needs a different approach, but how different? Can we get views from you?" he asked the rectors — Sapa

Taxi operator shot in arm

CAPE TOWN — Sporadic incidents of taxi violence continued on the Cape Peninsula at the weekend, police said

On Saturday Goodman Belu, 39, and an unknown passenger suffered bullet wounds to their arms when shots were fired at Belu's taxi in Khayelitsha.

Police appealed yesterday to operators to remain calm and urged those involved in the conflict to use the negotiation forums to deal with their problems.

Local transport MEC Leonard Ramatlakane claimed yesterday police were reluctant to arrest those involved in crime. However, a police spokesman said police had made a number of arrests and were playing an active role in negotiation forums. — Sapa.

Nigeria 'on verge of armed revolt'

Star 30/3/96 (226)

Nobel prize-winning Nigerian dissident Wole Soyinka warned yesterday of possible armed rebellion if Nigeria's military rulers did not set a date to cede power.

He said Nigerian opposition groups were meeting in secret this weekend to decide on a deadline for the return to civilian rule.

"It will be an outermost date for Nigerians to accept this regime," he told reporters in Johannesburg, and warned that armed rebellion could follow.

Soyinka, who won the 1986 Nobel Literature Prize, said Nigerian groups opposed to the rule of Gen. Sani Abacha would also choose a name for a new umbrella group at a meeting to be held at an undisclosed location tomorrow.

He did not specify which groups from the country's fractious internal and external opposition would attend.

The grey-haired playwright said Nigeria, which has replaced South Africa as the pariah state of the continent, faced a violent and bloody uprising if civil resistance to military rule failed.

"If we fail in the methods we are employing now, there's no way there will not be armed insurrection in Nigeria," he said.

Critics say Abacha's pledge to restore civilian rule over the next three years is too slow.

Earlier opposition deadlines for action have passed without event.

Nigeria has been in crisis since June 1993, when the army annulled a presidential election that was to end a long period of military rule and restore democracy.

Opposition groups have been divided and Soyinka, who lives abroad, conceded they remained weak within Nigeria itself.

Soyinka said the recent local elections were a sham and dismissed as irrelevant a UN mission this week to Nigeria to investigate last year's widely condemned execution of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists for the minority Ogoni tribe.

Soyinka said President Nelson Mandela, whose softly-softly approach to Nigeria failed to halt the executions, had too generous a view of human nature to deal with a leader who was far worse than the apartheid rulers Mandela had had to negotiate with at home.

"There is more humanity in the little finger of F W de Klerk than in the whole body of Abacha. I have yet to get that message across to Mandela," he said. He last met Mandela in February - Reuters

AFRICA FEATURE

UN team in Nigeria to probe hangings

(226) *Sowetan 1/4/96*

Lagos - A UNITED NATIONS fact-finding team investigating the execution of writer and human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa arrived in Nigeria last Thursday, a diplomatic source said.

The team, which has been invited by the Nigerian government, will meet government officials and representatives of human rights organisations, the source said last week.

It will also visit Ogoniland, in the southern Rivers state, the homeland of Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority activists who were executed on November 10 after being convicted of murder by a special military tribunal.

Examine laws

According to the source, the UN officials will examine the laws under which Saro-Wiwa and his companions from the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) were arrested, detained, tried, convicted and executed, and will seek to determine whether Nigeria respected international human rights conventions to which it is a party.

It will also examine the military government's three-year transition programme to bring an end to military rule.

The Commonwealth has threatened to impose further sanctions on Nigeria if it fails to return the nation to democracy in two years' time.

Nigerian officials have expressed a willingness to cooperate with the UN team, saying they have nothing to hide.

Cooperation pledge

The country's permanent representative to the UN, Agboola Gambari, met with members of the UN team in New York last Tuesday and pledged his country's cooperation, the official *News Agency of Nigeria* reported.

Saro-Wiwa and the other activists were found guilty of murdering four prominent Ogoni citizens in May 1994. The opposition said the charges were trumped up, but the junta insists the trial was fair.

The executions led to international fury. The Commonwealth suspended Nigeria from its fold while the European Union and the United States imposed

Writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight activists were executed last year

sanctions on Nigeria, including an arms embargo.

Umbrella grouping

A faction of the Campaign for Democracy, an umbrella grouping of human rights organisations, said last Wednesday it had prepared a document to present to the UN team denouncing the Nigerian government.

Entitled *We are in Chains*, the document covers the Ogoni crisis and the Nigerian regime's three-year transition programme.

The Ogoni people, who number about 500 000, live in a region where several multinational oil giants operate. Ogoni leaders have accused the companies of ruining their environment and denying them a fair share of the region's oil wealth.

The UN delegation will submit its findings to UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

● Meanwhile, an opposition group alleged last week that security agents

arrested dozens of political activists and put pro-government impostors in their places to mislead a UN team investigating Nigeria's human rights situation.

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) said those detained included village chiefs in so-called Ogoniland, an oil-rich region of southern Nigeria that is home to the country's Ogoni people.

- *Sapa-AP*

Obasanjo must not be forgotten

ALLISTER SPARKS
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

I RECEIVED a letter the other day from SA's forgotten friend, General Olusegun Obasanjo, smuggled out of the Nigerian jail where he has been rotting for nearly a year.

Obasanjo was co-chairman of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group that came here in 1985-86 to initiate the first shuttle diplomacy between the old South African government and the ANC.

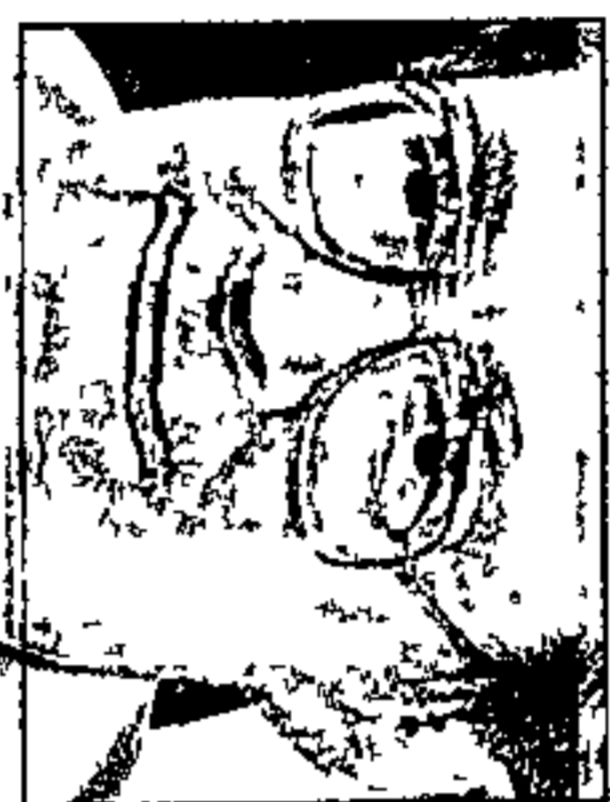
He twice visited Nelson Mandela in Pollsmoor Prison, an event Mandela later described as the turning point in his own secret talks with the government which led to our political settlement and the end of apartheid.

Now Mandela is free and it is Obasanjo who is in jail — for trying to liberate his own country from authoritarianism. It is a twist of fate that leaves us with a powerful moral obligation to play a reciprocal role and do what we can to free him.

Obasanjo is the only one of Nigeria's long line of military rulers to have handed power back to a civilian government — only to see it seized again in another military coup.

Since then he has campaigned with courageous persistence for a return to democracy, and become a symbol of the rising democracy movement in Africa.

This has made him a target of Nigeria's corrupt and arrogant military rulers. When General Sani Abacha seized power after his predecessor had annulled the latest attempt at democratic elections three years



ago, he trumped up coup charges and a secret military tribunal sentenced Obasanjo to life imprisonment — later commuted to 15 years.

Unfortunately, with the outcry over the execution of writer-activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and the imprisonment for "treason" of the winner of the 1993 election, Chief Moshhood Abiola, the Obasanjo case has been largely overlooked by the international community. He is in danger of becoming a forgotten man.

We South Africans cannot allow that to happen. This I have urged in two previous articles, which is why Obasanjo wrote to me — a simple thank-you letter, moving in its words of resolute courage, smuggled out of prison and brought to me by a personal courier. He wrote:

Just a short note from my special custody to express my thanks and appreciation for the concern and the efforts of friends like you in the south of our continent for the cause of jus-

...tice in my case. No matter what happens to me I will remain firm and faithful to the principles and ideals of peace, democracy, good governance, popular participation, transparency and the alleviation of poverty which the powers-that-be in my country, Nigeria, found too uncomfortable to live with. These are noble, enduring, lofty, challenging and inspiring principles and ideas that are worth sacrificing for. They will outlast any government and any individual.

My health is reasonably well controlled, at least for now, and with the grace of God I have joy and satisfaction in me emanating from God. My spirit is elevated, my conscience is free, my expectation from God is high and I harbour no bitterness or animosity in my heart. To be bitter is to be negative and destructive, and yet the work for Africa and particularly for my country is the work of positive construction requiring the best of character and attributes in us.

No frustration of disappointment should discourage us in working determinedly, painfully, consistently, collectively and steadily for the cause of justice until success is achieved. Injustice ignored is ignored at the peril of those who ignore. SA has shown leadership — courageous leadership in the cause of justice in Nigeria and that Africans can be counted for decency in the running of their affairs — at least some of them.

My faith is unshaken and unshakable. Please give my regards to all our friends, brothers and sisters.

After writing that letter, Obasanjo was moved from his prison in central Nigeria to one in the remote north-east, presum-



ROTTING IN JAIL: South Africa's forgotten friend, General Olusegun Obasanjo

ably to reduce even further his contacts with the outside world.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's military junta has brazenly let it be known that Obasanjo is not being treated as a political prisoner but as a common criminal with no privileges.

The last time I saw Obasanjo he was a thick-set man with a barrel chest and a

booming voice. People who saw him being moved between prisons last month reported that he was looking thin and weak. Doctors have been visiting him. His letter to me says his health "is reasonably well controlled, at least for now." That suggests he has some chronic illness.

What can SA do for this man who has done so much for us? At the very least, we must make sure he is not forgotten, for then he will surely be left to die in jail.

Our options are obviously limited because our government has been so publicly critical of the Abacha regime. Even so, there are things that can be done.

To begin with, we should seize every opportunity to raise Obasanjo's case in the forums of the world where we now have an influential voice — in the UN, the Commonwealth, at the Organisation of African Unity.

Secondly, while we may not ourselves be able to send envoys to see Obasanjo, Mandela could use his prestige to encourage other high-profile African figures to do so. People such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Graca Machel of Mozambique.

Another suggestion is that SA's three Nobel Peace laureates, Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk, should jointly nominate Obasanjo for that prestigious award.

Let us do any or all of these things, but for heaven's sake let us not forget this man. Let it never be said that South Africans laid claim to the moral conscience of the world, but when put to the test were not prepared to respond in kind.

(226) CT 1/2/96

SA cripples conference of Nigerian democratic forces

CT 1/4/96 (226)

JOHANNESBURG The opposition to the Nigerian military regime of General Sani Abacha suffered a setback at the weekend when its first conference in Africa was effectively crippled by its South African hosts

Addressed by Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian Nobel Laureate, the conference was to have been a rallying point for Nigerian pro-democracy forces, leading to the establishment of a symbolically important headquarters on African soil

The Nigerian opposition has looked to South Africa as its best friend after President Nelson Mandela's turnaround at the Commonwealth Heads of Government conference, when the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Nigerian dissidents saw Mandela abandon his conciliatory pose and lead a furious demand for sanctions

against the Abacha regime

But since then the feeling has been growing in ANC and Communist Party circles that it might be best quietly to ditch Mandela's human rights stand

The Nigerian opposition's plan to hold a large conference, and even establish its headquarters, here must have seemed like a large step in the wrong direction. South African embassies quietly refused to grant Abacha's opponents visas

The conference went ahead, but on a reduced scale and without publicity. Only Nigerians with British, American or Canadian passports were able to get into South Africa, leaving most delegates to meet at a separate conference in Norway

Soyinka and his compatriots are seeking clarification of the South African government's atti-

tude, hoping to hold it to Mandela's human rights commitment

In his speech Soyinka suggested that those who believed military dictatorship was the appropriate form of government for the world's largest black nation were betraying their "slave mentality"

His speech shows Pretoria's dilemma. It does not wish to be at odds with the rest of Africa, but if the government ditches Nigeria's democratic opposition, it could find the same rhetoric directed at the South African government

● Meanwhile, it is reported from Lagos that Abacha has sacked his army and air force chiefs in a surprise move that further shakes the unstable West African nation

The government did not say why the two men had been sacked or what had become of them — The Times, London

Nigerian strongman Abacha sacks army and air force chiefs

Lagos - Nigerian military ruler Gen Sani Abacha sacked his army and air force chiefs in a surprise move that further shakes the unstable West African nation.

According to a terse government statement issued on Saturday night, army Maj-Gen Alwali Kazir and air force Vice-Marshal Femi John Femi were replaced "effective immediately" by Maj-Gen Ishaya Bamayi and Air Commodore Nsikak Eduok.

The statement did not say why the two men had been sacked or what had become of them. It was the second time Abacha has fired his top military chiefs since he seized power in a bloodless coup in November 1993. The firings come amid a high-profile visit by a UN delegation to evaluate Nigeria's progress towards democracy.

The Guardian newspaper reported yesterday that the four-man team finally began work on Saturday after a discord with the

government over its travel itinerary.

The team had arrived on Thursday at the invitation of Abacha, who is trying to end his country's pariah status since the November executions of nine anti-government activists.

While the team is meeting with government officials in the political capital Abuja, human rights groups are threatening to boycott their meetings with the delegation if they are not allowed to do so in the commercial capital Lagos.

They are afraid they will be arrested if they are required to travel to Abuja. Abacha has jailed scores of anti-government activists and journalists during his rule.

"If they cannot concede Lagos as venue of the talks, then we will be left with no other option than to shun the entire mission," said Sina Loremuka, secretary of the Campaign for Democracy - Sapa-AP.

(226) Star 1/4/96

Chief Moshood Abiola ... the jailed opposition leader's wife Kudiratu will meet a UN team visiting Nigeria to investigate human rights.

Chief Tom Ibori ... Nigeria's foreign minister leaving a Commonwealth meeting last November after his country was suspended.

(226)

Opening the Nigerian closet

Sometan 9/4/96

LAGOS - A United Nations team investigating the human rights and political situation in Nigeria began meeting last week with opposition figures, human rights activists and non-governmental organisations.

The team is in Nigeria for two weeks to investigate the executions in November of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists as well as to examine the military regime's plans for a phased transition to civilian democratic rule.

The National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) an umbrella group for the opposition is expected to present a memorandum to the UN team. A NADECO spokesman, Chief Bola Ige, told *Supa-AFP*.

Abuses and detentions

Last Thursday the team met a delegation of human rights groups who accuse the regime of abuses including prolonged detention without trial and no right of *habeas corpus*.

NADECO and the human rights groups reject the regime's three-year transition programme under which the military will hand over power in 1998.

They insist that the regime step down immediately and recognise Chief Moshood Abiola as the legitimate winner of the June 1993 presidential election who is being held in jail for treason for declaring himself president on the basis of that election.

His most senior wife Kudiratu, is expected to meet the UN team. The government has repeatedly rejected charges of human rights abuses both at home and on the international stage.

However scores of pro-democracy and human rights activists are currently detained without trial including some for more than 18 months.

A clampdown on the opposition since the regime came to power in November 1993 has

The aftermath of Saro-Wiwa's death is still being investigated

landed prominent critics of the government and human rights activists in jail or forced them to flee the country or go underground.

Among those who fled are 1986 Nobel literature laureate Wole Soyinka, former foreign minister Bolaji Akinyemi and former army chief General Alani Akinrinade.

Some journalists, especially those working for the independent Press, are also languishing in jail while others have fled the country.

Colleagues of a Lagos-based lawyer and human rights activist, Femi Falana, allege that he is being held *incommunicado* in a prison in northern Nigeria.

Ganiat Fawehinmi, the wife of a prominent Lagos-based human rights activist Chief Gani Fawehinmi, has also complained of not being given access to her detained husband.

● Opposition pro-democracy and human rights groups said last week they planned to lobby the UN team currently in Nigeria on a fact-finding mission to air their views on the supposed transition to democracy.

Although Ige a lawyer and former civilian state governor refused to disclose the contents of the NADECO memorandum, the umbrella organisation has consistently denounced the military regime's three-year transition programme.

The Campaign for Democracy (CD) the militant wing of the opposition said that it has also prepared a document for the four-man UN team on the transition programme and the execution of Saro-Wiwa and the other campaigners.

The secretary-general of a faction of CD Sylvester Odion Akhaine said that human rights

groups in Nigeria would meet and "reconcile their positions" on various national issues which they would jointly present to the UN team.

'It is a golden opportunity we should not miss,' a human rights activist said.

Since General Sani Abacha's regime came to power, it has conducted a continual crackdown on opposition forces, most notably trying and executing Sara-Wiwa and the eight other Ogoni activists on murder charges. The government maintains the trial was free and fair.

A report on the UN mission is due to be submitted to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali after the team leaves Nigeria on April 12.

● Three people were detained in front of the Nigerian embassy in Prague, Czech Republic, last Wednesday after painting the embassy's gate and surrounding fence red, police said.

The three Czech suspects - two males and one female - were apparently protesting against last year's execution of Saro-Wiwa, police spokesman Petr Link said.

No identification

Police would only say the woman was born in 1976, and one man was born in 1975. The other male suspect carried no identification papers. Police said the three were still in custody last Wednesday after causing R750 to R1 500 damage to the embassy.

It was the second time protesters have vandalised the embassy in Prague.

Last November, large splashes of red paint were found on the embassy's facade. An anonymous caller to the official CTK news agency said the vandalism was in protest against the execution. *Supa AFP*

9/4/94

226



Nigeria's wasted oil assets

(226)

ARL 9/4/96

STEPHEN BUCKLEY of The Washington Post reports from Lagos on the deep rooted problems of Nigeria's fuel industry which makes the country one of the few oil producers which has to import fuel.

DRIVERS suffered in kilometre-long queues last month at petrol stations around Nigeria, Africa's leading petroleum producer. Fights exploded. Some patrons were trapped in line for days. One woman, after languishing at a station for hours, gave birth.

The chaos signaled another fuel shortage for Africa's most populous nation, where government mismanagement has so poisoned the petroleum industry that Nigerians must endure several such crises yearly.

The repeated shortages have become a potent symbol for what ails Nigeria, one of the few major oil-producing countries forced to import fuel.

"I could not make a living," said a taxi driver with a wife and five children. "I could not make money to feed my wife and family, and I could not make what I need to send my children to school. Why should this country have these shortages?"

Analysts say the short answer is that Nigeria's military regime has

mismanaged important aspects of the industry.

Critical pipelines remain unfinished. Fuel depots are constantly being repaired. An inefficient distribution system means some parts of the country are without fuel for days.

And at the core of the crisis lie Nigeria's four refineries, all of which were crippled last month.

The refineries - one in the north and three in the south - are crucial to the success of Nigeria's petroleum business, the West African nation's centrepiece industry. It brings in about \$12 billion a year - more than 90 percent of the country's foreign exchange - and raises some 80 percent of its government revenue.

The United States, which buys nearly 50 percent of this country's crude oil, is Nigeria's biggest customer.

Nigeria's refineries, which process products such as petrol for cars, cooking gas and motor oil, are incapacitated by a bevy of problems, including lack of spare parts,

outdated equipment and labour unrest.

Periodically, the refineries go through a maintenance overhaul that requires a plant to be shut down. Typically the overhaul should take a couple of weeks, but it often takes up to six months.

In 1993, the Warri refinery in southwest Nigeria had to shut down just two weeks after completing such an overhaul, unleashing such outrage among citizens that the government opened an official investigation. Since then the plant has still produced at only 30-4 percent capacity.

Overall the facilities, with the ability to refine 445 000 barrels of products a day, churn out less than half that, far below Nigeria's daily needs. The country uses about 280 000 barrels of petroleum products daily.

The shortfall has forced Nigeria to become increasingly dependent on imports. In some years, it has imported 40 percent of its fuel needs, and in recent months it has imported some 70 percent of its

petroleum.

At the same time, a booming petroleum-trucking industry has sprouted. Last year 50 000 tankers hauled nearly 2 million tons of fuel around Nigeria, mostly to the north.

The trucks can take days to reach the fuel-desperate outer reaches of this vast country.

"There are a lot of people who benefit from things staying exactly the way they are," an industry analyst said. "If you are an importer, why do you want the refineries to be fixed? If you own (an oil-trucking company) why do you want things to improve? For obvious reasons, you don't."

With the government-set retail petrol price at only 46 US cents a gallon, the government must buttress the petroleum industry with a \$390 million subsidy that bridges the gap between production costs and fuel-pump prices.

With the shortages and long queues at the official petrol stations, black marketers thrive. Throughout northern Nigeria, roadsides are dotted with sellers hawk-

ing fuel, sometimes for 10 times the petrol-station price.

Government officials have blamed the recent shortage on petrol dealers who hoard fuel and charge exorbitant prices during crises.

Last month the government promised to wipe out such dealers, and made several high-profile arrests.

The government is also "commercialising" the refineries, allowing private companies to operate the facilities without owning them outright.

The plan has drawn little interest, analysts said, because oil companies want to own the refineries if they are to operate them.

The solution to Nigeria's fuel crisis may require the government to take an unpopular step raising fuel prices to world market levels.

Higher prices would likely halt smuggling and allow the government to maintain refineries better and improve fuel distribution, analysts said.

UN probes Ogoni executions

(226) CT 10/4/96

PORT HARCOURT, Nigeria: A UN fact-finding team travelled into Nigeria's volatile Ogoniland yesterday with military officials saying they had nothing to hide over the execution of nine Ogoni minority rights activists

The four-man team, which is investigating human rights and progress towards democracy in the country, left for the oil-rich province after urging people there to talk freely, saying all statements would be held in confidence

Lieutenant-Colonel Dauda Komo, military governor of Rivers State, of which Ogoniland is a part, told the team on Monday that no restrictions would be imposed on its activities.

"As for Rivers State we have nothing to hide," he said, adding that they should investigate the

case very carefully

The November executions of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight fellow Ogoni activists for the murder of four prominent Ogoni chiefs turned Nigeria into an international panah

Komo accused Saro-Wiwa's Movement for the Survival of Ogoni Peoples (Mosop) of stirring up trouble in Ogoniland

"Mosop has converted Ogoniland into one giant Hollywood. The harm has been done. This country has been insulted and stigmatised in the eyes of the world," he said

The team flew into this city, the capital of Rivers State, for a three-day visit

The team urged Ogonis to talk openly when it met 14 elders and chiefs on Monday. Mr Justice V

Malomali of India, one of the four, urged Ogonis "to feel free to give useful information", saying this would be treated in confidence

Tight security surrounded the hotel where the team was staying. The Rivers State government said it would deal firmly with unrest during the team's visit

No incidents have been reported, but Ogoni minority rights activists said security forces had arrested 19 people on Sunday, a charge local authorities denied

"It's very calm. I don't think there will be any trouble," a Rivers State spokesman said

UN secretary-general Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali sent the team at the invitation of Nigeria's military government to investigate the trial and execution of the Mosop activists — Reuter

Pariah status hurts pride but not pocket

Nigeria unaffected by token sanctions

(226) CT(AR) 10/4/96

FROM THE ECONOMIST

Lagos — It takes more than cosmetic sanctions in the West to isolate Africa's largest nation and second-largest economy. While their new pariah status hits the pride of Nigeria's military rulers, their pockets are not being much hit.

The United States and the European Union tightened existing measures against Nigeria last November. This was after it was suspended from membership of the Commonwealth because of the execution, on a charge of murder, of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists from the Ogoni people of the oil-rich southeast.

The ban on visas for members of the regime hurts them. Nigerians love to travel and spend. Bans on aid and arms sales, however, have had little effect.

Aid was already tiny and declining, because the government fails to comply with the conditions of even the most tolerant of donors. The most effective sanction has been in place for more than two years: the US government's block on official credits to Nigeria as a penalty for its failure to stop drug-trafficking.

As for weaponry, the armed forces already have more than enough Western jet aircraft that they cannot fly, warships that they cannot sail and tanks that they will

never use. Bullets can be bought anywhere. And in any case, there is an exemption for Nigeria's peace-keeping forces around the world, notably its 10,000 men in Liberia.

There has been much talk of further sanctions. Bills are pending in Washington, although the United States argues that unilateral action would achieve little unless the EU followed suit. The most effective measure would be a freeze on the assets of Nigeria's top brass, held mostly in European banks or under their management in tax havens elsewhere.

Ordinary Nigerians are suffering as misrule brings down living standards. As poverty grows, so too does crime. And ever more Nigerians are trying to emigrate to Europe and the US, often in the guise of political refugees.

Yet, for all its blunders, the regime of Sani Abacha looks secure. Sanctions on Nigeria's oil — the source of nearly all its exports and most government revenue — could be devastating. But that looks unlikely. Unless it were worldwide, an oil export embargo would have limited effect. Nearly half of Nigeria's oil exports go to the US, but shipments are increas-

ing to the Far East, where governments and buyers have little interest in Nigeria's shortages of democracy or human rights.

There is little appetite for a ban on sales of oil equipment or investment in Nigeria. Companies such as Shell, Elf, Mobil and Chevron produce 2 million barrels a day. They, and some newcomers like Statoil and Exxon, are queuing up

to explore new deep-water fields. In the past few months, financing agreements for Nigeria's two biggest gas-export projects went ahead.

Meanwhile, the regime is cultivating new Eastern friends. Trade with China and Hong Kong is increasing, and ties

with North Korea are getting closer, possibly through arms deals. Iran and Russia have sent high-level delegations to the country.

There is little general isolation in Africa, despite criticisms from Nelson Mandela and others. Nigeria is still strong in the Organisation of African Unity, and it is the biggest shareholder in the African Development Bank. Nearer home it has its client states — Liberia, the Gambia and Sierra Leone — and it wields influence over such francophone neigh-

bours as Niger, Chad and Guinea. Sudan sees Nigeria's problems with the West as an opportunity to secure more influence for its own brand of Islamic fundamentalism.

The reclusive regime in Abuja complains that Western governments and media condemn military rule with little understanding of the problems, or solutions, of a country of about 100 million people and over 200 different tribes.

Yet the military rulers and their civilian courtiers seem to have no idea how to put their case to the world. Tom Ikimi, the Nigerian foreign minister, recently sent a peevish letter to Emeka Anyaoku, the Commonwealth's Nigerian secretary-general, refusing access to a multinational committee that plans to monitor Nigeria's progress until the next Commonwealth summit late next year.

Yet in the same breath he complained that Nigeria's suspension was hasty and unjustified.

The regime recently chose to admit a UN team to look into its plans for democracy, the Ogoni issue and human rights. But it has been busy keeping the UN team away from its critics for the whole of this week, a procedure likelier to earn a rebuke than a favourable report. Not that such a report would cut much ice with the US state department and other Western foreign ministries.

Unless it were worldwide, an oil export embargo would have little effect

Abacha leads the way in gagging Africa

(226) CT(BR)10/4/96

By STEPHEN BUCKLEY

Lagos — Babafemi Ojodu, the editor of Nigeria's AM News, shuttles between friends' houses because he fears security agents will arrest him at his home. He shuns parties, restaurants, all public meetings. Sometimes, when he goes out, he dons a disguise.

Ojodu's way of life is common among journalists in the country. The military regime has made throttling the press central to its campaign to suppress dissenting voices.

The regime has proscribed newspapers, arrested dozens of reporters, slapped draconian laws on the press, seized entire print runs of magazines and harassed vendors who sell opposition publications. The attacks have sliced into the incomes of many media organisations.

Some have closed, others have chopped their staffs. Reporters have gone underground.

Similar crackdowns are sweeping the continent, where many leaders believe thrashing the media will help them keep a lock on power.

Last month, the editor and publisher of Zambia's main opposition newspaper were arrested.

In the Ivory Coast last year, President Henri Bedie had three journalists arrested and sentenced

to two years in prison. They were accused of insulting him.

In Cameroon last year, the government arrested four journalists, confiscated copies of independent publications and temporarily banned others.

Countries, such as Tanzania, Kenya and Gambia, are either considering or have passed laws that curb media freedom. Most of the laws appear to be based on similar legislation in Nigeria.

Media analysts say the movement to restrict press freedom is disturbing because the nations involved have either adopted multi-party politics in recent years or say they are in transition to democracy.

"The leaders in countries with new multi-party systems know democracy requires a free press, but that doesn't mean they like it," said Richard Carver, who follows media issues in east Africa for the London-based International Centre Against Censorship. "Some leaders can't accept criticism, they take it very personally."

In most of sub-Saharan Africa, independent media outlets are a relatively new phenomenon. It has accompanied the rise of multi-party politics on the continent.

Nigeria is different. Its first independent newspaper was published in 1893. Until last decade, the nation's opposition press enjoyed freedoms envied by most journalists on the continent.

Nigeria's newspapers and magazines are bold and brash. They attack General Sani Abacha relentlessly. They lambaste failed government policies without mercy, and are unabashedly cynical about promises to move Nigeria to democracy by October 1998.

Abacha's regime increasingly has taken exception. Government officials frequently blast the independent media, accusing publications of

being unpatriotic and irresponsible. They have said that measures against the media are meant to compel publications to be more fair and accurate.

In 1994, the government closed three publishing houses for 14 months. This move effectively shut 20 publications. Security agents have arrested more than 40 journalists, detaining some for a few hours, others for several days.

Last year, four journalists were arrested and eventually sentenced to 15 years each in jail for allegedly

participating in a plot to overthrow the regime.

Security forces routinely trail reporters. Some journalists believe their phones are tapped.

The regime has also revived a law that forces publications to provide the government with the locations of their printing presses, as well as reporters' and editors' home addresses.

"The intent is obvious," said Babatunda Olugboji of the Constitutional Rights Project, a human rights group in Lagos.

"If they know where the reporters and editors are, it is easier to arrest them."

Ojodu goes to great lengths to avoid that. He rarely sees friends. If he drives, his eyes are glued to his rear-view mirror. He never takes the same route twice.

He also has stopped working at the office. He and other editors at AM News must meet at different homes to plan their publication. They also frequently change their printing sites in Lagos, the base for most of the independent press.

He said his wife is weary of their stressful lifestyle and asks "How long can we do this?"

"The problem is that if I left journalism now, it would be a waste of all the things we've done over the years," Ojodu said. "This is what I know. I don't want to give up." — The Washington Post

The regime has proscribed newspapers and slapped draconian laws on the press

Swazis protest for democracy

Mbabane - About 100 pro-democracy protesters marched on government offices yesterday, defying a 23-year-old ban on political activity in Swaziland.

Prime Minister Mbilini Dlamini on Thursday banned two rallies organised by the umbrella opposition Swaziland Democratic Alliance to mark the anniversary of an April 12 1973 state of emergency banning political parties. Dlamini had threatened to use troops to "enforce the law".

Simon Noge, executive officer of the Human Rights Association of Swaziland, said about 3 000 people would converge on parliament today in the hope of hearing that their demand for the repeal of democracy restrictions had been accepted - AFP

Diamond that enriched Free State miner set to fetch millions at auction

London - A diamond discovered more than 100 years ago by a young Free State mineworker is expected to fetch more than R12-million on auction next month.

The diamond, its history dating back to the pioneering days of the South African diamond industry, has lain in an American vault for nearly a century. It was placed there by its owner, whose identity remains a secret.

For the sweaty, tired miner, about to finish a shift at Jagersfontein mine in the Free State on a June evening in 1893, it was the find of the century. In his shovel, among the dirt and the grit, lay what at that time was the world's largest uncut diamond - all 995 carats of it.

Mine records recall that the worker did not do what he was supposed to do - hand it over to his supervisor. He had heard

many tales of miners cheated out of their rewards for finding and handing over diamonds. Without a word to anyone, he hid it among his belongings and waited for the right moment to claim his reward.

He managed to smuggle the diamond out of the work area and demanded to see the mine manager. When he produced the rock, he was handsomely rewarded, paid the equivalent of R3 000 - which for a black worker at that time was an enormous amount - and given a horse, complete with saddle and bridle.

History does not record what happened to him, but the diamond enjoyed celebrity status. In 1903 it was cut into 21 gems, the largest of which was the 69.68 carat brilliant white, pear-shaped Excelsior 1. It is this, the big brother of the family, that will be auctioned in Geneva next month.

Nigerian pledge on civilian rule

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Abuja - Nigerian military ruler Sani Abacha yesterday assured the international community that his regime is irrevocably committed to returning to democratic rule within the three-year timetable set out in the transition programme.

Abacha told a United Nations fact-finding team that his regime had no intention whatsoever to perpetuate itself in power as alleged by the opposition and pro-democracy groups, adding that the three-year timetable was to enable the regime to avoid past pitfalls and lay a good foundation for an enduring democracy.

"We have decided not to look back and we shall not waver in the faithful implementation of our transition programme," he added - Sapa-DPA

Star 13/4/96

How bodies rot in the 'nation without a soul'

(226) Atar 18/4/96

Lagos - Twice a week a mortuary van arrives at Atan municipal cemetery in central Lagos and dumps a heap of unidentified bodies collected from morgues and hospitals round this sprawling metropolis

The bodies are piled up and left on the ground to be picked at by rats and crows. They often stay unattended to for several days before being finally shovelled into a mass grave.

The horror of this macabre disposal process was brought to the attention of the public this week by a series of articles in the press which said it reflected the "moral bankruptcy" of modern Nigerian society.

The independent daily AM News was first to raise the matter with a front page photograph taken at Atan showing the piles of bodies. "A nation without a soul" was the legend under the photograph.

The rest of the Nigerian press was quick to follow up and the Concord newspaper spoke of the "horror" of the scenes in the cemetery, which is one of the oldest in Lagos.

Newspapers pointed out that the affair had come to light just when a team mandated by the United Nations was in Nigeria to investigate the human rights situation in the country.

The cemetery lies near the Roman Catholic church of Saint Dominique, one of the city's richest parishes and is also close to the University of Lagos. It is surrounded by a breeze-block wall topped by broken glass.

Part of the cemetery is given over to rich marble tombs set amid trees and shrubs. That is reserved for the affluent. Here, tombs cost up to 11,000 naira (R650) and concessions are for ever.

Further down the scale come the (R100) graves for the middle

classes and then the "ordinary" graves sold for 300 naira (about R17).

Then right at the bottom are the dead whose bodies have not been claimed by relatives or friends and whose names and religions are unknown.

It is these people taken from the various city hospitals, whose bodies are heaped by the dozen on a stretch of ground reserved for them at the far end of the cemetery bordering on Barikisu Lyede road in the working class district of Yaba.

The consignments arrive on Tuesdays and Thursdays, a cemetery official told AFP, angry at all the fuss being made about his workplace.

Smell obliges people near dump to keep their windows firmly closed

Between 300 and 400 bodies are dumped at the site each week by municipal workers and the deliveries have been going on for years, local people said. The employees wear gloves and use masks to cover their noses and mouths to keep out the stink.

A fetid smell hangs over the whole area while the bodies are left outside, obliging people living nearby to keep their windows and doors shut. Few people walk along the cemetery boundary and pedestrians hurriedly cross the road and avoid breathing in the obnoxious smell.

The Dominican friars who run Saint Dominique's church told AFP that until reading about it in the press, they had never known of the body dumping. - Sapa-AFP

Foreign Affairs backpeddles over

(22b)

South Africa's about-face on Nigeria brings it more into line with the approach of other African countries, reports **Stefaans Brümmer**

FAR from Nelson Mandela's trailblazing call last year for sanctions against Nigeria, South Africa was trying this week to pull the teeth from a United Nations resolution which slams the West African country's human rights record

The Department of Foreign Affairs acknowledges it is withholding support for the resolution until it is watered down, but argues that this is the best strategy to get consensus among African, Asian and Latin-American countries — which will increase the chances of the European Union-sponsored resolution being adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Commission, which is meeting for its annual session in Geneva.

Said Jackie Selebi, South Africa's ambassador to the UN mission in Geneva: "We have taken the view that we should make a contribution to a position where African countries can for the first time get consensus on an issue that involves [Nigeria]."

This is a far cry from Mandela's adventurous call for oil sanctions against Nigeria immediately after the hanging last November of minority rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa. His stance was lauded — though not heeded — by many in the West, but African countries made it clear they were not amused by what they saw as Mandela's disregard for African solidarity. South Africa's position in Geneva appears to be final confirmation that Foreign Affairs has gone with the African concern, and will no longer act alone.

Negotiations to water down the resolution coincide with a visit by Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo to London for a meeting this weekend of the Commonwealth "Committee of Eight". The committee, of which Nzo is a member, was established by the Commonwealth at its annual heads of state meeting in New Zealand last November to look at human rights abuses in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Gambia.

Part of the committee's mandate was to visit Nigeria on a fact-finding mission, but so far Nigerian dictator General Sani Abacha has refused them entry on the grounds that it interferes with his country's sovereignty. The London meeting is likely to have to decide on a response to that rebuff.

Ironically, the part of the EU resolu-

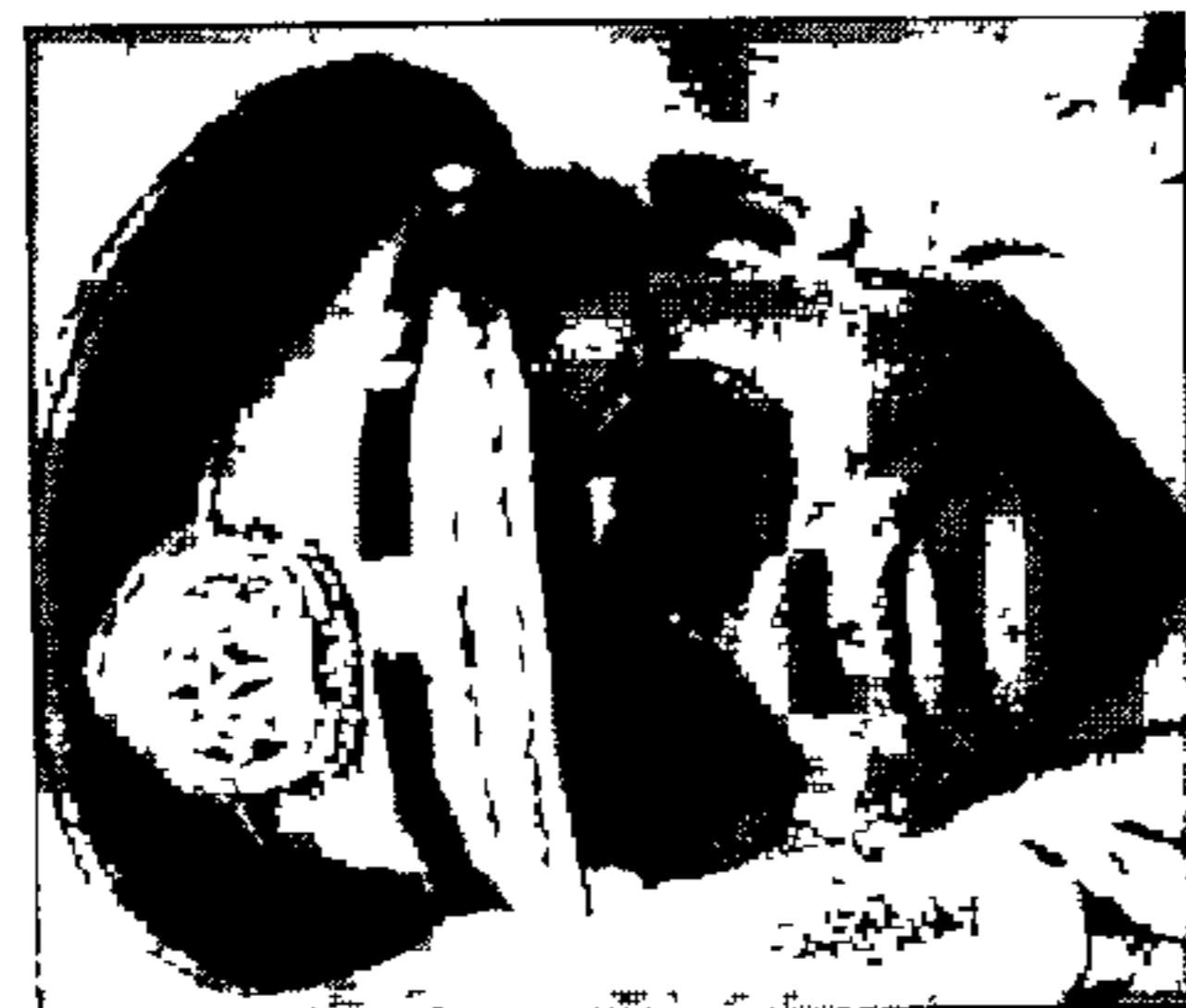
tion South Africa wants removed has the same theme another world probe into Nigeria's human rights situation.

A draft version of the resolution which the EU wants the plenary session of the UN Human Rights Commission to endorse says, among other things, that it is "deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Nigeria". It calls for a range of human rights to be guaranteed and for Nigeria to take "immediate and concrete steps to restore democratic government". It also calls for the appointment of a UN special rapporteur to "examine the human rights situation in Nigeria" and to report to the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Commission.

Selebi said this week African countries believed sending a special rapporteur to Nigeria would be "an overdose" at a time when the Commonwealth mission was pending, while UN Secre-

try likes a special rapporteur," he said. A special rapporteur is seen as having very wide powers and as being "difficult to remove from the agenda". Selebi said EU negotiators had given South Africa a broad outline of the resolution some weeks ago and asked for support, but did not present a full draft version. A copy of the draft was later "smuggled" to him. "We looked at it, and consulted our colleagues from Africa. It was clear there would be no support for it unless at least a number of African governments could identify with it.

"If that happened, some Asian and Latin-American countries would support it, which will increase its chances of succeeding. As it is, it won't succeed with the special rapporteur."



Sani Abacha: The Commonwealth this weekend deals with his rebuff

etary General Boutros-Ghali had his own "goodwill mission" in Nigeria this month, and while Nigeria itself has said it will consider accepting UN "thematic rapporteurs" who will report to the UN on specific issues, such as torture or freedom of speech.

"African countries don't like a special rapporteur, in fact not any coun-

try likes a special rapporteur," he said. A special rapporteur is seen as having very wide powers and as being "difficult to remove from the agenda". Selebi said EU negotiators had given South Africa a broad outline of the resolution some weeks ago and asked for support, but did not present a full draft version. A copy of the draft was later "smuggled" to him. "We looked at it, and consulted our colleagues from Africa. It was clear there would be no support for it unless at least a number of African governments could identify with it.

"If that happened, some Asian and Latin-American countries would support it, which will increase its chances of succeeding. As it is, it won't succeed with the special rapporteur."

Selebi pointed out that a "weaker" resolution on Nigeria adopted by the UN last December was co-sponsored by only four African countries, including South Africa.

A Foreign Affairs source said this week South Africa's regional partners in the Southern African Development Community had made it clear at the

body's pre-Christmas summit that South Africa "had to do things on a regional basis". That the criticism was taken to heart — and that it became a strong theme in foreign policy — appears from the fact that South Africa, and Mandela, fell silent on Nigeria this year. Earlier this month there were allegations that South Africa had tried to discourage a meeting of Nigerian opposition groups in the country, inter alia by not issuing visas timeously.

In other matters concerning individual countries — such as the crisis in Swaziland, where pro-democracy and labour groups have asked for South African help — Foreign Affairs has also said repeatedly it would only act in conjunction with its regional partners.

Raks Seakhoa, chair of the South Africa-Nigeria Democracy Support Group, said: "We want to ensure every pressure is applied, including that of rapporteur. While we understand you have to pull the slower soldier with you, we will not be happy if that does not succeed and we as a country are seen as folding our arms."

While we understand you have to pull the slower soldier with you, we will not be happy if that does not succeed and we as a country are seen as folding our arms."

Nigeria
 M+G 19-25/4/96

16 generals retired in big Nigerian Army shake-up

Lagos - Sixteen generals have been retired in a major shake-up of the Nigerian Army

Among them was the commander of the mechanised division in Kaduna, northern Nigeria, Brigadier-General Ahmed Abdullahi, and the principal staff officer in the presidency, Major-General Ishaya Bakut, the Vanguard newspaper said yesterday

Also retired was the first woman two-star general, Major-General Aderonke Kale, who was director of the army medical services

It said the retirements took effect on April 15. The paper quoted an unnamed Defence Ministry source as saying the retirements were "part of the reorganisation of the Nigerian Army"

The newspaper said that apart from the generals, many other lower-ranking officers had been retired

It is the second major shake-up of the army since military ruler General Sani Abacha took power in 1993 in the aftermath of anarchy after the annulment of a presidential election. - Reuters

■ See Page 5

(226)

Star 20/4/96

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New urgency for probe into Nigerian human rights

By AMMA OGAN

The detention of 16 members of the Ogoni youth wing hot on the heels of the departure of a UN delegation to Nigeria to investigate the execution of nine Ogoni leaders has added a note of urgency to current moves at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva to muster consensus support for a resolution demanding the appointment of rapporteurs to examine specific human rights violations in that country

Speaking in Lagos yesterday, Ayo Obe, president of the Civil Liberties Organisation of Nigeria, said "The manner in which people were arrested, particularly in Rivers State, after making their submissions to the UN delegation, shows that, if you do not have a rapporteur, the government can just put on a fine face for the day. The 16 were part of the protest that was held before the UN delegation in Port Harcourt (capital of Rivers State). We are trying to get

(226) STAN 20/4/96
resources together so that we can bring an application for their release"

In Geneva, ambassador Jackie Selebi at the permanent mission of South Africa to the UN dismissed claims that SA had withdrawn from sponsoring a resolution calling for an examination of violations of human rights in Nigeria

Selebi said the final wording for a draft resolution was still being negotiated between European Union members and the African group

An initial draft presented by the EU had met with disagreement from the Africans on a single clause and the two groups had until Wednesday to work at producing a consensus resolution

"There is no withdrawal here. In the course of our work here, different delegates come up with draft resolutions which are then discussed. South Africa is no banana republic.

"Any country that comes to us with a draft resolution must expect us to have our own views on it."

According to Selebi, the African group was unhappy with the clause in the EU draft that called for "a special rapporteur to examine the human rights situation in Nigeria", because they favoured a clause that would want "two thematic special rapporteurs to visit Nigeria". The difference, Selebi stressed, was that the African group wanted the rapporteurs charged with examining the judicial processes and the incidence of extra-judicial summary and arbitrary execution

The operative clause in the African draft resolution "calls on the government of Nigeria to accede to the request of the two thematic special rapporteurs to visit Nigeria, in order to enable them to report to the 53rd session of the Commission on Human Rights"

The EU draft, Selebi stressed, called for broad general rapporteurs. There was already consensus among the 25 African members of the commission and those outside it

AFRICAN BUSINESS

Nigeria to cash in on its minerals

(22b) BD 22/4/96

LAGOS — For years, Nigeria has depended heavily on oil, source of more than 90% of its export earnings, but it now aims to cash in on hitherto neglected minerals.

Increasing their contribution to the economy is the thrust of a new strategy announced by the solid minerals development ministry.

The ministry stated in a recent document on the strategy that "it is intended the mineral sector's contribution should rise within the next few years to a level comparable to that of the oil sector", which earns between \$8bn and \$10bn in annual export income.

An "annotation of minerals discovered so far shows that Nigeria has more than 32 diverse and commercially viable solid minerals", the document said.

These include gold, found in at least nine of the 30 states of the Nigerian federation. Another expected money-spinner is coal, present in almost half of the states, with deposits estimated at more than 2,75-billion tons.

Reserves of kaolin, limestone and salt also run into billions of tons.

That minerals other than petroleum abound in Nigeria is not news. What is new is that the government is now trying to encourage and, at the same time, regulate their exploitation.

Oil boom

Before petroleum mining started in 1958, coal, tin and columbite were among Nigeria's leading exports. However, when the oil boom started in the mid-1970s, other exports were relegated.

Coal is a case in point. By the late 1970s, production had fallen to only 10% of the 905,397 tons recorded in 1959, which was a peak year

for the industry.

This was due to "a limited domestic market, non-availability of coal-export infrastructure and losses recorded through use of obsolete mining equipment," said Nigerian Coal Corporation MD Greg Iwu.

As successive governments neglected the non-oil sector, illegal miners stepped in, as in the northern state of Bauchi, which has huge deposits of kaolin and gypsum.

Bombers

Today "there are more than 10,000 people working in various fields, using primitive tools to mine kaolin and gypsum at a token fee of 40 naira (50 US cents) per head," says Yerimah Giade, who is in charge of trade and industries in Bauchi.

In the central states around the federal capital, Abuja, the going mineral is columbite, which is used to manufacture stealth bombers, among other things.

A US citizen who said he was involved in mining and exporting columbite from the central region said illegal miners who extracted the mineral using crude implements sold it at about \$70 a jute bag.

He said that he sometimes exported up to 20 tons of columbite a year, "but in recent times, the business has not been as lucrative as it used to be because a lot of people are rushing into it".

Serious efforts to streamline and regulate

mining activities here began with the creation of the solid minerals ministry early last year.

Then, in August last year, the government promulgated two decrees aimed at encouraging investors in mining and other sectors.

The Nigerian investment promotion decree and the foreign exchange (miscellaneous and monitoring provisions) decree allow for 100% foreign ownership and the unhindered repatriation of profits.

A month later, Solid Minerals Development Minister Koloma Ali set up a committee, whose task was to work out a detailed investment policy and incentives for investors in the non-oil mining sector.

These included accelerated processing and issuance of mining licences, capitalisation of expenditure on surveys and mining operations, deferred royalty payments, as well as tax holidays of three to five years.

Since then, local and foreign business interests have shown a strong interest in investing in the mining sector, Ali said.

"In fact, Israel requires 11-million to 15-million tons of our coal yearly," the minister said.

However, the international outcry that followed the execution of nine minority rights activists in October last year has delayed some joint ventures which were already under

preparation.

Last year, the New Nigerian Development Company and the Gypsum Company of SA concluded plans to cooperate in the mining of gypsum.

Then came a diplomatic face-off between Pretoria and Abuja over the executions.

"The South African team, which was scheduled to visit Nigeria last November for further work on the project, suspended its visit to await further developments in bilateral relations," said Adamu Ahyu, MD of the Nigerian firm.

Setback

Other plans were also put on hold and Nigeria-SA Chamber of Commerce head Stephen Akinwale has said that "Nigeria will lose about \$1bn in investment funds following the withdrawal of 30 South African firms from the solid minerals sector".

However, this may be just a temporary setback, especially since the World Bank has taken an interest in developments in the non-oil mining sector.

Last week, the bank's country manager for Nigeria, Isaac Sam, paid a visit to Koloma Ali to commend him, he said, for "the very strong signals" which were coming from his ministry — Sapa-IPS.

Nigerian military government (226) CT 22/4/96 dethrones Muslim leader

LAGOS: Nigeria's military rulers have dethroned the powerful spiritual leader of the country's Muslims, Sultan Ibrahim Dasuki, and could put him on trial for alleged financial offences, state radio has reported.

Dasuki, 72, was removed from office on Saturday as the Sultan of Sokoto in north-west Nigeria after he was arrested and flown to Adamawa state in the north-east, local newspapers reported.

Official Rima Radio said a dusk-to-dawn curfew had been imposed on Sokoto to prevent any unrest.

Telephone calls to Sokoto went unanswered yesterday.

Sokoto's military administrator, Colonel Yakubu Muazu, said Dasuki was removed for lack of respect for constitutional authority and was

found to have engaged in subversive activities against the government.

"He stated that Dasuki might be appearing before the failed banks tribunal, adding that it will be embarrassing for the government to arraign a personality like the Sultan before the tribunal," the radio reported.

Diplomats said Dasuki's fall was not unexpected as his relationship with military ruler General Sani Abacha is frosty.

His son, retired Colonel Sambo Dasuki, who is in exile, is wanted for an alleged plot to topple Abacha last year for which many people, including a former ruler, were jailed.

In all, eight reasons were given by Muazu for the removal of the sultan, including travelling without permission and misusing money sent by for-

eign donors for mosques and schools.

Dasuki is facing investigation by a tribunal looking into failed banks.

A millionaire businessman, he has been chairman or director of many companies. Two such firms are alleged to be owing the failed Alpha Merchant Bank 775 million naira (about R38m).

Dasuki, a banker as well as an Islamic scholar, became sultan in 1988 in a controversial appointment in which many analysts saw the hand of the previous military government.

Many local people protested that Muhammed Maccido, the son of the former sultan, should have been appointed instead.

Around half of Nigeria's 100 million people are Muslims including Abacha — Reuter

Renegade Nigeria to face sanctions

(226)

MD 24/4/96

But measures watered down by UK

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LONDON - Commonwealth ministers have agreed on a package of sanctions designed to push renegade Nigeria toward democracy but had to water down the measures after Britain suddenly had second thoughts

The eight-nation Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) yesterday initially decided to impose a ban on air links and to freeze the assets of Nigerian leaders abroad

But the British delegation, led by Foreign Minister Malcolm Rifkind, then began to argue that measures such as these should only be adopted after consultations with the European Union and the United States in order to make the steps more effective

Debate continued for several hours beyond the scheduled end of the talks before a compromise was agreed on British terms.

"The final document was signed with considerable disappointment," said an official at the day-long talks.

CMAG decided on sanctions after Nigeria - suspended from the Commonwealth last year for executing nine human rights activists - barred a

CMAG fact-finding group in January

The package of non-binding measures included imposing an embargo on arms exports, a ban on sporting links, cutting down diplomatic missions, visa restrictions on Nigerian leaders and ending military training

"We hope that Nigeria will take this as a message from the Commonwealth to take on the issues," said Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Stan Mudenge.

He said the sanctions would start in a month's time

But whether Nigeria wants to talk is another matter Lagos has said it does not regard the CMAG as the right Commonwealth body to deal with

The execution of the nine activists, including Ken Saro-Wiwa, who led an environmental campaign against Nigeria's lifeblood oil industry, sparked world outrage

But CMAG did not discuss an oil embargo, seen as the only measure which could cripple Nigeria

"We are really trying to target members of the regime We are not trying to harm 100 million people," said New Zealand's Don McKinnon - Reuter

Commonwealth debates

tougher Nigerian sanctions (22b) BD 24/4/96

LONDON — As Commonwealth foreign ministers debated tougher sanctions against Nigeria yesterday, the Abuja military regime renewed pleas for lifting of its suspension from the organisation for human rights abuse.

The Commonwealth ministerial action group — Britain, Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia, New Zealand, SA and Zimbabwe — is meeting on ways to effect political and rights improvements in Nigeria.

The Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, suspended Nigeria last November after the military government executed nine Ogoni minority rights activists, including writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, on murder convictions.

Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi, in a letter to Commonwealth secretary-general Emeka Anyaoku, himself a Nigerian, urged the suspension be lifted "to overcome the obstacle to dialogue between Nigeria and the Commonwealth".

"It has come to our attention that some influential members of the Commonwealth have set their minds to take punitive actions against Nigeria regardless of whatever developments occur in our country," said Ikimi's letter.

"It is important that the Commonwealth should not allow itself or its agencies to be used to achieve the designs of these states. Otherwise we run the risk of gambling with the Commonwealth and jeopardising its existence," Ikimi said.

The letter, dated April 21, was in response to Anyaoku's request that the Commonwealth ministerial action group be permitted to go to Nigeria, which has opposed such a visit since its suspension.

Diplomats said Nigeria had done nothing to improve its political and human rights records since Commonwealth leaders set up the action group last November to restore democracy and constitutional rule there — Saps-AFP



SA Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo reads over papers during a meeting yesterday of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, at Marlborough House in London. The Commonwealth ministers met to consider possible action against Nigeria following the military junta's refusal to allow a delegation to visit Lagos in January to discuss human rights and moves towards democracy

Picture AP

Nigeria gets a low-key ⁽²²⁶⁾ rebuke ^{sowetan 25/4/96}

Commonwealth ministers' clear-cut message to military regime

LONDON - COMMONWEALTH foreign ministers, meeting in London, agreed early yesterday on a series of low-key sanctions against the Nigerian military regime, including an arms embargo

But they stopped short of threatening, or enacting Nigeria's expulsion from the 53-nation organisation that groups Britain and its former colonies. Nigeria's membership was suspended at the Commonwealth summit last November.

In protest at Nigeria's refusal to improve its political and human rights records, Commonwealth leaders set up an action group last November designed to restore democracy in the leading African state.

Protracted negotiations

After protracted negotiations, ministers early on Wednesday overcame their divisions and agreed to formally caution the regime of General Sani Abacha.

Britain's foreign secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, was present at the London meeting, also attended by his colleagues from Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The members of the so-called Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group agreed to impose visa restrictions on

members of the Nigerian regime and their families, and the withdrawal of military attaches from member countries.

They also voted for a cessation of military training facilities for Nigeria and imposed an arms export embargo.

Commonwealth countries would in future deny educational facilities to members of the Nigerian regime and their families, downgrade cultural links as well as diplomatic missions.

There would, furthermore, be an immediate visa-based ban on all sporting contacts.

But the group put on hold a ban of all air links with Nigeria and decided not to include an oil embargo, measures to which Britain is strongly opposed.

British officials at the meeting said privately that many Commonwealth members with poor human rights records were themselves reluctant to move too strongly against Nigeria for fear that they might face similar censure.

Don McKinnon, New Zealand foreign minister and vice-chairman of the Commonwealth Action Group, said after the meeting "We realise an oil embargo was totally impractical."

"We are trying to target members of the regime and not hurt 100 million Nigerians. What has been produced is a clear-cut message to the Nigerian regime," he added. - Sapa-DPA

Nigeria 'cautioned' by Commonwealth

(226) CT 25/4/96

LONDON: Commonwealth foreign ministers, meeting in London, agreed yesterday on a series of low-key sanctions against the Nigerian military regime, including an arms embargo.

They stopped short of threatening to expel Nigeria from the 53-nation organisation. Nigeria's membership was suspended at the Commonwealth summit last November.

In protest against Nigeria's refusal to improve its political and human rights records, Commonwealth leaders set up an action group last November designed to restore democracy in Nigeria.

After protracted negotiations, ministers yesterday agreed to caution formally the regime of General Sani Abacha.

Britain's Foreign Secretary Mr Malcolm Rifkind was present at the meeting, attended also by his colleagues from Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

The action group agreed to impose visa restrictions on members of the regime and their families, and the withdrawal of military attaches from member countries. There is also an immediate visa-based ban on all sporting contacts.

But they did not sever air links, nor institute an oil embargo, measures to which Britain is strongly opposed.

British officials said privately that many Commonwealth members with poor human rights records were themselves reluctant to move too strongly against Nigeria, for fear that they might face similar censure.

"We realise an oil embargo was totally impractical," New Zealand's Foreign Minister, Mr Don McKinnon, said.

"We are trying to target members of the regime and not hurt 100 million Nigerians. What has been produced is a clear-cut message to the Nigerian regime." — Sapa-DPA

Nigerian sanctions 'meaningless'

(22b) CJ(BR) 25/4/96

By JONATHAN THATCHER

London — The threat of Commonwealth sanctions against Nigeria is virtually meaningless unless the group banned oil exports and that looked very unlikely, analysts said yesterday.

"They are trying to punish the military leaders. It's a political statement. It certainly won't affect the economy," said Parvoleta Shtereva, an ING Barings analyst.

Sanctions have been proposed by Commonwealth ministers meeting in London. Their effect has been diluted by Britain's insistence they be adopted only after consultation with the United States and the European Union.

The proposed sanctions are part of an effort to push the military leadership towards more democracy. They would include an embargo on arms exports, visa restrictions on Nigerian leaders and a ban on all sporting links.

Nigeria's military government has been isolated internationally since last year's execution of human rights activists.

But the economy has plodded along with the help of higher prices for oil, on which the economy depends.

Despite a diplomatic quarantine and a dull economy, Nigerian bond prices have been one of the best performers in emerging markets.

The price of Nigerian Brady bonds have risen about 20 percent since the November execution of the activists.

The bonds were issued four years ago and were guaranteed by the United States as part of a deal with foreign banks to settle old debt.

They rose largely on the back of higher oil prices and a perception that Nigeria would not default on them.

There is widespread belief in



DITHERING Alfred Nzo, South Africa's foreign minister, reads over papers during a meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group at Marlborough House in London this week. The ministers met to consider possible action against Nigeria. PHOTO AP

the market that many of the bonds are in the hands of leading Nigerians who would be unlikely to stop paying themselves.

"The only serious threat to the regime — the possibility of an oil embargo by the US and European Union — is very unlikely to be implemented unless there are further significant human rights abuses," said Andrew Kenningham, an emerging markets economist at Merrill Lynch in London.

Nigerian bonds are one of the few ways to invest in the country. Analysts doubted that their prices would head much higher in the current environment.

"My sense is that they are starting to do slightly better. Fiscal discipline has improved a

lot," said Peter Worthington, a JP Morgan analyst, though he observed that Nigerian statistics were unreliable.

It was proving hard to attract foreign investors and questions have been raised whether Nigeria would be able to increase the output of oil and gas.

Analysts said Nigeria's chances of securing an early agreement with the IMF were virtually nil while it continued with such contentious policies as interest rate caps.

Even if the IMF did want to lend Nigeria money, some of its board members would come under public pressure to oppose any deal with the regime, the analysts said — Reuter.

ABACHA SHOWS CONTEMPT FOR 'TOOTHLESS THREATS'

Nigeria poll 'ploy' disappoints

NIGERIAN military leader General Abacha about to be elected president in the 2000 general election will be greeted by the international community with a mixture of contempt and indifference, according to a report by the British newspaper the *Financial Times*. Editor **COLIN LEGUM**

THE Commonwealth and the Organisation of African Unity (between them representing about 100 nations) have reacted negatively to the Nigerian military leader's ploy to defuse opposition at home and to ward off further sanctions.

The US, in fact, has taken the initiative in persuading Britain and the rest of the European Union to accept a new package of measures to increase pressure on the Abacha regime. These include a sports boycott, a limited measure of trade sanctions and strengthening the arms embargo.

Britain was the first to refuse to accept the US proposals, saying that only an oil embargo could be effective — a measure that neither the British nor the US governments are willing to consider. The two countries are Nigeria's biggest trad-

ing partners. This difference between the British and Americans has played into Abacha's hands enabling him to reassure Nigerians that they have nothing to fear from threats of economic pressures.

When the Commonwealth earlier this year suspended Nigeria from membership after the execution of Kenneth Saro-Wiwa and nine of his political supporters, the decision was seen as only the first step to pressurise the Nigerian regime.

But without strong measures to back up the suspension it has remained a toothless threat which has enabled Abacha to show his contempt for the Commonwealth by refusing to agree to a visit by a top-level delegation (including South Africa) to investigate the situation and conduct a dialogue with him.

Because the OAU backs the Commonwealth proposal, Abacha has also defied it. The European Union, too, proposed sending a high-level delegation of its own, but this was also refused.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku, himself a Nigerian, has been left in the humiliating position of being unable to implement his organisation's decision, while Abacha follows his own agenda.

It is a situation that, time and again, has pointed up the mistake of making symbolic threats with no purposeful intention to back them up.

Meanwhile, former head of state, General Olusegun Obasanjo, and the winner of the presidential elections two years ago, Chief Abiola, as well as 17 other accused convicted in a secret trial, remain in prison.

Human Rights and other opposition leaders continue to be arrested and detained routinely.

Political parties remain banned. In the recent local government elections, candidates had to stand without party affiliations. The elections also pointed up the

splits within the opposition movement. Some advocated a boycott of the polls, saying it was merely a propaganda exercise, others insisted that simply restoring the right to vote should be grabbed with both hands. The result of these divided counsels was that the opposition sent a confused message to voters.

The crucial — as yet unanswered question — is whether Abacha has the stubbornness and authority to stick to his own 1998 deadline for the return to civilian rule, or whether he is in fact less obdurate than his public stance has come to suggest.

Reports from authoritative sources suggest that he may make a major pronouncement in June announcing a programme to defuse the crisis. This could include releasing Obasanjo and Abiola, and possibly proposing to end the ban on political parties in the near (though not immediate) future.

In opposition circles, these reports are treated with scepticism since there is one thing that unites all the Nigerian opposition leaders: A deep mistrust of Abacha's intention of abandoning military rule in 1998.

(221) 2614196

Nigeria's dream

Of new mineral export riches

(226)

AKG 29/4/96

NIGERIA has bold plans to boost its non-petroleum mineral exports, but South African companies which initially showed some interest in the plan are backing away, reports **DULUE MBACHU** of International Press Service in Lagos.

FOR years, Nigeria has depended heavily on oil, source of more than 90 percent of its export earnings, but it now aims to cash in on hitherto neglected minerals.

Increasing their contribution to the economy is the thrust of a new strategy announced by the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development.

The ministry stated in a recent document on the strategy that "it is intended that the mineral sector's contribution should rise within the next few years to a level comparable to that of the oil sector," which earns between \$8-billion and \$10-billion in annual export income.

An "annotation of minerals discovered so far shows that Nigeria has over 32 diverse and commercially viable solid minerals," the document revealed.

These include gold, found in at least nine of the 30 states of the Nigerian federation.

Another expected money-spinner is coal, present in almost half of the states, with deposits estimated at over 2,75 billion metric tons. Reserves of kaolin, limestone and salt also run into billions of metric tons.

That minerals other than petro-

leum abound in Nigeria is not news. What is new is that the government is now trying to encourage and, at the same time, regulate their exploitation.

Before petroleum mining started in 1958, coal, tin and columbite were among Nigeria's leading exports. But when the oil boom started in the mid-1970s, other exports were relegated.

Coal is a case in point. By the late 1970s, production had fallen to ten percent of the 905 397 metric tons recorded in 1959, a peak year for the industry.

This was due to "a limited domestic market, non-availability of coal-export infrastructure and losses recorded through use of obsolete mining equipment," says Professor Greg Iwu, managing director of the Nigerian Coal Corporation.

As successive governments neglected the non-oil sector, illegal miners stepped in, as in the northern state of Bauchi, which has huge deposits of kaolin and gypsum.

Today "there are over 10 000 people working in various fields, using primitive tools to mine kaolin and

gypsum at a token fee of 40 naira (50 US cents) per head," says Yermah Grade, who is in charge of trade and industries in Bauchi.

In the central states around the federal capital, Abuja, the going mineral is columbite, which is used in the manufacture of stealth bombers, among other things.

A US citizen who said he was involved in mining and exporting columbite from the central region said illegal miners who extracted the mineral using crude implements sold it at about 5 000 naira (\$70) per jute bag.

He said he sometimes exported up to 20 metric tons of columbite a year, "but in recent times, the business has not been as lucrative as it used to be because a lot of people are rushing into it."

Serious efforts to streamline and regulate mining activities here began with the creation of the Ministry of Solid Minerals early in 1995.

Then, in August, the government promulgated two decrees aimed at encouraging investors in mining and other sectors.

The Nigerian Investment Promotion Decree and the Foreign Exchange (Miscellaneous and Mon-

itoring Provisions) Decree allow 100-percent foreign ownership and the unhindered repatriation of profits.

A month later, Minister of Solid Minerals Development Koloma Ali set up a committee to work out a detailed investment policy and incentives for investors in the non-oil mining sector.

These include accelerated processing and issuance of mining licences, capitalisation of expenditure on surveys and mining operations, deferred royalty payments, and tax holidays of three to five years.

Since then, local and foreign business interests have shown interest in investing in the mining sector, according to Ali.

"In fact, Israel requires 11 to 15 million tons of our coal yearly," the minister said.

However, the international outcry that followed the execution of nine minority rights activists in October last has delayed some joint ventures which were already under preparation.

Last year, the New Nigerian Development Company and the Gypsum Company of South Africa

concluded plans to cooperate in the mining of gypsum. Then came a diplomatic face-off between Pretoria and Abuja over the executions.

"The South African team, which was scheduled to visit Nigeria last November for further work on the project, suspended its visit to await further developments in bilateral relations," said Adamu Aliyu, managing director of the Nigerian firm.

Other plans were also put on hold and, according to Stephen Akinwale, head of the Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce, "Nigeria will lose some \$1-billion in investment funds following the withdrawal of 30 South African firms from the solid minerals sector."

However, this may be just a temporary setback, especially since the World Bank has taken an interest in developments in the non-oil mining sector.

Earlier this month, the bank's country manager for Nigeria, Isaac Sam, paid a visit to Koloma Ali to commend him, he said, for "the very strong signals" coming from his ministry.

Sapa-IPS

No haven for Nigeria's victims

M+G 29/3-3/4/96 (226)

As the Nigerian crisis increases and more students face the wrath of the regime, little help from Africa or the West appears forthcoming **Gaye Davis reports**

WHEN the telephone rang in Austin Abada's sparsely furnished Cape Town flat this week, it heralded news as familiar as it was terrible. Abada, a Nigerian student leader seeking asylum in South Africa after fleeing his country as a wanted man last month, learned of yet another crackdown by state security forces at his *alma mater*, Nigeria's Benin University.

"I was told that two students had been shot dead after a student protest," he said. "The student movement is presenting the only real challenge to [General Sani Abacha's] regime at present and the government wants to crush it at all costs."

Abada (26) has a photograph of himself showing scars from beatings he received at the hands of Nigerian security forces during the 11 months he spent detained without trial. Compatriots of his in the Campaign for Student Liberties, the organisation he helped found in response to "the state's assault on the student movement", were in hiding this week to avoid similar fates.

Registered for an economics degree at the University of Cape Town, Abada's future lies in the hands of the Department of Home Affairs. He has applied for political asylum. A temporary permit has allowed him to take up a scholarship sponsored by a German church organisation. But if his application for asylum is rejected, he faces deportation and criminal charges.

"I am supposed to be on trial back home for armed robbery, arson and theft," Abada told the *Mail & Guardian*. "A conviction for armed robbery carries the death sentence. It is the way things are made to look here."

His uncertainty about his future is overshadowed, however, by his frustration at the apparent inability of South Africa and the international community as a whole to turn the

diplomatic screws on Abacha's regime. "We have lost faith in various governments and are relying on non-governmental organisations to assist our people back home in finding their way out of their predicament. The West is doing nothing — because it gets cheap oil from Nigeria. The other African countries don't want to act because of the patronage they have received from Nigeria."

"The solution to our problems does not lie with foreign intervention as such, but in complementary actions that assist the pro-democracy movements in Nigeria. They need moral and logistical support. It is true the pro-democracy opposition is fragmented. The problem has always been one of lack of trust and no mutually agreed strategy. But the groups are more united than they have ever been."

The Nigerian crisis is a very serious one. We are saying something can be done by nations acting in concert and imposing sanctions, especially on oil.

Representatives of exiled Nigerian opposition groupings based in South Africa, Europe and the United States, will be attending a three-day meeting in Johannesburg this weekend, according to the African National Congress's international affairs department head, Yusuf Salojee.

Organised by the South African-Nigerian Democratic Support Group launched in response to the executions in November last year of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists, the meeting was "an attempt to bring Nigerian opposition groups together and strategise a way forward", Salojee said.

South African MPs and members of the ANC-South African Communist Party-Cosatu alliance would also take part. "Right now things are in limbo. We are very sensitive to the issue of human rights abuses in



Scarred: Nigerian student Austin Abada shows the wounds inflicted by beatings received at the hands of Nigerian security forces

Nigeria, but in terms of taking action we need to be sensitive to the thinking of other African countries."

The Southern African Development Community was reluctant to take a stand, and the Organisation for African Unity was "not moving" on the issue, Salojee said. Plans for an ANC delegation to visit Nigeria had not been shelved, but "members would need visas issued by the existing Nigerian authorities who want us to come with a very clear agenda and to say who we want to meet", he said.

The South African government's lack of action on the Nigerian issue is dictated largely by its concerns about the feelings of its African

neighbours.

No other African country was prepared to back President Nelson Mandela's calls for sanctions against the Nigerian junta. Diplomatically South Africa found itself out on limb.

Abada laments the fact that the government's expressed commitment to human rights appears to be held in thrall by the baser, economically driven concerns of its fellow African countries. Until efforts to create a united African position on Nigeria bear fruit, however, he must wait and hope — and brace himself for inevitable bad tidings from his homeland.

Commonwealth talking nonsense — Nigeria (226)

CT 3/5/76

LAGOS. Nigerian reacted angrily to a recent decision by the Commonwealth military action group to recommend the imposition of more sanctions on the country.

The Nigerian government had maintained silence on the decision since the decision was made in London last week.

Foreign Minister Chief Tom Ikemba said yesterday the decision was part of a pre-meditated attempt by the international community to destroy Nigeria.

He said he would be discussing the country's future

approach to the Commonwealth military leader General Sir Whatcha.

He said he was in no mood for talks.

The recalling of British troops and in reference to the Commonwealth.

After months of talks in Nigeria's relations with the Commonwealth the eight-nation Commonwealth action group on Nigeria decided to look to recommend more stringent sanctions, including an arms embargo and further restrictions on visas for government officials. — Super DPA

Abacha purges top officers

Nigeria - A widespread purge of airforce and navy officers ordered by the military government of Gen Sani Abacha has been reported by Nigerian newspapers

The papers said senior naval officers, including Rear-Adm Isaac Areola, the Commerce Minister, Rear-Adm Rufus Eytayo, the flag officer of the western naval command, and Rear-Adm Oladele Dada, chief of the fleet support, were among those forcibly retired

The purge also included 10 group captains, six wing commanders and ten squadron leaders removed from the airforce

The reports were published despite the lack of any official announcement and regular attempts

by the military government to clamp down on the opposition press

Nigerian journalists have suffered repeated harassment and several printing presses have mysteriously been set alight. The purge was seen in Nigeria as a way of consolidating the rule of General Abacha

Nigerian newspapers are fiercely critical of the breakdown of democracy and civil order, despite the many obstacles to press freedom in the country

Newspapers have published details of corruption and scandal, directly blaming the government for the breakdown of the urban community - Times News Service

(22b)

SLM 3/5/96

AFRICA

Half the population will live in poverty within a decade, says World Bank

Nigeria 'faces bleak future'

By Michael Binyon

London — Nigeria is rapidly sinking into poverty and corruption, according to the latest World Bank report

Unless the military government of Sani Abacha takes urgent measures to stimulate growth, about half the population will sink below the poverty line within a decade

Infant mortality is high and the windfall oil wealth has been accompanied by growing misery and economic decline

This picture of a new African heart of darkness was confirmed by senior diplomatic sources. They said the military regime was isolated in Abuja, steeped in corruption and indifferent to world opinion

Diplomats estimate that since the beginning of the oil boom in

the 1970s, Nigerian leaders have salted away \$200 billion from the economy. Most of this money has been transferred to Swiss or Lebanese banks.

Sources said the violence is endemic and the unpaid military supports itself by extortion.

Public health has broken down, leading to an epidemic of meningitis, and the cities are being buried under mountains of decaying rubbish.

A newspaper recently pictured dozens of putrefying corpses that were regularly dumped by prisons and hospitals at a cemetery near the main market in a Lagos suburb.

The World Bank has laid the blame squarely on the government. It said Nigeria could achieve high growth if proper policies were in place.

"The government needs to

make a firm commitment to place poverty alleviation at the forefront of its development strategy. To succeed, this commitment will need to be backed up by improvements in accountability to the population and in the administrative capacity of each level of government," the report said.

However, Western diplomats believe that Nigeria could recover quickly. They said it still had a remarkably free press and a relatively low number of political prisoners. It was also committed to African peace keeping, lacked expansionist policies and had many capable potential leaders.

However, a senior source described every minister in the present government as corrupt, and the majority were either "clowns or thugs."

Nigeria's central bank said

that it might have found buyers for six of the 18 banks it took over last year when they were crippled by fraud.

Scores of former bank executives are in detention under a decree by the military government to recover stolen bank deposits. Some have been tried and jailed, and billions of naira have been recovered.

The Commonwealth has announced that it would impose new sanctions against Abacha, including a visiting ban on families of the regime. Britain believes this has caused considerable anger among ministers used to coming to London for shopping and seeing relatives.

However, Britain has opposed oil sanctions, which diplomats said would exacerbate the hardships of the poor — The Times of London

5

Gas project tops talks with Nujoma

(226)
A trade co-operation agreement with a strong emphasis on major gas projects aimed at providing jobs for Namibians and South Africans is likely to be reached between the two countries

President Nelson Mandela and visiting Namibian counterpart Sam Nujoma discussed the Kudu Gas Project yesterday. Outgoing Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha and his Namibian counterpart Andimba Toivo ya Toivo held separate talks to discuss the finer details of the project and how it can benefit both countries.

Nujoma arrived in SA yesterday for a three-day state visit, his first since he became president and SA became a democracy.

Mandela yesterday awarded Nujoma the Order of Good Hope – a presidential honour to visiting heads of state.

When Nujoma arrived in SA yesterday for a four-day state visit, he was met at Cape Town international airport by Mandela and welcomed with a 21-gun salute. An earlier state visit by the Namibian president was cancelled when Mandela was admitted to a Johannesburg clinic for medical tests.

Today Nujoma is scheduled to address a joint sitting of Parliament and visit Robben Island before departing for Gauteng, to be hosted by Premier Tokyo Sexwale.

– Political Correspondent.

Stow 14/5/96

other organisations are holding in stock on behalf of the SANDF, if not, why not, if so, what are the relevant figures in each case.

- (2) whether any measures have been taken by the SANDF to assist in the clearing up of landmines which were laid by the former South African Defence Force and/or supplied by the SADF and/or agencies or companies acting on behalf of the SADF for use in neighbouring countries, if not, why not, if so, what measures.

- (3) (a) what progress has been made in the development of so-called "smart mines" and (b) with what objective are these mines being developed in view of the commitment of South Africa to move towards an eventual elimination of landmines? N521E

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE

- (1) (a) The SA National Defence Force has a total of 311 179 land-mines in stock. Of these 261 423 are of the anti-personnel type and 49 756 anti-tank.
- (b) No stocks are being held by other organisations for the National Defence Force.

- (2) Yes. Measures have been taken by the National Defence Force to assist in the clearing up of land-mines in neighbouring countries.

- (a) *Angola* With the exception of one minefield in the area south of Cuito Cuanavale, no mines or minefields were left behind by the SADF after their withdrawal from Angola. Assistance given by the SADF to Angola to facilitate the clearing of mines includes:

- (i) The training of Angolan forces in 1992 in mine/counter-mine warfare.
- (ii) The handing over in 1992 of a complete minefield record to the Angolan Government.
- (iii) The handing over earlier this year of two copies of the minefield record to BMATT and the British Military Attaché in South Africa for use by the

United Nations in their demining programme in Angola.

- (iv) A further comprehensive Demining Planning and Management Course to be presented shortly by the National Defence Force for selected personnel in Angola.

- (b) *Namibia* The former SADF laid protective minefields in Namibia around the pylons supporting the powerlines between Ruacana and Windhoek as well as around certain security force bases in the north of the country.

- (i) *Power-lines* In 1989 it was decided by the Interim Namibian Government and the South West African Water and Electricity Commission that the minefields protecting the power-lines should not be lifted. In order to facilitate the clearing of the minefields at a later date, the SADF handed over detailed minefield records to the Namibian Government upon the withdrawal of South African Forces from Namibia.

- (ii) *Security Force Bases* All minefields protecting security force bases were cleared by the SADF before their withdrawal. Minefield records were also handed over to the Namibian Defence Force.

- (3) (a) A project to develop so-called "smart" mines, a mine which self-destructs after a set period of time, was registered earlier this year. No mentionable progress can be reported at this stage.

- (b) Currently the National Defence Force is considered to be a world leader in counter-mine technology. The possibility that the National Defence Force will become involved in the clearing of mine threats and the clearing of minefields during future peacekeeping operations is extremely high. In order to maintain the present high level of expertise and to keep abreast of the ongoing development of mine

technology it is essential that the National Defence continues with its research work into "smart" mines.

Recently the Department of Foreign Affairs in co-operation with the Department of Defence released the following Press statement:

The issue of land-mines is a subject which rightly enjoys international prominence. The number of casualties caused by the indiscriminate use of land-mines, especially anti-personnel land-mines, is particularly distressing.

As part of its support for the global elimination of anti-personnel land-mines, the South African Government has been progressively reviewing steps to address the massive/land-mine problem which besets our region, the African continent and the world. The Government adopted a moratorium on the export of all types of land-mines and in September 1995 this was extended to a prohibition on the export of so-called long-lived anti-personnel land-mines and the phasing out of the use of these mines.

In addition, the Government, having earlier decided to impose a moratorium on the export of land-mines, has now decided to replace this moratorium with a prohibition on the export of all types of land-mines.

The SANDF has been re-evaluating the future operational use of anti-personnel land-mines and will shortly report to Cabinet.

Representations to Nigeria for release of General Obasanjo

*21. Mr C W EGLIN asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Whether since 1 January 1996 the South African Government has made any representations to the military government of Nigeria for the release from prison of General Olesugun Obasanjo, if not, why not, if so, in respect of each such representation, (a) what was the nature thereof, (b) on what date was it made and (c) what was the response thereto? N523E

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Yes

- (a) The South African High Commissioner to Nigeria, Mr Nene, whom, it will be remembered, was recalled for consultations immediately after the execution by the Nigerian Military Government of mine Nigerian activists, including Ken Saro-Wiwa, during November 1995, on his return to Lagos in February 1996 reiterated at a press conference the concern of the South African Government regarding the continued detention of political prisoners in Nigeria.

In an effort to convey the South African Government's continued concern at the highest level, High Commissioner Nene also requested an audience with Nigerian Military Head of State, General Abacha. As is apparently the case with requests for similar audiences by diplomatic representatives of other countries in Nigeria, a reply is still awaited.

The High Commissioner then called on the Nigerian Foreign Minister, Chief Ikim, on which occasion the subject of Nigerian political prisoners was again broached.

The preceding efforts follow the high-level visits which were undertaken to Nigeria last year for the express purpose of securing the release of General Obasanjo and other political detainees. It will be recalled that, following the arrest of General Obasanjo during March 1995, President Mandela sent Archbishop Tutu the following month as his personal emissary for discussion on the issue with General Abacha and his government. This visit was followed by the visit of Deputy President Mbeki and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Pahad, to Nigeria during August 1995 and by a second visit by Deputy Minister Pahad the same month.

In view, however, of the lack of a positive Nigerian response to these representations, the South African Government has, since December 1995, in addition been actively pursuing the issue through its membership of appropriate international bodies, namely the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the implementation of

the Harare Declaration on human rights (CMAAG), and the United Nations

In the case of CMAAG, the Group was appointed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), held in New Zealand during November last year, to deal with venous or persistent violations of the principles of the Harare Declaration, *inter alia* in Nigeria. The Group met in London during December 1995 and again in April 1996. At the first meeting, it was decided to send a mission to Nigeria to pursue dialogue with the Nigerian Government aimed at the speedy restoration of democracy and constitutional rule. Following the continued refusal of the Nigerian Military Government to receive the mission the Group, at its second meeting, *inter alia* took note of the fact that political and other detainees had not been released and recommended implementation by the Commonwealth of a number of further restrictive measures against Nigeria, including visa restrictions on, and a denial of educational facilities for, members of the Nigerian regime and their families, an arms embargo, a ban on sporting contacts, and a downgrading of diplomatic missions. It was also decided that further measures, *inter alia* of an economic nature, would be considered in consultation with the European Union, the United States and other members of the international community.

In the United Nations, South Africa although not a member of the Commission for Human Rights, played a pivotal role in the adoption by the Commission of a resolution by consensus on the human rights situation in Nigeria, which *inter alia* called on the Nigerian Government to restore *habeas corpus* and release all political prisoners.

- (b) The press conference took place on 13 February 1996
The request for the audience was conveyed on 23 February 1996
The meeting took place on 5 March 1996

The second CMAAG meeting in London took place on 23 April 1996

The United Nations Commission for Human Rights adopted the resolution on

Nigeria in Geneva on 23 April 1996 as well

- (c) There has unfortunately been no positive response by the Nigerian Military Government to any of the above-mentioned actions to date as far as the release of General Obasanjo and other political prisoners or detainees is concerned

Government delegation to Beijing: discussions

*22 Mr C W EGLIN asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs

- (1) Whether he intends leading a Government delegation to Beijing for discussions with the government of the People's Republic of China, if not, what is the position in this regard, if so, (a) when are the discussions to take place and (b) what will be the subject of the discussions,

- (2) whether the South African delegation will convey to the government of the People's Republic of China the attitude of the South African Government towards the issue of diplomatic relations between (a) South Africa and the People's Republic of China and (b) South Africa and the Republic of China, if not, why not, if so, what are the relevant details,

- (3) what is the attitude of the South African Government to each of the issues referred to in paragraphs (2)(a) and (b) above? N524E

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The hon member is referred to the oral reply given to Question 12 in the National Assembly on 15 May 1996

Tax amnesties: amounts retrieved

*23 Mr K M ANDREW asked the Minister of Finance

Whether any amounts in back taxes have been retrieved in any of the various tax amnesties in the past five years, if so, what amount was recovered during each amnesty period? N525E

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The 1993 moratorium was aimed at taxpayers who failed to render tax returns timeously. Assurance was given that prior years' tax

returns would be accepted without the imposition of penalties in respect of the late rendition thereof. This moratorium did not prove very successful as it was not properly publicised. Separate records of the amounts of tax paid by taxpayers who submitted arrear returns were not kept.

The object of the 1995 tax amnesty was to expand the taxpayer-base by registering as many taxpayers as possible. Many of the taxpayers who came forward during the amnesty period were salaried taxpayers. In these cases they were registered as taxpayers as from the 1995 tax year. It can further be argued that there are no arrear taxes in these instances as their employers had already deducted/employees tax at source and it was paid over to the Receiver of Revenue where the employers were registered.

By 18 April 1996 a total of 15 662 taxpayers had been granted amnesty and taken on the income tax register. The Commissioner for Inland Revenue is unable to furnish specific details relating to arrear tax paid under the amnesty as this information was not captured separately and many of the assessments have yet to be issued. Furthermore in terms of the Tax Amnesty Act the applicants are entitled to pay off the taxes over various periods, depending on which taxes are involved. The Commissioner is however aware of two separate payments totalling R1 357 260 relating to previously undisclosed sales tax which were made as a result of the 1995 tax amnesty.

State tender contracts: investigation of affirmative action

*24 Mr K M ANDREW asked the Minister of Finance

Whether, with reference to the reply to Question No 26 on 6 September 1995, the Task Team investigating affirmative action in respect of the awarding of State tender contracts has delivered its report, if not, what is the position in this regard, if so, (a) what proposals did the Task Team make and (b) what is the status of these proposals? N526E

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

Yes

- (a) The Task Team proposed, as an interim strategy until a Green Paper has been completed by the end of June 1996, that a preference system be introduced to target the previously disadvantaged sector of the community. This preference system is based on equity owned by Blacks and women. Guidelines for the implementation of an affirmative procurement policy, through joint ventures between established and emerging companies, was also drafted by the Task Team.

- (b) The preference system as well as affirmative procurement policy were approved as an interim measure by Cabinet and is in the process of being implemented by national departments and provinces.

Madimbo Corridor: protection of environment

*25 Mr N J J VAN R KOORNHOF asked the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

- (1) Whether his Department is considering taking any steps aimed at protecting the environment in the Madimbo Corridor, if not, why not, if so, what are the relevant details,

- (2) whether there are any mining activities in this area, if so,

- (3) whether any prospecting contracts have been awarded in this regard, if not, what is the position in this regard, if so, what are the relevant details,

- (4) whether he will make a statement on the matter? N562E

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM

(1) Yes. The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism is considering taking steps to conserve the environment in the Madimbo Corridor, but with acknowledgement of the framework prescribed by Schedule 6 of the Constitution. Schedule 6 states, amongst other things, that the executive responsibility for the environment is a provincial competence.

The Department does not have executive powers regarding the prospecting taking place in this area. The approval thereof has

HANSAID

Nigeria boycotts SA conference over 'discrimination'

Nigeria would boycott the African Insurance Organisation (AIO) general assembly and conference in South Africa later this month because of "discrimination", the News Agency of Nigeria has reported.

The NAN said "discriminatory, unprecedented and insulting" conditions were being imposed on Nigerian delegates by

the South African high commission in Nigeria.

Nigerian AIO members had to produce evidence of property they owned, verified bank statements and police clearance reports before being issued with visas to enter South Africa.

Similar conditions were not being imposed on delegates

from other countries, the report said. As a result, the Nigerians had decided to boycott the conference at Sun City from May 27-31.

The Nigerians would urge the AIO executive to ensure that only countries which did not insist on unusual entry conditions were used as future assembly venues - Sapa

Star 18/5/96 (226)

AFRICAN BUSINESS

Call to police led to 80 deaths

Shell admits error in Nigeria

ET(BR) 21/5/96 (226)

London—Shell has acknowledged it made a mistake to call the riot police in an incident in Nigeria where security forces killed 80 people, a British television film broadcast said yesterday

Brian Anderson, the head of Shell's Nigeria operations, said on Granada Television's World in Action documentary "We have made one or two mistakes. We once called in the police to assist us on a case where things got out of hand completely and I must say that taught us a lesson—some people died because of that."

The incident occurred in 1990, World in Action said, when Shell asked the Nigerian riot police to deal with a protest against the company by the Umuechen village in the Niger Delta. The programme said that after

the Police Mobile Force, known locally as the Kill and Go, had left, at least 80 people had been killed.

"It was a tremendously regretful incident. We did not believe the police would overreact in that way," Anderson said.

A spokesman for the company in London said of the Umuechen incident "We are required by law when there is a disruption to the oil activities to inform the authorities. They then decide how to react to that situation just as in any other country. If they overreact that's their decision, not the company's."

World in Action said despite Shell's regret, one of its employees, a security adviser, had attempted to buy anti-riot equipment worth \$500,000 for the Nigerian

police force from a London arms dealer. Shell, however, said that the employee had gone too far in trying to buy the equipment.

Anderson told the programme "One of the people in my company, who I did not consider to be worth keeping on, considering what he was doing, was asking for things that we would never want and would never authorise."

Shell has been criticised for the way it has run its oil extraction operations in the Niger delta. World attention was focused on the area when the military government hanged author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists. The sentences attracted widespread condemnation and Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth.—Reuter

'WE'LL ACCEPT CONDITIONS FROM NO ONE'

Why Madiba backed off Nigeria

AT A COMMONWEALTH conference President Nelson Mandela called for sanctions against Nigeria after the execution of Ogoni leaders, but since then he has fallen silent about this matter. Political Writer **BARRY STREEK** asked him why.

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela has given reasons for backing off supporting international sanctions against Nigeria

He has also explained why he will not break off diplomatic relations with Taiwan

World and West African leaders had asked him not to push for sanctions against Nigeria, and South Africa could not ignore international opinion, Mandela said in an interview

He also revealed that President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo was the West African leader trying to broker a meeting between him and Nigerian military ruler General Sani Abacha

Last week, he said he was prepared to meet Abacha provided these discussions were "fruitful"

Mandela said he had supported the Commonwealth decision to suspend Nigeria and impose sanctions after the execution of the Ogoni leaders

But afterwards he had found himself in difficulty, because UN secretary-general Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali had called him and said sanctions would be most dangerous from a Nigerian point of view and if something happened to Abacha the Nigerian soldiers in Sierra Leone and Liberia would be withdrawn, creating difficulties for the UN

Mr Salm Salm of the Organisation of

African Unity had made a similar appeal, as had the leaders of a number of West African states, including President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, who had supported the Commonwealth stand

"I could not ignore these appeals," Mandela said

"People say my moral authority would have saved the Ogoni leaders. How so? I don't order oil from Nigeria. Why would the leaders of Nigeria listen to me? Moral authority alone is nothing"

On the Taiwan issue, Mandela said he wanted diplomatic relations with both Taiwan and the People's Republic of China. He would tell Chinese President Jiang Zemin that China's problem with Taiwan was an internal one

"I will tell him very politely 'Don't expect us to settle your problems. I want diplomatic relations with you, but without conditions'"

"Two years before the election, when

the ANC was experiencing financial difficulties, I went to Taiwan and said that, although we had boycotted them, we were going to inherit a situation where they had diplomatic relations with our country

"I told them we would not break those relations unless they did something in international law that justified breaking off relations"

"I asked them for \$10 million (R43m) and they gave it to me on the spot for the elections. They are also building technicians in this country and have given us R300m for the RDP"

"What leader with any moral authority would say, 'You have put me in power and now I am going to cancel diplomatic relations'? What type of leader would that be, purely from the point of view of morality? I am not going to accept conditions from any other country"

● See Page 25

CF 21/5/96 (226)

Nigeria reforms law that killed Saro-Wiwa

BD 27/5/96 (226)

LAGOS — Nigeria's apparent intention to repeal some of the more draconian decrees imposed by its military regime was interpreted here on Saturday as the first sign of it relaxing its grip on power

Diplomats said they were encouraged by Friday's announcement that the African giant would ease some of the tough measures under which opposition activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others were executed last November, causing international outrage.

It represents the first time since Gen Sani Abacha seized power in November 1993 that his military regime has admitted that its draconian laws "do not conform to international criteria" one diplomat said

A legal adviser to Abacha told the UN on Friday that the ruling junta would amend the so-called Civil Disturbances Decree.

Under the changes, military personnel would be barred from juries in special courts like the one that in November convicted Saro-Wiwa and the eight others of murder. It will also allow appeals against verdicts handed down by these courts, the

adviser, Auwalu Hamsu Yadudu, said in a letter to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali.

These changes were announced as part of what Yadudu called a series of democratic reforms, and come in response to a UN fact-finding mission that recently visited Nigeria and called the human rights situation deplorable. There was no official announcement of the changes by the Nigerian government on Saturday.

The executions triggered an international outcry. The Commonwealth suspended Nigeria's membership while the European Union, the US, Canada and SA imposed sanctions against Nigeria, including an arms embargo

Yadudu said the moves were part of the military's gradual disengagement from power, leading to a return to democracy by October 1998.

Abacha's military regime has been under strong international pressure since annulling the result of the June 1993 election. Saro-Wiwa led the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People. — Sapa-AFP.

(226)

Prosecutor concedes hanged Ogonis

wronged

ARG 29/5/96

ABUJA - The prosecutor in the trial of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni activists has admitted the hanged men had a genuine case of environmental degradation against the Nigerian government and the oil companies

Philip Umeadi, senior advocate of Nigeria (SAN) and former vice-presidential candidate, however this month justified his role by saying, "My brief was to present the evidence in the police file"

Chief Umeadi has counselled all parties to the dispute to "avoid senseless bloodletting", and to "get together like brothers and talk"

In a related development, the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (Mosop) has told UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali that 43 Ogonis have been detained by the government for the views they expressed to the UN fact-finding mission to Nigeria over the plight of the Ogonis

Mosop claimed members "suffered heightened harassments and state brutality" for daring to "express themselves to the fact-finding team"

Mosop, winner of this year's Danish Peace Award for its courage, urged the UN "to intervene to help secure the liberty of these victims of your team's visit"

Rationalising his prosecution of the late Ogoni Nine despite his belief in the Mosop struggle, Chief Umeadi said "If I hadn't taken up the case for the government another lawyer would have done it I just did my duty, which was to present the evidence in the police file"

Pressed for comment on his reaction to the conviction and subsequent hanging of the Ogoni Nine, the prosecutor did not want to be "drawn into all these things"

But he said "I don't think I'm in a position to criticise the government because I would be criticising myself, but when I write my memoirs, I will tell my own side of the Ogoni story"

The senior advocate admitted that the Ogoni incident was shocking and "one can't blame the Ogonis for going into exile in other countries"

Mosop has also complained to the UN that 87 Mosop activists have been arrested

They claim one of the detainees, Tombari Gbawabe, collapsed, allegedly while being tortured - Independent Foreign Service

Jailed activists in bad shape

(226) *Sametari 30/5/96*

By Michael Dynes and
Inigo Gilmore

NELSON Mandela, who endured 27 years' imprisonment fighting a repressive white regime, is under increasing pressure in South Africa and internationally to press for the release of 19 jailed Ogoni activists facing execution by Nigeria's military dictatorship.

Mandela has said he is prepared to meet Nigeria's hardline ruler, General Sani Abacha, provided the talks offer some real prospect of success.

Shareholders who attended Shell's annual general meeting in London and The Hague, recently, were greeted by bongo drums, screaming protesters and a mock hanging staged to highlight the Nigerian government's imprisonment of the activists and the oil company's operations in the Niger delta.

The appalling conditions of the 19, who have been in Port Harcourt jail for two years, were disclosed last week after a letter signed by the prisoners was smuggled out.

The inmates, all members of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, have been accused of complicity in the murder of four tribal leaders who were bludgeoned to death by a mob in 1994. None has yet come to trial and all face the prospect of being hanged.

To cries of "Shame on Shell" and "Stop the genocide in Nigeria", shareholders filed into the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London.

Responding to a suggestion from the floor, Shell chairman John Jennings

agreed to hold a minute's silence at the meeting for Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight fellow Ogoni activists hanged last November.

"I respect your feelings, and, like you, I much regret the tragic loss of life. I think the time has come to seek reconciliation," he said.

Despite a torrent of questions about Shell's activities in Ogoniland, its executives were adamant they had done nothing wrong in the delta. Shell Petroleum Development Co has been exploring for crude oil in Nigeria since 1937. Production began in 1958 and an estimated R160 billion of oil has been extracted.

Environmental projects

Shell says it spends R400 million a year on environmental projects, but recognises that some communities feel they have not been rewarded adequately.

Shell faced international protests last November after the execution of Saro-Wiwa, a writer and champion of Ogoni rights, who had accused the company of despoiling parts of the delta by disregarding the devastation caused by oil and gas leaks.

Lazarus Tamana, president of Mosop UK, who helped to organise last Wednesday's protest, said "Our message to Shell shareholders is that the Ogoni 19 are still being held in appalling conditions awaiting death."

"The pollution of Ogoniland is still going on. Nothing has changed. If Shell wants to speak to us, then these issues need to be addressed" - *The Times, London*

Inspections may damage cocoa, exporters claim

(226) CT(BR) 4/6/96

By Matthew Tostevin

Lagos — Mandatory pre-shipment inspections by Nigerian government-appointed agents may damage cocoa exports, traders say

"Effectively it means we have to pay another 1 percent tax, which reduces the already slim margins even further," one major Lagos-based exporter said yesterday

Exporters are charged 1 percent of the free-on-board value of goods for the inspections, which started last month and are carried out by two foreign companies

"To restore confidence in the quality of goods leaving our shores we thought it necessary to bring in international monitors of repute to screen what is being exported," Anthony Ani, the finance minister, said last week

Exporters said the actual cost of inspection was far lower than the 1 percent being charged

"We already have to pay for inspections at state and national level, as well as taxes for transporting it. Nigerian cocoa is uncompetitive compared with countries like Ghana and the Ivory Coast, and this just makes it worse," another dealer said.

In any case, the only inspection

of any value is our own when it arrives at destination"

Cocoa is Nigeria's largest non-oil export

Production hovers at around 130 000 tons a year, but has generally declined over the past two decades

Plantations are old and poorly maintained, and support for cocoa farmers has not been a priority for successive Nigerian governments

Peasant farmers, who produce the bulk of the crop on tiny plots of land between one and 20 hectares, complain that they can rarely afford the fertiliser and chemicals that are needed to ensure a profitable harvest

Many simply crop what turns up on the trees, as they say their profits leave them nothing to invest

"The exporters are not going to want to let their margins slip, and nor are we

"It means that the farmer will be getting that much less for what he grows," said Bode Fagbayibo, the chairman of the Cocoa traders' association in south-western Ondo state, which produces roughly two-thirds of Nigeria's cocoa "The farmers can't understand these difficulties," he said — Reuter

Shock at Abiola killing

Star 5/6/96

(226)

The foreign ministry in Pretoria has joined international condemnation of the assassination in Lagos yesterday of the senior wife of jailed Nigerian opposition leader Moshood Abiola

Kudiratu Abiola (44) died in a private clinic in Ikeja, north of Lagos, near where she lived, after gunmen opened fire on her car. Her driver was also killed

The killing has sparked a wave of condemnations in Nigeria and abroad, ranging from an umbrella opposition group pointing the finger at the military junta to police who have pledged to catch her assailants

Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said it was "regrettable" she was killed in the "horrifying event" while South Africa repeatedly called for the release of Chief Abiola and other political prisoners

Nzo said "It would be encouraging if, based on the calls previously made, as well as humanitarian grounds, Chief Abiola could

now be released"

According to eyewitnesses, five people in a car opened fire on Abiola's Mercedes as she was on her way to a meeting with a senior western diplomat in Victoria, a residential area of Lagos

The British Foreign Office said it was "sad to hear the news of the tragic incident and we hope the Nigerian authorities will quickly launch a full investigation"

Her family said in a statement "The manner of her death is bizarre and shocking"

The opposition umbrella Campaign for Democracy said "We do not have to look too far for her assassins" The US State Department described the killing as apparently politically motivated.

Chief Abiola was detained in 1994 for treason. He declared himself president after elections which the military annulled. - Sapa-AFP

► Nigeria's turmoil

Page 4

Nigerian political battle culminates in killing

(226) Star 5/6/96

Lagos — Yesterday's killing of the senior wife of Nigeria's detained presidential claimant Moshood Abiola follows a series of crises in the history of Africa's most populous nation of 100 million people

Here are the main events in the latest political battle:

1989 General Ibrahim Babangida, who seized power in a palace coup in 1985, created two political parties to contest elections for restoration of democracy

June 1993 Businessman Moshood Abiola wins presidential election. Babangida annuls vote after partial results show Abiola ahead. US and European Union impose sanctions

July 1993 Riots erupt in Lagos and south-western Nigeria, Abiola's political stronghold, over the poll's cancellation. At least 100 people are killed and army moves in to quell the protests

August 1993 Babangida steps down and installs interim government headed by industrialist Ernest Shonekan

November 1993 General Sani Abacha, defence minister in interim government and most senior officer, seizes power.

June 1994 Abiola proclaims himself president, is arrested and charged with treason. Riots and strikes erupt. The military government meanwhile inaugurates constitutional conference to write a new charter for Nigeria that would lead to civil rule.

August 1994 Many labour leaders and Abiola lieutenants are arrested in crackdown on strikes which force opposition figures such as Nobel literature laureate Wole Soyinka to flee abroad.

June 1995 Constitutional confer-

ence submits its report recommending that power should be rotated between north and south

July 1995 Alleged coup plotters, among them former army ruler retired general Olusegun Obasanjo, are sentenced in a secret trial which shocks the world. Appeals pour in from around the globe to Abacha to show clemency

October 1995 Abacha commutes coup sentences to long prison terms, and unveils transition to democracy programme to hand over to an elected president in three years

November 1995 Writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight members of his Movement for the Survival of Ogoni Peoples are hanged for the murder of four Ogoni chiefs. The Commonwealth suspends Nigeria. The United States, European Union and South Africa impose arms and visa restrictions and call for quicker restoration of democracy, but Nigeria says it will stick with its own transition plan.

January 1996 Abacha's eldest son is killed in a plane crash in which a shadowy group claims responsibility. Bombs explode in the north, killing one person

February 1996 Alex Ibru, publisher of Nigeria's leading independent newspaper, is wounded after being shot in a Lagos street. Another shadowy group claims responsibility for the shooting, saying it was to protect the interest of Nigeria's northern rulers.

May 1996 Kudirat Abiola, Abiola's senior wife, is detained overnight and charged with false publication. — Reuters.

African countries did not support call

SA forced to back down on Nigeria — Nzo

DD 5/6/96 (226)

Tim Cohen

CAPE TOWN — SA had been forced to back down on its call for sanctions against Nigeria because other countries, particularly those in Africa, did not support the policy, Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said yesterday

Nzo said SA had softened its stance because of the need for a common African approach — a position emphasised in new policy documents disclosed yesterday.

SA had backed down on its demands for sanctions against Nigeria when it became clear that "countries with clout" did not favour this option and that African countries were against punitive measures

The discussion documents, described as a "green paper" by Nzo, set out for the first time in detail government's foreign affairs policy — often criticised for being without coherence or focus

The document emphasised that SA "should assume a leadership role in Africa in all those areas where a constructive contribution could be made without politically antagonising the country's African partners"

The 33-page document stressed SA's position as a country which contained elements of both the developed and developing world, suggesting this position should be emphasised in

"diplomacy of bridge-building between the north and south"

The document proposed a "non-aligned approach" to the extent that this did not conflict with its commitments to multilateral organisations such as the Organisation of African Unity, Southern African Development Community, and the Non-aligned Movement

Nzo pointed out the difficulties involved in applying such a policy with reference to Nigeria, suggesting SA risked being isolated from the approach being adopted by other African countries to the Nigerian dilemma

SA had been the only African country to withdraw its representative from Nigeria following the execution of Ogoni activist Ken Saro-Wiwa

It was also the only African country to call for punitive measures following the human rights violations perpetrated by Nigerian dictator Gen Sani Abacha's government

A change of approach had become necessary because SA did not want the issue to become a conflict between only SA and Nigeria, Nzo told the parliamentary foreign affairs committee

Such a situation would breach "norms of (African) solidarity" which were important to government, he said "It is important for us to go along

Continued on Page 2

Nzo (226)

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Continued from Page 1

with other countries, but principally we have not retracted our call for Nigeria to embark on democracy."

The policy documents emphasised that SA should "constantly endeavour to promote . . . human rights, democracy, global peace, security and protection of the environment"

SA was monitoring human rights developments in Iran "very closely" and government believed more should

be done to address violations in that country, Nzo said.

But Nzo said no human rights abuses were taking place in Cuba which would warrant SA's condemnation of that country.

Asked by NP MP Boy Geldenhuys why SA did not support UN resolutions condemning human rights abuses in Cuba, Nzo said: "We are acting on the basis there are no such violations of human rights which would warrant such action against Cuba."

He denied that SA was risking alienating itself from countries such as the US

AFRICAN BUSINESS

Some see a rosy future in Nigeria

JOS — Nigeria, best known for coups, corruption and a troubled oil industry, might finally have something to sweeten up its image. Roses.

High in the Jos plateau, about 750km northeast of the sprawl and filth of the Nigerian capital, Lagos, British horticulturist Tony Mills has been growing roses for export since 1993.

What started as a million-stem-a-year enterprise is expected to produce 6-million roses for export by 1997, providing what Mills says are cheaper and better flowers for his European market.

The idea was hatched in 1991 when Mills and his British partner in a Jos engineering firm hit hard times and needed another money-making plan.

"As with all good ideas, we were sitting in the bar one day just mulling it over, and we thought it had to be something concerning exports. The economy in Nigeria wasn't so good. We would have to really export to earn some foreign exchange," said Mills, 46, who grew up in London but has lived in Nigeria for 18 years.

Jos has a very good climate, so we thought of vegetables, certainly agriculture. Then somebody suggested we look at roses," he said.

Thus began two years of travel through eastern and southern Africa to study rose-growing in Zimbabwe, Kenya and SA, which produce roses for export but whose climates and air links to Europe put them at a disadvantage, according to Mills.

About 25 flights a wee go from Lagos to

Europe, and regular flights also leave from the city of Kano, 300km from Jos. In Jos, the average temperature year-round is 27-30°C by day with humidity of 70% — perfect for slow-growing roses that emerge as long, thick-stemmed, big-budded beauties.

According to Mills, the slower growth ensures longer life for the roses, compared to faster-growing roses coming from the wetter climates in the south.

Mills opened Heleena Farms Ltd — named after a woman initially involved in the business venture — a 3¹/₂ farm on the Jos plateau, 1 400m above sea level.

It is the only farm producing roses for export in western Africa. By next year Mills hopes to expand the farm to 1 and double his 1993 gross of \$2m.

Not all has been rosy, however. Mills has been hampered by the inefficiency, mismanagement and iron-fisted government control that make Nigeria notorious among foreign investors. "It's been a titanic battle for us to get our roses out of the country," he admitted during a recent interview.

One shipment destined for Europe in February was stalled at the airport by red tape for three weeks, destroying the delicate cargo.

Mills has since appealed to Nigeria's military government for waivers to ensure quick exports and to avoid the bureaucracy that holds up crucial imports of fertiliser, chemicals and other farm necessities.

One thing Mills has been able to avoid is the political controversy that has swirled

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around Nigeria since 1993, when Gen Sani Abacha seized power in a coup that crushed the country's hopes for civilian rule.

Abacha's pariah status was sealed in November when the Commonwealth suspended Nigeria for the execution of nine political activists, including playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa.

Human rights groups said the nine were targeted for their opposition to Abacha and to the Western-dominated oil industry, which provides more than 80% of Nigeria's income from exports.

Abacha lashed out at Europe and the US for their condemnations of his rule, and his relations with SA President Nelson Mandela soured when Mandela called for an international oil embargo against Nigeria.

But the tumultuous events in the capital passed quietly at Heleena Farms, where 145 Nigerians work with a few Europeans.

Although the company's chairman is a Nigerian, at this stage the Nigerians are mainly farmhands. Mills says that is because Nigeria has not been a flower producer before and thus hasn't had any horticultural training programmes.

Heleena's roses are grown in large greenhouses, each covering 1ha and constructed from clear plastic held together on a wooden frame. The greenhouse has nets to protect it from hail.

Heleena Farms makes about 10 shipments to Europe each week, mostly to Amsterdam, with the high season from October to May — Europe's cold, grey season, but prime growing time in Africa — Sapa-AP

Jailed Nigerian leader's wife slain

(22b)
CT 5/6/96

LAGOS: Gunmen shot and killed the wife of imprisoned opposition leader Mr Moshood Abiola near her home yesterday.

Mrs Kudirat Abiola, 44, an outspoken critic of the military government and vigorous campaigner for her husband's release, was in her car when she was shot at close range by six gunmen.

Dr Ore Salomo said she died about two hours later in the operating theatre at Eko Hospital here. Her driver also was shot and died.

The US and Britain called for a swift and thorough hunt for the killers.

South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo said the attack was "horrific" and urged the military government to free Abiola. "It is all the more regrettable that this tragedy occurred while Mrs Abiola's husband remains detained," he said.

Nigerian opposition politicians, expressing shock, suggested government involvement.

"They want to dominate us, but with the help of God the will of the people will prevail," said Mr Michael Ajasin, 94, leader of the National Democratic Coalition.

Mrs Abiola openly criticised the government of General Sani Abacha. Her husband, widely believed to have won Nigeria's nullified presidential election, was jailed on treason charges in 1994 for proclaiming himself president.

Witnesses said the gunmen opened fire on Mrs Abiola's Mercedes-Benz as she returned from Ijebu Ode, an hour's drive from here. The car swerved off the road and the gunmen moved in, firing at close range and shooting out the car's windows. Police are searching for a Peugeot 505.

In a recent magazine interview, Mrs Abiola said there had been threats to her life and spoke of being followed.

Abiola has several wives. — Sapa-AP, Reuter

Flourishing rose exports help to sweeten Nigeria's image

CT (02) 516196

By Gilbert Da Costa

Jos, Nigeria — Thus African country, best known for coups, corruption and a troubled oil industry, may finally have something to sweeten up its image — Roses

High in the Jos plateau, about 750km northeast of Lagos, Tony Mills, a British horticulturist has been growing roses for export since 1993

What started as a million-stem-a-year enterprise is expected to produce 6 million roses for export by next year, providing what Mills says are cheaper and better flowers for his European market

The idea was hatched in 1991 when Mills and his British partner in a Jos engineering firm hit hard times and needed another money-making plan

"Jos has a very good climate, so we thought of vegetables, certainly agriculture

"Then somebody suggested we look at roses," he says

Thus began two years of travel to study rose-growing in Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa

These countries produce roses for export but their climates and air links to Europe put them at a disadvantage to Nigeria, he says. About 25 flights a week go from

Lagos to Europe, and regular flights also leave from the city of Kano, 300km from Jos

In Jos, the average temperature year-round is between 27 and 30°C by day with humidity of 70 percent

This is a perfect climate for slow-growing roses that emerge as long, thick-stemmed, big-budded beauties Mills says the slower growth ensures longer life for the roses, compared with faster-growing roses coming from the wetter climates in the south

Mills opened Heleena Farms as a 3ha farm on the Jos plateau. It is the only farm in western Africa that produces roses for export

By next year Mills hopes to expand the farm to 5ha and double his 1993 gross of \$2 million

Not all has been rosy, however

Mills has been hampered by the inefficiency, mismanagement, and iron-fisted government control that make Nigeria notorious among foreign investors "It's been a titanic battle for us to get our roses out of the country," he says

One shipment destined for Europe in February was stalled at the airport by red tape for three weeks, destroying the cargo

Mills has since appealed to Nigeria's government for waivers to ensure quick exports and to

avoid the bureaucracy that holds up imports of fertiliser, chemicals and other farm necessities

One thing Mills has been able to avoid is the political controversy that has swirled around Nigeria since 1993, when General Sani Abacha seized power in a coup that crushed the country's hopes for a return to civilian rule

Abacha's pariah status was sealed in November when the Commonwealth suspended Nigeria for the execution of nine political activists

But the tumultuous events in the capital passed quietly at Heleena Farms, "where 145,

Nigerians work with a few Europeans

Though the company's chairman is a Nigerian, at this stage the Nigerians are mainly farmhands

Mills says that is because Nigeria has not been a flower producer before and there have not been any horticultural training programmes

Heleena Farms makes about 10 shipments to Europe each week, mostly to Amsterdam, with the high season from October to May

This may be Europe's cold, gray season, but it is prime growing time in Africa — Sapa-AP



Protests, arrests as Nigeria buries a heroine

(226)

International pressure brought to bear after mysterious murder of jailed opposition leader Abiola's wife

Star 6/6/96

FRANCOIS ROJON / AFP

AFP
agos

The slain wife of jailed Nigerian opposition leader Chief Moshood Abiola was buried yesterday after police broke up protests against her murder and as international pressure on the country grew.

Some mourners chanted anti-government slogans, demanding that the military regime of General Sani Abacha act swiftly to arrest the "armed bandits" said to have killed Kudiratu Abiola (44).

She had been an outspoken advocate for the release of her millionaire husband, jailed on treason charges after he claimed to be the real winner of Nigeria's last presidential elections on June 12 1993.

In the presence of about 15 ambassadors and other diplomats, including those of the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Germany and South Africa, students forced another Nigerian millionaire, Alhaji Wahab Folarin, to leave the venue before the burial ceremony. They accused Folarin of being too pro-government.

As the ceremony began, students led the crowd in singing the nation's original post-independence national anthem, which was discarded more than 10 years ago. Police bolstered security measures in the city and blocked access to the headquarters of Oyo state military governor Colonel Ike Nwosu, to which a protest march was headed.

The protesters chanted slogans critical of the military regime, demanding the release of Moshood Abiola and acceptance of the June 1993 presidential election results.

The crowd dispersed without clashing with police, but several people, believed to be organisers of the march, were arrested.

Meanwhile, a delegation of government ministers and high-ranking officers from the military met led by army chief of staff



Happier times ... detained Nigerian president-elect Moshood Abiola and his wife Kudiratu (right) on June 12 1993 at a Lagos polling station during elections in the country's shortlived attempt to return to civilian rule. Mrs Abiola died on Tuesday after being shot in the head by unknown gunmen.

General Ishaya Bama, presented its condolences to the Abiola family. Bama handed over a letter from Abacha expressing "great shock and a deep sense of loss" at the news of the killing.

The head of state promised to do all he could to clarify the mysterious circumstances of her death. A minority movement

whose leaders were executed late last year called yesterday for the isolation of Abacha's regime.

Kudiratu Abiola's death "is clearly no coincidence and bears the hallmark of assassinations of other prominent pro-democracy activists" in Nigeria, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People said.

President Nelson Mandela said through a spokesman that he had "learned with shock (of) the heinous act".

US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said yesterday "The United States deplores the killing of Mrs Kudiratu Abiola. We urge the government of Nigeria to diligently pursue the

killers and ensure that they are identified and duly prosecuted in an open court of law for this reprehensible crime."

In Ottawa, the Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy expressed his "shock" at the murder, calling Kudiratu Abiola "a tireless campaigner for the liberation of her husband and

for Nigerian democracy in general."

France said it deplored the murder and called on Nigerian military authorities to shed maximum light on the crime.

France also called for the release from prison of Moshood Abiola and other political prisoners in Nigeria.

OPPOSITION POINTS FINGER AT GOVT

Probe ordered into Abiola assassination

ET #6/6/96 (226)

LAGOS: Thousands of people took to the streets yesterday to protest against the assassination of Mrs Kudirat Abiola, while opposition leaders suggested that the government might be involved in the killing.

THE government has ordered an investigation into the assassination of the wife of imprisoned opposition leader Moshood Abiola

"No stone would be left unturned," said Mr Alhaji Ibrahim Coomassie, the inspector general of police in Lagos. He appealed to the public for information about the gunmen who killed Mrs Kudirat Abiola, an outspoken critic of the military government.

Abiola, 44, was in her car when she was shot at close range by six gunmen on Tuesday morning. Her doctor, Ore Salomok, said she died of head wounds about two hours later in the operating room. Her driver also died of his wounds.

Opposition politicians, expressing shock at the killings, suggested government involvement.

"They want to dominate us, but with the help of God the will of the people will prevail," said Mr Michael Ajasin, 94-year-old leader of the opposition National Democratic Coalition. "Her death is ominous," said Dr Wahab Sosunmu, a former civilian minister and a leader of the opposition.

Abiola openly criticised the government of military ruler General Sani Abacha. Her husband, a millionaire businessman who was widely believed to have won Nigeria's nullified 1993 presidential

election, was jailed on a charge of treason in 1994 after he proclaimed himself president.

The flamboyant businessman has another wife, more than a dozen concubines and at least 60 children. A third wife died in 1992, though Kudirat was considered his No 1 wife and was his most ardent spokeswoman. The couple had seven children.

In a magazine interview recently, Abiola said there had been threats to her life and she spoke of being followed.

She was detained for a few hours in May for allegedly possessing publications critical of the Abacha government.

In the western city of Ibadan, several thousand people marched through the streets to protest against Abiola's murder and to denounce the military government, residents said.

Many of those taking part were university students, one said.

"Kudirat Abiola assassinated," headlined National Concord as the family prepared for the burial of the 44-year-old businesswoman.

She was given a Muslim burial yesterday afternoon.

National Concord did not speculate on the motives, but exiled members of the main opposition coalition the National Democratic Coalition alleged political assassi-

nation in a statement from their London office.

"Her death, like the many before hers, was not the work of hoodlums, but the result of organised state terrorism," the alliance said.

There was no immediate comment from local representatives.

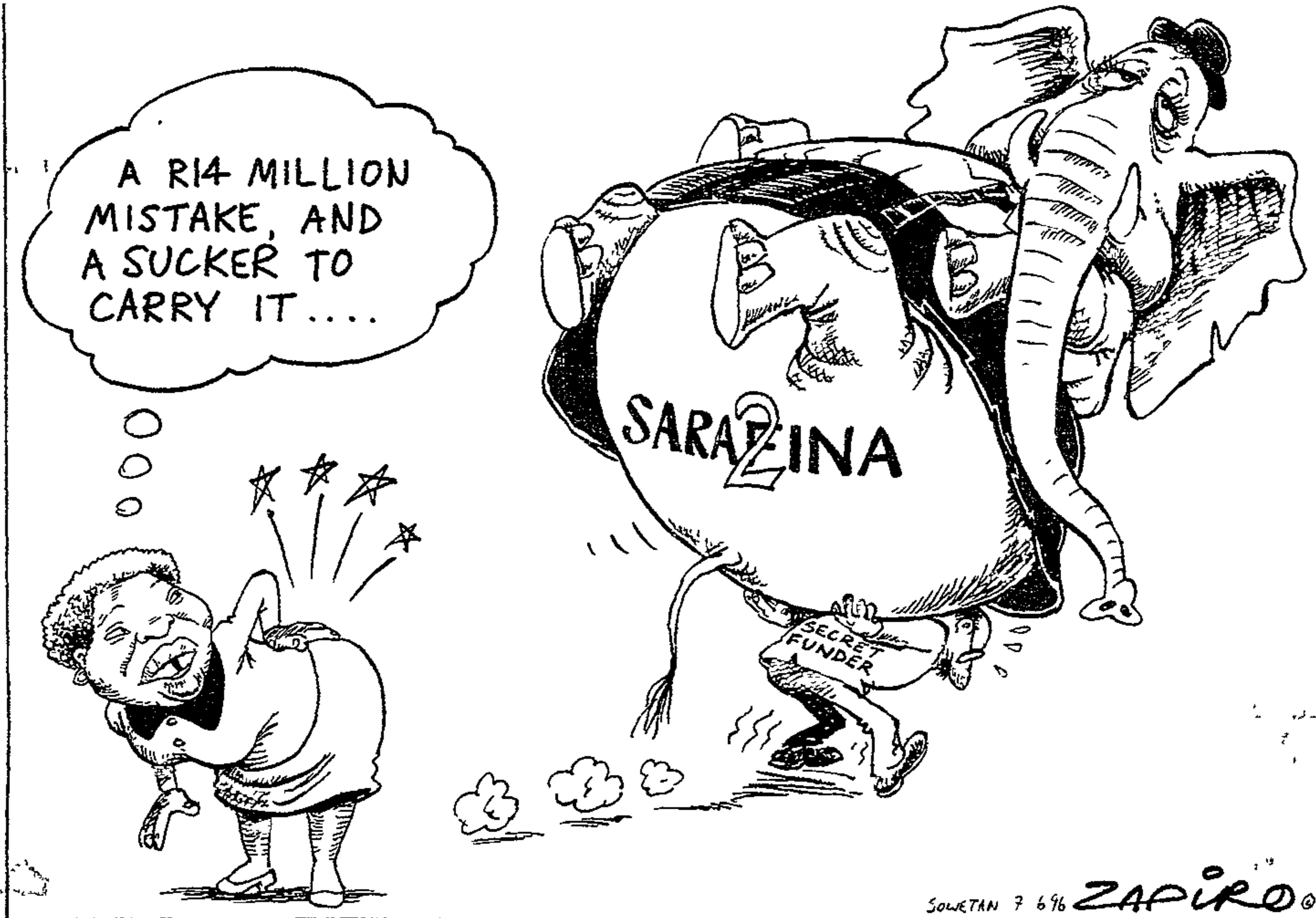
Abacha yesterday sent a letter of condolence to Abiola's family with a high-powered delegation, led by chief of army staff Major-General Ishaya Bamaayi and including eight government ministers.

"It is with great shock that I received the news... the government will do everything within its power to unravel the mystery of Kudirat's death," the letter said.

The US deplored the murder and called on the government to catch and prosecute the killers. State Department spokesman Mr Glyn Davies said it was too soon to tell whether the killing was politically motivated "but it does appear to have been an assassination, not an intended robbery".

Britain, Nigeria's former colonial ruler, had a more muted response. "We were sorry to hear this tragic news. We hope the Nigerian government will quickly investigate the circumstances and bring those responsible to justice," the Foreign Office said.

The military government, which seized power in a coup in November 1993, is under fire from the West for repressing the opposition and for refusing to hand back power to civilians. — Sapa-AP-Reuter



A very troubled state

LAGOS — THE SLAIN WIFE of jailed opposition leader Chief Moshood Abiola was buried on Wednesday after police broke up protests against her murder and amid international pressure on Nigeria

Some mourners chanted anti-government slogans, demanding that the military regime of General Sani Abacha act swiftly to arrest the "armed bandits" said to have killed Kudirat Abiola (44)

She had been an outspoken advocate for the release of her millionaire husband, jailed on treason charges after he claimed to be the real winner of Nigeria's last presidential elections on June 12 1993

"Adieu Kudirat Abiola June 12 will not die," read a placard carried by university students in academic gowns who attended the burial, which was conducted according to Muslim rites

They also sang in Yoruba, the language of Abiola's birthplace in southwestern Nigeria "Those who have killed Kudirat in her prime, have murdered sleep They and their offspring will know no rest and they will soon be visited by the god of lightning"

In the presence of about 15 ambassadors and other diplomats, including those of the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Germany and South Africa, the students forced another Nigerian millionaire, Alhaji Wahab Folawiyo, to quit the venue before the burial ceremony got under way They accused him of being too pro-government

Original anthem

As the ceremony began, the students led the crowd in singing the nation's original post-independence national anthem, which was discarded more than 10 years ago

The burial was completed without incident and without visible police presence around Abiola's vast residential quarters in the Ikeja district of Lagos

But earlier police made several arrests when they broke up a protest by thousands of students in Ibadan

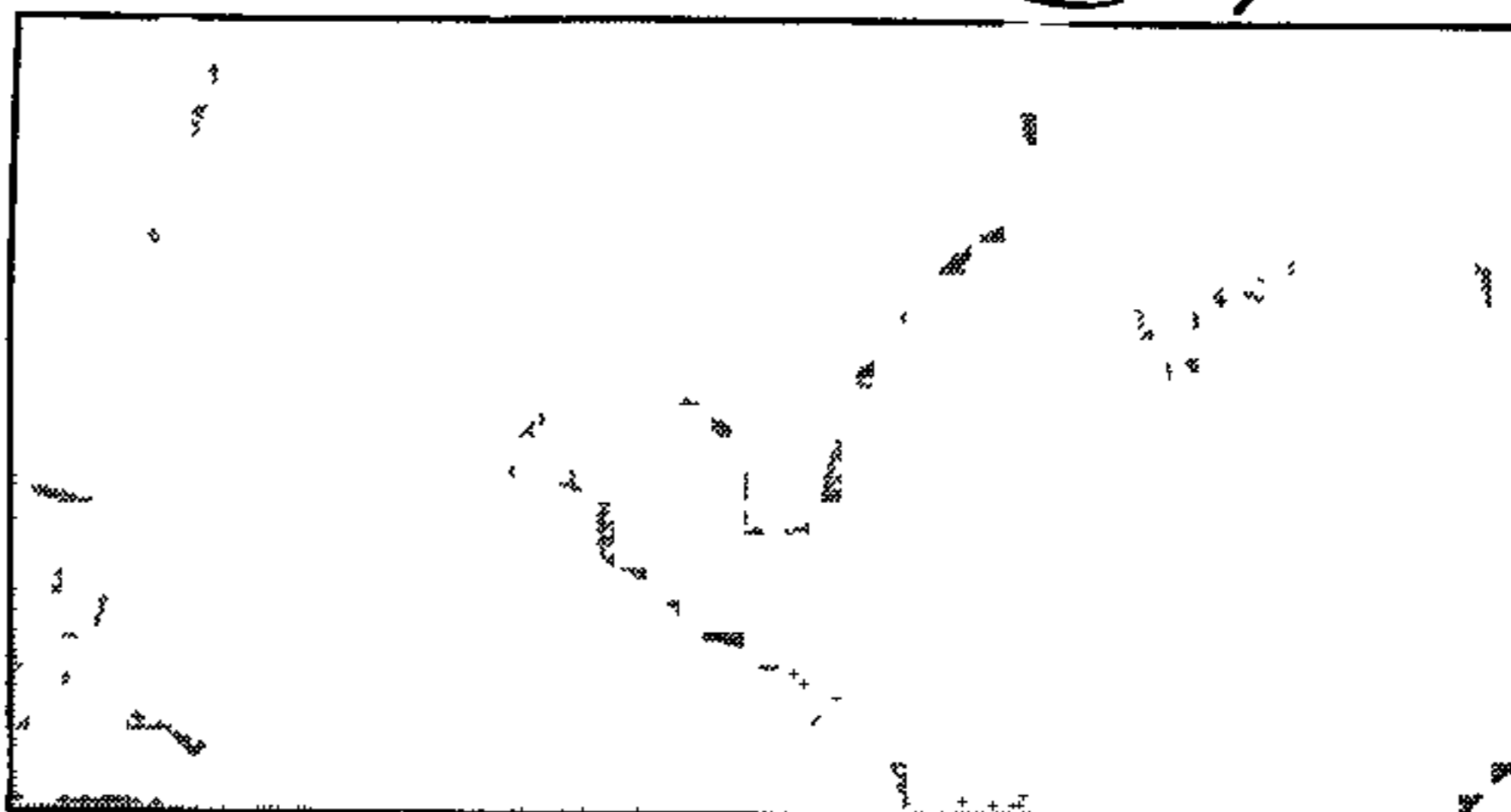
Police bolstered security measures in the city and blocked access to the headquarters of Oyo state military governor Colonel Ike Nwosu, where the protest march was headed, witnesses said

The protesters chanted slogans critical of the military regime and demanded the release of Moshood Abiola and acceptance of the 1993 presidential election results

The crowd dispersed without clashing with the police but several people, believed to be organisers of the march, were arrested

Meanwhile, a delegation of government ministers and high ranking officers from the

The assassination and funeral of detained Nigerian leader Moshood Abiola's wife Kudirat has renewed international criticism of and pressure on dictator Sani Abacha's military junta... (226) someparab 7/6/96



Flashback ... Kudirat Abiola during a campaign for the release of her husband Moshood in September 1995. She was shot at close range by six gunmen on Tuesday morning. PIC AP

military junta, led by army chief of staff General Ishaya Bamaayi, presented its condolences to the Abiola family

Bamaayi handed over a letter from Abacha expressing "great shock and deep sense of loss" at the news of the killing He promised to do all he could to clarify the "mysterious" circumstances of her death

Abiola's violent death sent shock waves across the country and was condemned in Nigeria and abroad

A minority movement whose leaders were executed late last year called on Wednesday for the isolation of Abacha's regime

Abiola's death "is clearly no coincidence and bears the hallmark of assassinations of other prominent pro-democracy activists," the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People said

President Nelson Mandela said through a spokesman that he had "learned with shock of the heinous act" US state Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said "The US deplors the killing

Reprehensible crime

"We urge the government of Nigeria to diligently pursue the killers and ensure that they are identified and duly prosecuted in an open court of law for this reprehensible crime"

In Ottawa, Canadian foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy expressed his "shock" at the murder, calling Abiola "a tireless campaigner for the liberation of her husband and for Nigerian democracy in general"

He also expressed concern at the "continued deterioration of the situation in Nigeria", whose membership of the Commonwealth was suspended after last year's executions

France deplored the murder and called on Nigerian military authorities to shed maximum light on the crime It also called for the release of Moshood Abiola and other political prisoners

● The killing of Abiola was the latest in a series of murders of major opponents of Abacha's military regime

Murdered or injured

While her husband's trial — he is charged with treason — has been repeatedly postponed over legal technicalities, several other Nigerian opposition figures have either been murdered or seriously injured

Others have had their homes or offices either burnt or damaged by unknown assailants

Last October, gunmen burst into the bedroom of Chief Alfred Rewane, a major financial backer of the opposition National Democratic Coalition and shot him dead

In February, Alex Ibru, the Abacha regime's former internal affairs minister and owner of the *Guardian Press* group, was shot and wounded as he returned home from his office

He was known for his principled stand for justice and recognition of Abiola's claimed victory

Navy Admiral Olugbenga Omotehinwa was fatally wounded by armed intruders at his home in May The admiral, believed to be a friend of a prominent opposition figure in exile, died later in hospital

Other pro-democracy activists and friends of Abiola, such as Chief Segun Osoba, the former civilian governor of Ogun state, and Ayo Opadokun, Nadeco's detained secretary-general, have either been assaulted or have had their homes attacked by gangs in the last two years — Sapa-AFP

Abiola's death won't change SA's policy

(226)

M+G 7-13/6/96

Stefaans Brümmer and Sapa-AFP

THE apparent assassination of Kudiratu Abiola, activist wife of imprisoned Nigerian leader Chief Moshood Abiola, is unlikely to prompt South Africa to formulate a stronger policy against Nigeria's military government.

Abiola (44) died from a gunshot wound to the head in Lagos on Tuesday, the same day Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo publicly acknowledged South Africa had toned down its hardline stance on Nigeria in response to accusations by South Africa's partners on the continent that it was acting against African solidarity.

Nzo told Parliament's foreign affairs committee it was "important to go along with other countries", while "we have not retracted from our call for Nigeria to embark on democracy". This confirmed the view that President Nelson Mandela's call for sanctions against Nigeria, first made after the execution last year of Nigerian minority rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, had been dropped in favour of a softer common African position.

This week the African National Congress's labour partner, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, made a new call for sanctions — and South African high commissioner to Nigeria, George Nene, joined mourners at Abiola's funeral on Wednesday afternoon — but it seems unlikely Nzo's ministry will plot a new policy course for now.

A Foreign Affairs representative said "We decided at a summit that we would work through the SADC [the Southern African Development Community] I don't think that will change."

South Africa's deputy high commissioner to Nigeria, Jan van Jaarsveld, said members of the diplomatic corps doubted Nigerian dictator General Sani Abacha's statement that the attack on Kudiratu Abiola, her driver and her personal assistant, had been a robbery attempt.

He said "Her car was forced from the road at a T-junction. People are talking about several shots from an automatic gun. But what raises suspicion is that she died of a single shot to the head."

Van Jaarsveld said the driver had died of several wounds, but the personal assistant, who was unscathed, had been arrested by the Nigerian police "to help with the investigation". He said this came across as a possible attempt to keep him away from publicly giving his version of events.

Van Jaarsveld said in spite of suspicions about the attack, it would not have immediate bearing on South Africa's policy. The police investigation would have to be evaluated first.

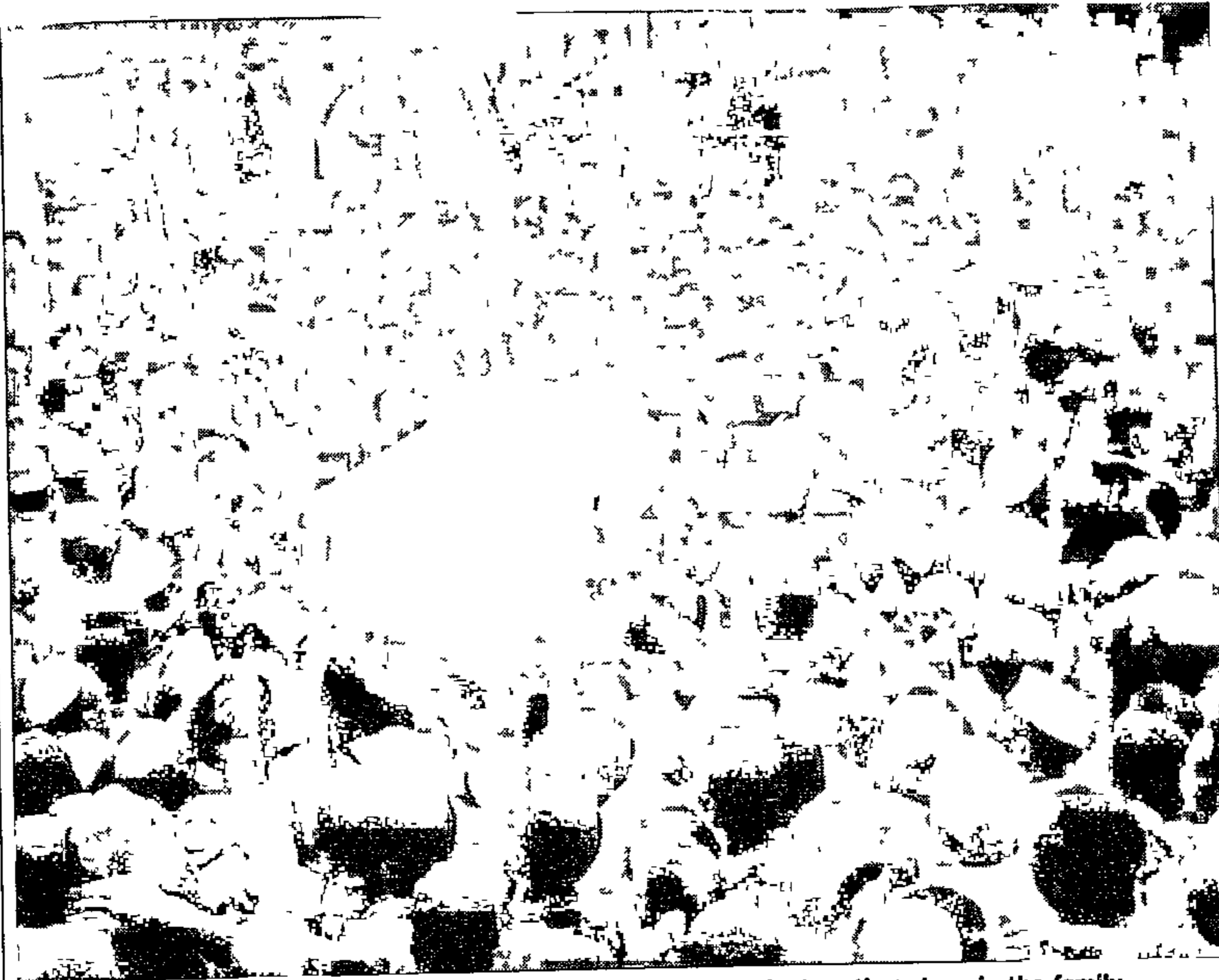
Millionaire newspaper tycoon Moshood Abiola has been in virtual solitary confinement, awaiting trial on charges of treason, since he declared himself president in 1994 — the year after the military government run by Sani Abacha annulled elections he appeared to have won.

Kudiratu Abiola, who married him in 1973 and was one of a number of wives — and was said to be his favourite — was also one of the main figures in Nigeria's opposition.

Last month she appeared in court on charges of conspiracy and making false statements. She and two co-accused pleaded not guilty and her trial was to have started on July 17. The charges apparently arose from interviews she gave to Nigerian and foreign media in which she called for her husband's release from prison.

Nigerian police said in a statement they had "directed a full-scale investigation" and pledged that "no stone will be left unturned in unravelling the perpetrators of this heinous crime."

● On Wednesday police made several arrests when they broke up a protest against the assassination by thousands of students in the city of Ibadan.



The casket of Kudirat Abiola is carried through the crowd to its last resting place in the family compound in Lagos, Nigerian, on Wednesday. Abiola, the wife of imprisoned opposition party leader Moshood K Abiola, was shot dead at close range by six gunmen on Tuesday when travelling in her car. She died of head wounds hours afterwards, as did her chauffeur. PIC AP

Dictator Abacha blames 'bandits'

(226) Sowetan 7/6/96

NIGERIAN MILITARY DICTATOR General Sani Abacha has sent a letter of condolence to the family of slain opposition activist Kudirat Abiola, who was killed by gunmen who fired on her car in Lagos on Tuesday.

"It is with great shock and a deep sense of loss, but with total submission to the will of Allah, that I received the sad news of the tragic death of Kudirat Abiola," Abacha says in the letter, a copy of which was sent to *Sapa* by the Nigerian embassy in Washington.

She was buried on Wednesday amid anti-Abacha protest.

Abacha blamed "armed bandits" for the killing.

The Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People's Johannesburg office yesterday called for the immediate

Opposition in Jo'burg calls for isolation of the military regime

isolation of Abacha's government.

"Mrs Abiola's murder is clearly part of the brutal campaign by the military junta to eliminate Nigerian pro-democracy activists and silence its critics," said Mosop spokesman Willie Nwudo.

Successful coup

Abacha carried out a successful coup on November 17, 1993, and jailed for treason Abiola's husband Mosood Abiola, who won the June 1993 presidential election. Kudirat Abiola (44) was prominent in the campaign for her husband's release.

Late last year Abacha ordered the

execution of minority rights activist Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other activists, spurring an international outcry.

President Nelson Mandela this week joined other heads of state in expressing shock over Abiola's death.

In his letter to the Abiola family, Abacha extolled the virtues of Kudirat Abiola as a "mother, motivator and a counsellor" and said "her demise at this epoch of our political development is therefore not only a loss to you but to the nation as a whole."

Lawyers for Human Rights said "Abacha's stated commitment to return to civilian rule should be viewed with scepticism" - *Sapa*

Clandestine organisation claims responsibility for murder of Abiola's wife

(226) Star 8/6/96

Lagos - Nigerian police yesterday ruled out armed robbery as a motive for the killing of the wife of detained presidential claimant Moshood Abiola

"The police now believe that Kudirat Abiola's attackers acted with intent to murder the occupants of the vehicle," Nigeria's top police detective, Archibong Nkana, told a news conference

Nkana said the police did not yet have any suspects

Kudirat Abiola was shot in the head at close range on Tuesday while driving along a Lagos street. She was the senior wife of the millionaire politician and had championed his cause since his detention two years ago

The murder and accusation by opposition and pro-democracy groups that the military government was behind the killing has raised the political ire of Africa's most populous nation

Kudirat Abiola's personal assistant, Mike Adesina, who escaped the attack unscathed, was co-operating with the police investigation, Nkana said

"Adesina is undergoing interrogation, but we cannot say he is a suspect," he said

A statement issued by a clandestine organisation called the Committee for the Release of MKO Abiola was sent to news

agencies yesterday claiming responsibility for the murder

"The police are aware of these claims and they are being investigated," Nkana said

The statement accused Kudirat Abiola of "puerile belligerence, inordinate ambition and gallery-oriented activism", and said she was killed because she stood in the way of her husband's release by insisting that the results of the annulled election be upheld

It warned the government to release Abiola or "face horrendous consequences"

Newspapers have suggested that Abiola would be willing to give up his claim to be president for freedom. He was detained in 1994 after declaring himself president on the basis of results of a 1993 election annulled by a former military government

Western countries have called on Nigeria to ensure a proper investigation into the killing. Nigeria has been shunned by the West for human rights abuses and lack of democracy. The United States has not ruled out an oil embargo, an official said this week, and Nigerian military ruler General Sani Abacha yesterday appointed a commission to investigate alleged human rights abuses - Reuter

The Nigerian viper just carries on roaming

Anthony J Afolayan

THE roles played by regional and international economic and political groups of nations in resolving internal and international problems have increased as the world moves closer to a global village. When individual countries hinder such well-meaning bodies' ability to resolve problems that have the potential to create chaos for the international community, they are leading the world one step closer to a state of anarchy.

Nigeria's role in the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity, the Commonwealth, the Economic Community of West African States and non-aligned countries becomes a mockery if it insists on disobeying the will of these organisations. Indeed, it appears that Nigeria wants to stand alone and to continue moving in the opposite direction to the rest of the world. Nigeria's example to the other African countries is frightening.

At the domestic level, Nigerian rulers have continued to ignore the rule of law and respect

for human rights. They ought not to be allowed to extend this irresponsible behaviour to the international arena.

The holding of non-party local government elections should not deceive anyone that the Nigerian military government has genuine intentions to cede power to civilians. The rulers have increased repression of political opponents and have, since October 1994, denied the winner of the June 12 1993 elections, Chief Moshood Abiola, access to his lawyers. Political detainees are still being held, with their families denied access to them.

The measures taken so far by the Commonwealth to censure Nigeria have not gone far enough to convince the rulers to take responsible steps towards solving the political crisis. For example, what steps has Nigeria taken since her suspension from the Commonwealth to warrant sending back ambassadors to the country? Why is it difficult to freeze the foreign accounts of known military rulers? Does the Commonwealth not know the type of steps a hardened dictator will understand?

(226) MFG 14-20/6/96
The Commonwealth should not shift goals. The Nigerian government was mandated by the Commonwealth to return the country to democratic rule within two years. Softening this condition will signal further wrong messages to the military junta.

While the roles being played by Canada and New Zealand are appreciated, Britain and African countries appear to be willing to continue business as usual, they refuse to impose sanctions and prefer to prolong the sufferings of Nigerians in favour of economic advantages. Our generation will not forget our friends and those who stand by us now. Certainly, Nigeria will have new civilian governments that will be responsible enough to address the wrongs.

The futility of pursuing the military-designed transition programme is obvious to most Nigerians. The 1993 elections, and the indiscriminate arrests and trials of political opponents, must be faced squarely by Nigerian rulers. Attempts to sweep them under the carpet are like seeing a viper in one's bedroom and letting it roam.

The human rights abuses and oppression of the masses will not be reduced as long as nothing is done now to stop their repetition in the future. The failure of the Commonwealth to address this problem not only makes a mockery of its declarations, but also sets an example to other African countries that they may follow suit, knowing full well that the international community will not do anything to them.

The solution is dialogue with Abiola. He represents the principle of democracy sought by the average Nigerian. Denying him the right to rule ensures that the history of abuse of political process will recur in the future. Solving this problem now to the satisfaction of most of the aggrieved parties will pave the way for the sustainable retention of sound democratic culture and responsibility to the electorate. Abiola should be invited to make concessions, and the military must make concessions as well. One obvious concession is the establishment of a government of national unity, which Abiola should lead. This appears to be the bottom line accepted by most Nigerian pro-democracy groups.

Anthony J Afolayan is the African representative of the Association of Nigerians Abroad.

Human rights body launched in Nigeria

(226) AD 19/6/96

ABUJA — The Nigerian government has lifted its ban on party politics, but made it clear that all new parties to be registered must have national appeal.

In another development on Monday, military ruler Gen Sani Abacha formally inaugurated an independent body empowered to conduct investigations into allegations of human rights violations referred to it.

The 16-member National Human Rights Commission, made up of representatives of registered nongovernmental human rights organisations, the media, lawyers and "individuals of proven integrity", would also encourage dialogue and educate the public on human rights issues.

Political parties were banned in Nigeria when Abacha seized power in November 1993, cancelling presidential elections that were taking place.

Under regulations issued on Monday by the National Electoral Commission, new parties, to be registered by September, must have a manifesto, a programme and published statutes, and must operate on democratic lines. But it also said the formation of political parties must be based on the principles laid down in the new constitution, whose publication due at the end of last year was put off until 1998.

Among others, the regulations said parties should have their headquarters at Abuja, the federal capital, and have at least 40 000 paid-up members in each of the country's 30 states, plus 15 000 in the capital territory.

The commission will have the right to check details of every member of a party and to oversee its finances. Any funds received from abroad must be handed over within 21 days, the com-

mission said, without making it clear what would become of the money.

The registration of political parties is one of the steps announced by the government leading to presidential elections in 1998 and the disengagement of the military from politics.

Inaugurating the National Human Rights Commission, Abacha said on Monday that "no absolute rights" exist in Nigeria or "in any human society".

"Our rights are of necessity limited by those of other individuals and the larger needs of our society as a whole."

"No one can be allowed to place himself above the law without repercussions because if people are allowed to do so, we will inevitably find ourselves in that state of anarchy which is the antithesis of the civilised society we are striving to build."

He urged the international community to "refrain from judging us by the standards of advanced nations" that passed many years ago through the developmental stages which Nigeria is currently going through.

While some laws enacted by the regime seem objectionable in the eyes of the world, Abacha said, they are "very essential and justifiable in our unique and peculiar circumstances".

Last week, the government announced that Abacha had approved a decree removing the military from special courts and giving a right of appeal to those convicted by such courts. Another decree repealed a 1994 law banning courts from hearing habeas corpus applications for prisoners in preventive detention. The measures were in response to a report by a United Nations fact-finding team which visited Nigeria last April. — Sapa-AFP

226

20/8/96

A new battle front

Opens In Nigeria

FRG 20/6/96

(226)

TOYE OLORI of International Press Service reports from Lagos on the advent of pirate political radio stations in Nigeria aimed at opposing the Abacha regime.

IT'S hardly likely that the Nigerian government officials frequently heard on state-run radio here will get much time on *Radio Democratic International Nigeria* (RDIN) or that they will want to

RDIN was started last week by Nigerian pro-democracy activists living in exile and is believed to be operating from abroad. According to a man who identified himself as its operations director, it is determined to mobilise Nigerians and the international community around the need for a democratic government in Nigeria

"Our aim is to provide an alternative medium to counter the propaganda mounted by the government on national stations," he added

In an apparent bid to compete with the state broadcast media, the RDIN transmits from 7 am to 7.30 am and from 4 pm to 6 pm local time, which is when the government-run *Radio Nigeria* airs its main newscasts

Programmes are in English, but the station has promised to broadcast in Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa, the three major languages spoken by the some 100 million Nigerians. Reports from several cities in Nigeria show that RDIN, which transmits on shortwave, is being received clearly by radio listeners

So far, government officials have said nothing about the emergence of RDIN, the second radio station to have gatecrashed the airwaves here in less than a year

"We have not listened to the station but even if it exists there is little the Nigeria Broadcasting Commission (NBC) can do," a state official said. "We do not have the wherewithal to monitor or control its operation"

Segun Odukumaya, a social sci-

entist and head of the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Lagos, agrees that Nigeria is ill-prepared to monitor or control pirate radios

Odukumaya, who said he had not listened to RDIN, said "the NBC should be the monitoring and control body but I doubt if it has the facilities to do that"

"When citizens go out to set up such pirate stations, it shows all is not well back home and this will have a telling effect on the country," he added

When in October, a similar station, *Radio Freedom Frequency* (RFF) began transmitting anti-government programmes on FM (frequency modulation) for 30 minutes daily in the Lagos area, Information Minister Walter Ofonogoro warned that it would be tracked down and its operators arrested

Thus far, the authorities have not discovered the location of RFF

Some optimists here see the coming on stream of a second pro-democracy radio station which, moreover, reaches a wider audience, as a significant blow to the military regime

"This is a new dimension in efforts to bring down the General Sani Abacha-led military government. If the pressure is kept on, the military might have no choice than to go," said a female commentator, who requested anonymity

The emergence of RDIN coincided with the third anniversary of the presidential election held on June 12, 1993, whose annulment by the military started a political crisis that has continued until today

Businessman Moshood Abiola, believed to have won the election, was arrested and charged for treason after declaring himself presi-

dent on the first anniversary of the poll. He is still being detained by the Abacha regime as are a number of opposition and pro-democracy activists

"All the military government is doing is to chase after pro-democracy groups and use our limited resources to fight a propaganda war abroad instead of making its citizens comfortable at home," the female commentator said

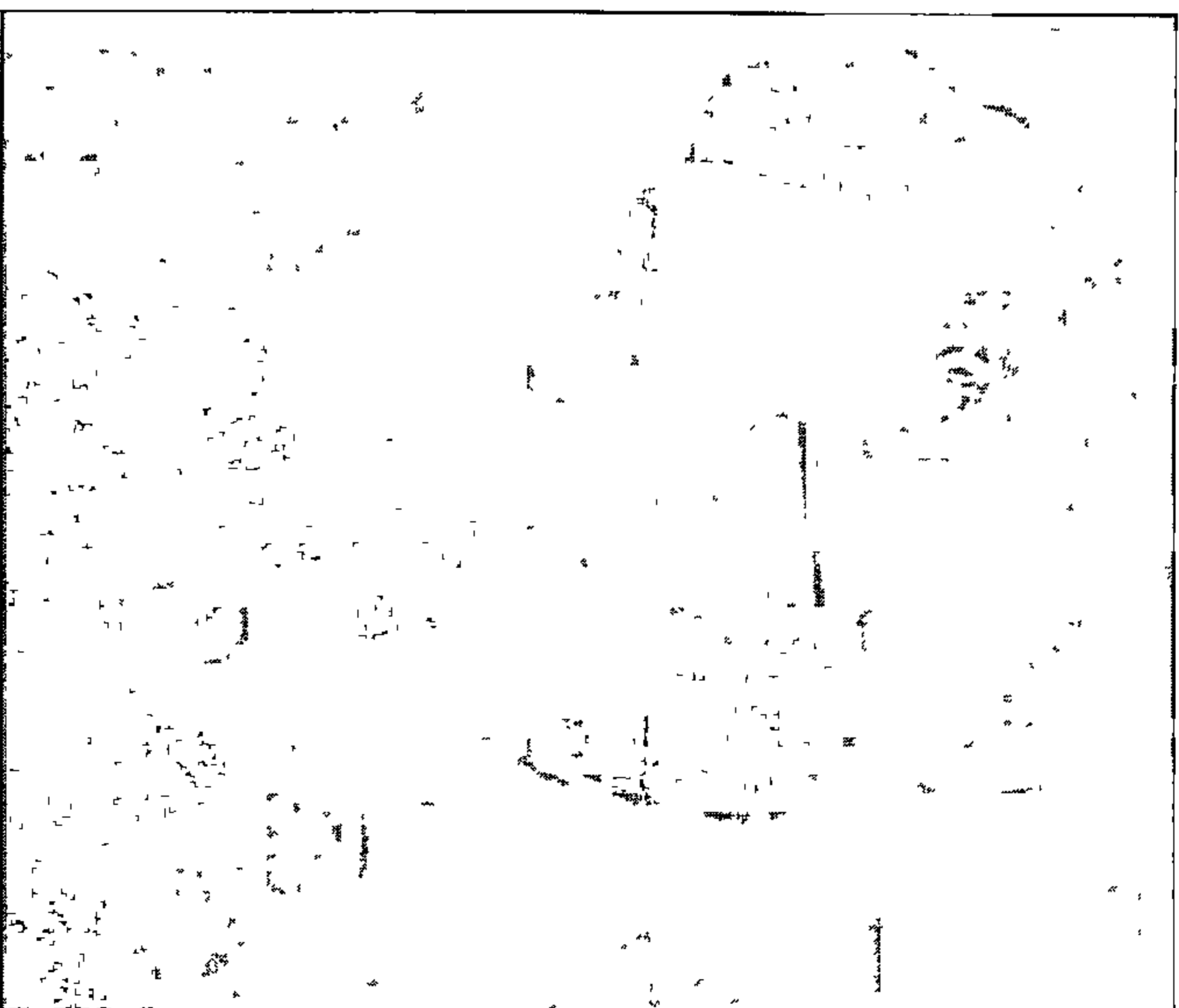
Kayode Fayemi, Director of Communications of the opposition National Liberation Council (NLC), a pro-democracy group based in the United States, had heralded the coming of RDIN in early May. He said then that it would seek to transmit the truth and expose the illegality of Nigeria's military regime

RDIN went on the air on Tuesday, June 11. By the next morning, it had relayed a recorded speech credited to Anthony Enahoro, leader of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), calling for sanctions against Nigeria and the withholding of proceeds of oil sales abroad to get the military out of power

"The fear that economic sanctions will hurt the ordinary man does not arise as the common man has never enjoyed the fruits of Nigeria's oil," said the NADECO leader, who lives in exile in London

Following the execution of nine minority rights activists in November last, the Commonwealth suspended Nigeria while the European Union and the United States imposed limited sanctions, including an embargo on the sale of weapons and military hardware to the West African nation and the non-issuance of visas to persons directly related to its military regime

But many here believe oil sanc-



Nigerian dictator General Sani Abacha. He now faces a growing challenge on the nation's airwaves.

tions are the only sure way to force the military out of power, since they have been the main beneficiaries of oil incomes, which account for more than 90 percent of Nigeria's export earnings

Other Nigerian exiles who have

spoken on RDIN include Tokunbo Afikuyomi, one-time personal assistant to ex-Foreign Minister Baba Gana Kingibe. He hinted that Nigerians abroad might form a government in exile

Sapa-IPS

Nigerian rulers in bid to stave off sanctions

LONDON: A 17-member delegation from Nigeria met Commonwealth ministers here yesterday in a bid to avert continued sanctions imposed to protest against the executions of nine activists last year.

(226) CT 25/6/96

NIGERIA'S military leaders, a target of international scorn for executing human rights activists, met Commonwealth ministers here yesterday to stave off punitive sanctions

As the closed-door meeting got under way, Nigeria released two detained human rights activists

They are lawyer Mr Tunji Abayomi and Mr Abdul Oro, a leading member of the Organisation for the Defence of Civil Liberties, who were arrested last July

Abayomi was held after he denounced the 15-year jail term given former head of state General Olusegun Obasanjo by a military tribunal for his alleged role in a failed coup attempt in March 1995 against General Sani Abacha.

The meeting here was the first of its kind since Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth last November after writer and

minority rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other members of the Ogoni people of southern Nigeria were hanged

Headed by Foreign Minister Mr Tom Ikin, the size of the 17-member Nigerian delegation was said to reflect the importance the military junta was according the meeting with the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG)

Ministers of Britain, Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa and Zimbabwe met among themselves yesterday morning before receiving the Nigerian delegation

The CMAG, created in November to report on human rights violations in Nigeria, will issue a statement today

A Commonwealth spokesman said late yesterday "The talks between CMAG and the Nigerian delegation have started positively

and were frank and cordial "

He added "The discussion has been concerned with issues raised by the Nigerian government and by CMAG. The discussions will resolve tomorrow morning "

The Nigerian delegation includes two advisers to military ruler Abacha whose regime incurred worldwide condemnation after the hangings.

A military tribunal found the nine activists guilty of killing four prominent members of the Ogoni community in oil-rich Rivers state

The Nigerian opposition denounced the trial as a farce aimed at silencing Saro-Wiwa's movement, which worked to secure a share of the state's oil revenue for his people and to protect the environment

But Nigeria said it was a victim of a "premeditated plot" and refused to allow a CMAG fact-finding group to enter the country

In April the CMAG recommended sanctions against Nigeria, but agreed to allow Lagos to argue its case before implementation — Sapa-AFP

Nigeria wins reprieve over sanctions

(226) Star 26/6/96

Canada has broken ranks with other Commonwealth countries over action against the Nigerian military regime and will go ahead alone with sanctions, including a ban on arms exports and sporting contacts

At a meeting of foreign ministers in London yesterday, other Commonwealth countries agreed not to impose sanctions against Nigeria immediately

A joint communique at the end of two days of talks between a 17-strong Nigerian delegation and a special Commonwealth committee welcomed the dialogue and agreed to hold off on sanctions until the committee's next meeting in September.

But the Canadian foreign minister said his country will go ahead with sanctions recommended by the committee in April.

These also include visa restrictions on members of the Nigerian regime and their families, withdrawing military attaches, halting military training, downgrading diplomatic missions and cultural links, and denying educational facilities to members of the regime and their families

The special Commonwealth committee was established in November when Nigeria was suspended at the Commonwealth's summit meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, for its disregard of human rights and democracy. While the meeting was in progress, the regime executed nine minority Ogoni leaders, despite pleas for clemency

Axworthy said the Nigerians pushed hard to have their suspension from the Commonwealth lifted and argued that they were making progress on human rights and the rule of law, "but I'm afraid some of us disagree".

Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi said the meeting was significant "because it has broken an impasse that has existed between Nigeria and the Commonwealth" - Sapa-AP

Nigeria still out in the cold

(226)
LONDON - Commonwealth countries have said they will not impose agreed sanctions against Nigeria until the two sides have talked more about ending a seven-month crisis in relations. ARG 26/6/96

But Commonwealth ministers, speaking after two days of talks with a delegation from the Abuja government, made no mention of reversing Nigeria's suspension from the 56-nation body last November, which was imposed for human rights abuses.

Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi said the impasse had been broken, but diplomats said the two sides still remained far apart - Reuter.

Commonwealth defers

sanctions on Nigeria

(226) CT 26/6/96

LONDON: Commonwealth countries said yesterday they would not impose a set of agreed sanctions on Nigeria until the two sides had talked more about ending a seven-month crisis in relations.

But Commonwealth ministers, speaking after two days of talks with a delegation from the Abuja government, made no mention of reversing Nigeria's suspension from the 56-nation body last November, which was imposed for human rights abuses.

Nigerian Foreign Minister Mr Tom Ikimi said the impasse in relations had been broken and expressed the hope that his country could return to the Commonwealth one day.

But diplomats said the two sides still remained far apart after a day of heated discussions between the Nigerians and the eight-nation Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, which is itself showing signs of a split.

Canadian Foreign Minister Mr

Lloyd Axworthy said that Ottawa would unilaterally impose the sanctions, which include an arms sales embargo and a ban on foreign travel for members of the Nigerian leadership and on foreign education for their children.

"As the Nigerian delegation has indicated a will to open a dialogue, it would not be proper to impose the measures for the time being," Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Mr Stan Mudenge told a news conference.

As the Commonwealth ministers met, Nigerian authorities said they had freed another political detainee, editor of an opposition magazine who had been held since last December, bringing the number of recent releases to seven.

The action group said in a statement that further talks with Nigeria would be held, but Ikimi said it would be some time before a fact-finding group was admitted to his country — Reuter

Commonwealth has no answer to Nigeria crisis

(22b)

BD 27/6/96

LONDON — Commonwealth officials concede they have little hope of nudging Nigeria down the road to democracy, and say the crisis in relations with Abuja is putting increasing strain on the 56-nation body.

The sides remained poles apart on Tuesday after two days of talks to discuss Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth for human rights abuses. The Commonwealth has also criticised the Nigerian military government's planned three-year transition to democracy as inadequate.

Commonwealth officials expressed guarded optimism about the future but were more candid in private, using undiplomatic language to vent their frustrations. "This regime is so corrupt that I can see things going on like this for a very long time. Things will be the same whoever we deal with," said one senior negotiator.

"The Nigerians are like the Soviets — they just don't want to understand."

After the talks, the eight-nation Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group said it would continue to suspend a set of agreed sanctions against Nigeria pending further talks.

Former Commonwealth secretary-general Sonny Ramphal condemned the decision and called for wide-ranging sanctions to be slapped on Nigeria.

"I'm troubled that more did not come out of what was described as a ministerial action group. It was the epitome of inaction. What was agreed between the group and the Nigerian delegation was very feeble and puny."

"I think of Nigeria, the pro-democracy groups. . . What would they think of this Commonwealth statement? Where is the concern with freedom,

with values, with people?"

The Nigerians gave little away, rejecting criticism of the government's plans for transition to democracy while demanding the end of the suspension, imposed after the execution of author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight rights activists last year.

"What we have here is a failure to communicate. We have two totally different cultures with no understanding of each other."

"The second people began talking about timetables the whole thing fell apart," said one diplomat.

Prof James Manor, director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, said the dispute with Nigeria highlighted the grouping's weaknesses.

"It's a major problem. The Commonwealth is very effective when a degree of goodwill is available from the errant state or government," he said.

"When that goodwill is absent, then action through other international agencies and bilateral relations with the errant government are more effective means of tackling the problem."

This view is shared by Canada, which showed its frustrations with the action group by announcing it would unilaterally impose the set of agreed sanctions, which include an embargo on arms sales.

Britain and others strongly oppose the idea of sanctions such as an embargo on oil sales, saying the steps would be virtually unenforceable and would harm ordinary Nigerians rather than the leaders of the populous oil-rich West African state. The group consists of Zimbabwe, the UK, Malaysia, Canada, Jamaica, Ghana, New Zealand and SA — Reuter.

CANADA UNILATERALLY IMPOSES SANCTIONS

Nigeria talks deadlocked

CT 27/6/96 (226)

LONDON. Canada has decided to go ahead and impose sanctions on Nigeria after inconclusive Commonwealth talks on Nigeria's suspension from the organisation

COMMONWEALTH officials concede they have little hope of nudging Nigeria down the road to democracy saying the crisis is putting increasing strain on the 56-nation body

The sides remained poles apart yesterday after two days of talks to discuss Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth for human rights abuses

The Commonwealth has also criticised the Nigerian military government's planned three-year transition to democracy as inadequate

Commonwealth officials expressed guarded optimism about the future but were more candid in private using undiplomatic language to vent their frustrations.

"This regime is so corrupt that I can see things going on like this for a very long time" a senior negotiator said.

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Former Commonwealth secretary general Mr Sonny Ramphal condemned the decision and called for wide-ranging sanctions to be slapped on Nigeria

"I'm troubled that more did not come out of what was described as a ministerial action group. It was the epitome of inaction" he told BBC television

"What would they (the pro

democracy groups in Nigeria) think of this Commonwealth statement? Where is the concern with freedom with values with people?"

The Nigerians gave little away rejecting criticism of the government's plans for transition to democracy while demanding the end of the suspension imposed after the execution of author Ken Saro Wiwa and eight rights activists last year

Professor James Manor, director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in London, said the dispute with Nigeria highlighted the organisation's weaknesses

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Britain and others strongly oppose the idea of sanctions such as an embargo on oil sales saying the steps would be unenforceable and would harm ordinary Nigerians rather than their leaders

Nigeria which wields real power in Africa has been carrying out a concerted diplomatic campaign among weaker members of the Commonwealth who now seem unlikely to back calls for tougher action — Reuter



UNREPENTANT Nigerian Foreign Minister Chief Tom Ikimi (left) with the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on Nigeria's chairman of the group Dr Stan Mudenge

'Call for sanctions against Nigeria is naive'

(226) CT (BR) 27/6/96

By Lahai J Samboma

Tanker drivers' strike sparks panic buying

London — Leading oil industry experts have described renewed calls by pro-democracy activists for an international embargo to be imposed on Nigerian oil as "naive" and "an exercise in wishful thinking"

The latest call for anti-Nigeria oil sanctions were made by the co-chairman of Nigeria's National Democratic Coalition (Nadeco), chief Anthony Enahoro in London this week. The call coincided with a meeting of the Commonwealth

Chief Enahoro says the government's political transition programme is a farce and that only comprehensive oil sanctions by the international community can force General Sani Abacha's regime to institute human rights and political reforms

But Simon Trimble, a senior oil analyst at the London-based stockbrokers, Merrill Lynch, said "It is somewhat naive to believe that sanctions will be imposed on Nigerian oil by powerful Western nations, whose economies will be severely affected by such a move"

Enahoro's lobbying of Western governments will be difficult, given that the earlier intervention of statesmen, such as President Nelson Mandela, failed to persuade the West to join the pro-sanctions bandwagon, he says

"There is only one word for the situation in Nigeria and that is grim," said Enahoro. "We have had nearly 36 years of military rule and we say enough is enough. We've got to make the soldiers go back to their barracks to do the job they are paid to do

Lagos — A strike by road tanker drivers sparked panic buying for fuel yesterday in Nigeria's biggest city, Lagos motorists and officials said

Queues of vehicles formed at many pump stations as motorists tried to fill up. "People are trying to stock up because of the strike by tanker drivers," said one station attendant, Biodun Aina

Road tanker drivers went on

Oil sanctions can do the trick "

Calls for an oil embargo on the West African state were first made after the military annulled the 1993 presidential elections, universally acknowledged to have been won by chief M K O Abiola

They intensified a year later when Abiola was imprisoned on charges of treason after he declared himself president on the first anniversary of the voided poll. The execution last November of the Ogoni rights campaigner Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others galvanised the Commonwealth to suspend Nigeria

But, while Western nations applied limited sanctions on the country, they stopped short of an embargo on oil exports, which account for over 90 percent of government revenue

A spokesman for the British Foreign Office, James Dunlop, said that comprehensive anti-Nigeria sanctions would be "counter-productive" and would alienate the Nigerian regime, "with whom," he said, "we are trying to have a constructive dialogue about reform"

Shell Oil — the Anglo-Dutch

strike on Tuesday over a ban on them parking their articulated trucks under Lagos flyovers

Nigeria, Africa's leading producer, pumps almost 2 million barrels of crude oil daily, but still suffers fuel shortages for many reasons ranging from poor distribution to the inability of its oil refineries to function properly. Any problem with distribution immediately leads to a shortage.

multinational whose activities in the Niger Delta were primary targets for Saro-Wiwa and his comrades before their executions — gets 14 percent of its output from the country's oil wells. Major British and US oil companies have also invested massively in the country

But aside from the fact that an oil embargo on Nigeria would jeopardise tens of billions of dollars of Western investment in the country, Trimble believes it could also trigger inflation in Western countries at a time when many of them have only managed to push it below the five percent mark

Despite activists' best efforts, the company's share price continues to rise on international stock markets. This, say analysts, indicates investors are confident an oil embargo on Nigeria is not in the offing

"The forward market for oil is not reflecting any panic," says Trimble

"The market presumes that there will not be an embargo on Nigerian oil — and the market is usually right" — Sapa-IPS



While Abacha still prays hard to get

LONDON - The Commonwealth agreed this week not to impose sanctions against Nigeria immediately - but Canada announced that it would unilaterally go ahead with sanctions including a ban on arms exports and sporting contacts.

A joint communique at the end of two days of talks between a 17-strong Nigerian delegation and a special Commonwealth committee welcomed the dialogue and agreed to hold off sanctions until the committee's next meeting in September.

Canada announced that it would go ahead with sanctions recommended by the committee in April.

These include visa restrictions on members of the Nigerian regime and their families, withdrawing military attaches, halting military training, downgrading diplomatic missions and cultural links, and denying educational facilities to members of the regime and their families.

Disregard for human rights

The special Commonwealth committee was established last November after Nigeria was suspended at the Commonwealth's summit meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, for its disregard of human rights and democracy.

While the meeting was in progress the regime executed nine Ogoni leaders ignoring international pleas for clemency.

Nigerian foreign minister Tom Ikimi said this week's meeting was significant "because it has broken an impasse that has existed between Nigeria and the Commonwealth" since it suspended Nigeria's membership.

"Of course Nigeria, a long-standing Commonwealth member, would like a situation where circumstances are normalised and Nigeria is once again a fully-fledged member of the Commonwealth," he told a news conference.

Meanwhile Nigerian leader General Sani Abacha has refused the eight-

member Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group permission to visit Nigeria. The group pressed the Nigerian delegation to allow a visit but got no commitment.

The committee is chaired by Zimbabwean foreign minister Stan Mudenge and includes the foreign ministers of New Zealand, South Africa, Ghana, Malaysia, Jamaica, Canada and Britain.

Nigeria has agreed to reinstitute *habeas corpus*, released some prisoners and agreed to review the cases of political prisoners.

No movement

However, despite requests from the committee, there was no indication that Nigeria was prepared to release Moshood Abiola, the presumed winner of the June 1993 election, who is still in jail for defying Abacha and declaring himself president. Nigeria has recently freed seven political activists.

Auwalu Hamisu Yadudu, Abacha's legal adviser and a member of the delegation, told the BBC World Service that the releases were not related to the London talks. But many observers saw the release as a gesture to the Commonwealth.

The latest prisoner freed was leading Nigerian journalist Nosa Igiebor, who edits *Tell* magazine. He was released on Monday night after being held for six months.

Ban on air links

At the April meeting, the Commonwealth committee also said a ban on air links with Nigeria and additional economic measures, including freezing the financial assets and bank accounts of members of the regime and their families, should be considered in consultation with the European Union and the United States.

Canada will raise Nigeria at this weekend's summit meeting of leaders of the seven major industrialised nations in Lyon, France. - Sapa-AP

Isolated Nigeria lashes out at SA

ST 30/6/96

(226)

By ANDREW TRENCH: London

SOUTH Africa this week fended off an angry attack from Nigeria over the African nation's suspension from the Commonwealth and a threatened package of sanctions

The onslaught came from the Nigerian Foreign Minister, Tom Ikimi, as eight Commonwealth countries met with the Nigerians in London

After the meeting, the group decided to "hold in reserve" its threat of sanctions until a further meeting with the Nigerians in September

It had to contend with the possibility of serious divisions within its ranks, as Canada said it had decided to press ahead with sanctions

Commenting on Nigeria's position after the talks, Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo said "When they argue, they have scapegoats, including South Africa and President Mandela"

He said Nigeria had sought to group South Africa with other Western powers, "saying we are working against their interests"

"I simply said it was wrong to say South Africa was against the people of Nigeria we want to see democracy established," he said.

"I was not surprised that they levelled this attack against us They have been doing it at all levels They are trying to blame us for the situation," he said

South Africa responded with strong challenges to the Nigerian delegation, raising the question of the release of jailed opposition leader, Chief Moshood Abiola, and free political activity in the country

Mr Nzo said he had stressed South Africa's insistence that "civil society" be involved in Nigeria's moves towards democracy

"Civil society will have a different view to what the government sees as progress," he said.

This week's meeting was the first between Nigeria and the Commonwealth

since Nigeria's suspension from the organisation in November over the execution of author and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others

Diplomats involved in this week's talks say they were amazed by Nigeria's tough position

Nigerian opposition groups labelled the Commonwealth's decision to "hold in reserve" its sanctions plan until the September meeting "disappointing" and "short-sighted"

However, Mr Nzo said the Nigerians' main aim had been to have their suspension lifted and the threat of sanctions removed completely

They had argued that their suspension was unprocedural and that they had not been given the chance to state their case

"They did not get what they wanted," he said "I think their isolation is beginning to bite"

Meanwhile, of immediate concern to the Commonwealth group is Canada's decision to go it alone with sanctions

Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy said after the meeting that his country would "go ahead on our own"

He acknowledged the Commonwealth's decision to pursue talks with the Nigerians, but added "We think more has to be done, and we can do what we can by ourselves"

New Zealand's Foreign Minister, Don McKinnon, did not rule out following the same route

Mr Nzo said South Africa would not adopt the same stance as Canada, whose move had sent a message to Nigeria that there was "a big division in the group"

The Canadians said they were trying to bring themselves into line with measures taken, for example, by the European Union

The European Union has imposed a number of sanctions on Nigeria, including a freeze on development aid and the banning of arms exports and visas to government members and their families

PAUL J RICHARDS / AFP



Nigerian leader's son freed from jail

Lagos - Kola Abiola, the eldest son of detained Chief Moshood Abiola, has been released after being detained more than two weeks over the assassination of his stepmother, Kudiratu Abiola, press reports said yesterday

The Sunday Concord, a newspaper owned by Chief Abiola, reported that his son had been released late on Saturday.

Gunmen assassinated Kudiratu Abiola (44) on June 4.

Other members of the Abiola family, including the millionaire politician's younger brother Alhaji Mubashuru Abiola, who was arrested about the same time, were expected to be released soon.

Chief Abiola has been detained on treason charges since declaring himself president on the basis of 1993 elections that had been annulled by the military despite having been judged free and fair by observers. - Sapa AFP.

(226) etov 1/7/96

Abiola's CT 1/7/96 son freed (226) from jail

LAGOS Mr Kola Abiola, the eldest son of detained Chief Moshood Abiola, has been released after being detained more than two weeks for the assassination of his stepmother, Mrs Kudiratu Abiola, it was reported here yesterday

The Sunday Concord, a newspaper owned by Chief Abiola, said that his son, who was taken away for interrogation on June 12, was released late on Saturday

The release was also reported by the independent Vanguard newspaper yesterday

Gunmen assassinated Mrs Abiola, 44, as she was getting into her car on June 4.

● Nigeria's Housing Minister, General Abdulkareem Adisa, told thousands of people whose makeshift homes and shops here had been demolished on government orders to return to their villages

"More than 50% of people living in Lagos have no business staying there. If they have no jobs, they should return to their villages," he said on state television

Thousands of people have been made homeless and jobless here since the demolition of houses and shops built under bridges or near highways started in mid-May.

"They have farms. They should go and farm. All we are doing is to ensure that things are done properly and that people do not look for money anyhow," he added — Sapa-AFP

B) 3/7/96
**Backdown
on Nigeria**

(22b)
APPEALS from the UN and west African countries forced President Nelson Mandela to back down on his hard line against Nigeria's military regime, the president said yesterday.

Mandela said he hoped the issue would not be brought up at the forthcoming OAU summit in Yaounde this week because of differences of opinion.

"I must say that Africa is not speaking with one voice" on Nigeria, he said.

When he played a leading role in suspending Nigeria from the Commonwealth last year, following the executions of author Ken Saro-Wiwa and other minority activists, Mandela said: "I received representations from countries in West Africa as well as Boutros Boutros-Ghali," the UN secretary-general.

Boutros-Ghali reminded Mandela that "Nigeria is responsible for law and order in Sierra Leone and Liberia" and if something happened to Nigerian leader Sani Abacha greater chaos could result.

"The countries in West Africa are saying. 'We depend on Nigeria economically and if you hurt Nigeria you are hurting us'."

Although there exists in Nigeria "a situation that cannot be condoned, we must take into account the feelings in Africa", Mandela said — Sapa-AFP.

Restore civilian rule, Nigeria told

ET 11/7/96
(226)

GENEVA: Nigeria's military regime, which drew international condemnation for executing nine minority rights activists last year, told a UN commission it had taken measures to improve its human rights record, according to a report released yesterday.

But the 18-member UN Human Rights Committee concluded after studying a report requested from Nigeria that continuing military rule in Africa's most populous country was "inherently incompatible" with human rights.

And it insisted that the military junta make good on its pledge to restore civilian rule in October 1998.

The head of the Nigerian delegation, Mr Auwalu Yadudu, told the panel on Tuesday that the regime's efforts on the human rights front included June decrees that bar military personnel from courts hearing civil disobedience cases and restoring the right to appeal.

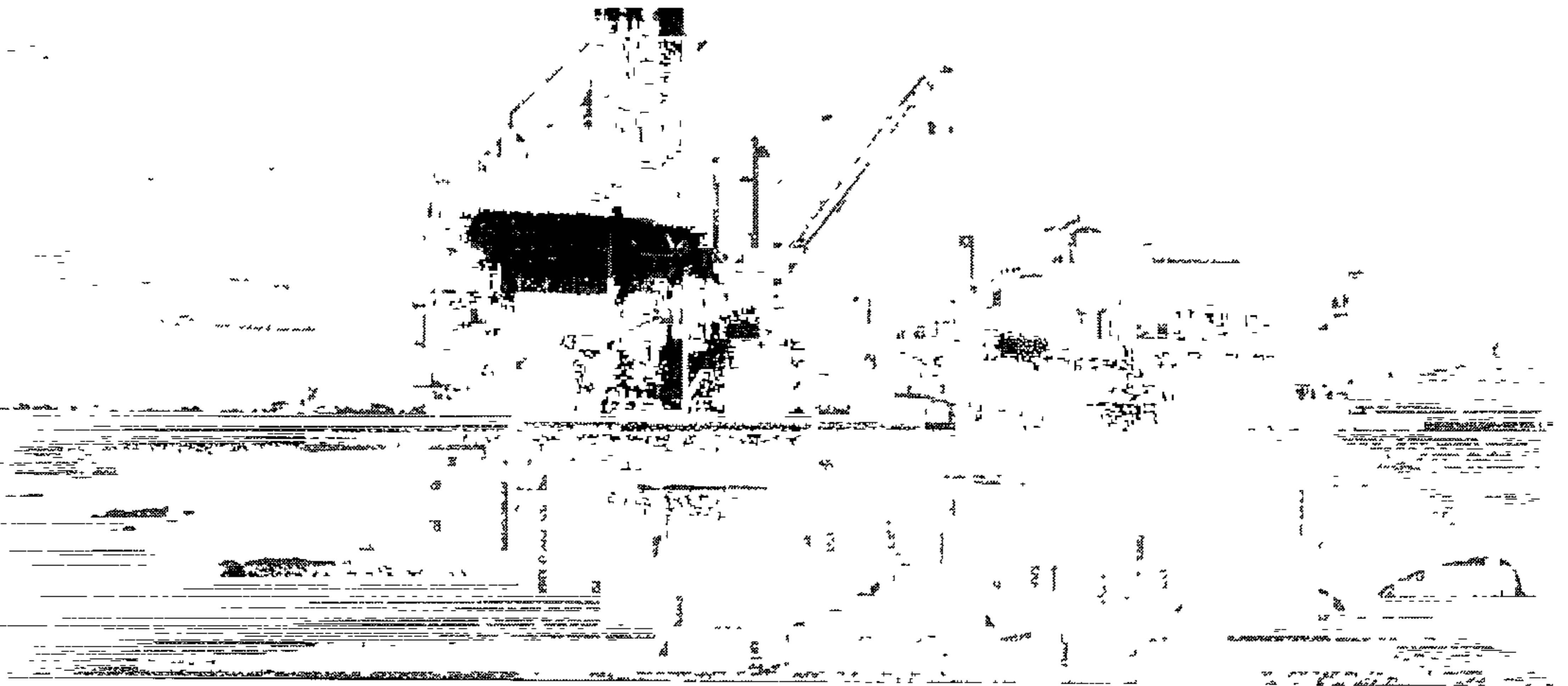
There was no such right when writer and human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other members of the Ogoni minority group were executed last November. They had been convicted of murdering four prominent pro-government members of their community in the oil-rich southern state of Rivers.

The executions prompted the Commonwealth to suspend Nigeria's membership in the organisation, and impose other international sanctions.

Saro-Wiwa led a movement that sought to protect Ogoni land from environmental damage by multinational oil companies operating in the state, such as Shell, and to obtain for the Ogoni a share of the region's oil wealth.

Yadudu said a Nigerian government commission on developing oil-producing regions had also been asked to study whether the petroleum industry was in fact causing ecological damage in rivers.

The UN committee urged that all political prisoners be released immediately, that harassment of human rights activists stop, that compensation be paid to families of those executed as a result of trials that violated human rights conventions and that those responsible for human rights violations be brought to justice. — Sapa-AFP



umping oil from the mangrove swamps Shell has been blamed for deteriorating living standards in the Niger Delta

PHOTO SHELL PHOTO SERVICE

The Shell road to shame

MTG 12-18/7/96 (226)

A barrister berates Shell in front of village elders It's music to the ears of the military, writes **Patrick Donovan**

GIVE him a wig and black silk gown, and Napoleon Agbedetse could have walked back into the south London courtroom where he used to practise as a barrister. He is on the bank of the Abadino River, deep inside the mosquito-infested mangrove swamps of the Niger delta. Despite the shirt-soaking humidity, Agbedetse is immaculately dressed in a heavy black pinstripe suit.

Standing on the jetty amid a welter of gaping young boys, he cuts an incongruous figure as he courteously greets representatives of the Shell oil company and prepares, yet again, to verbal battle on behalf of the Omadino people. This is only one of the hundreds of remote rural communities in Nigeria who feel they are being cheated out of their birthright by foreign oil companies.

This issue has rarely been out of the headlines since the country's military government late last year outraged international opinion by proceeding with the hanging of environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa — a campaigner for the the Ogoni people who live in the east of the delta.

Shell, which operates a consortium responsible for drilling more than half the country's oil reserves, has been widely criticised for not doing more to oppose the execution. Shell is perceived by many in the west to have huge influence with the authorities as oil now accounts for as much as 90% of the government's revenue. But within the subsistence-level fishing communities like the Omadinos near the oil town of Warri, anger is steadily growing.

Last month, 60 protesters forced Shell to shut down its drilling rig in nearby Jones Creek — the latest of a string of incidents throughout the delta basin, where local communities' dissatisfaction has boiled over into direct action against Shell activities.

Six million people live in this 70,000km² province. These are rural communities, eking out their living from the brown waters of the Niger and its fast-running tributaries, making out across a massive expanse of rain forest and mangrove swamp. But their living standards have plummeted: wildlife is scarce, and fish

yields are down. How much this is due to the pressures of population growth, lack of land management or oil industry-related pollution depends on which lobbyists you listen to.

All of which raises the question of to what extent any international company operating in a deprived country should be held responsible for functions which are, or should be, the preserve of the national government. In the case of Nigeria, the debate is clouded still further by the failure of the national government to redistribute hefty oil revenues to the producing areas, and by the myriad local tribal tensions which make it almost impossible to get an accurate assessment of the views of local people.

Yet the debate that took place last week between Agbedetse and Shell's local general manager, Steve Ollerearnshaw, in front of an audience of villagers down the Abadino River does, in simplified form, highlight the underlying conflict.

Although he had cut out a career for himself as a British-based barrister, Agbedetse says that he was driven by his conscience to return to help his native Itsekri tribe.

Waiting until the contingent from Shell has sat down in the corrugated tin-roofed meeting hall, Agbedetse drops to his knee before Chief Sunday and the other tribal elders, some wearing bowler hats and all seated at differing heights to reflect their varying degrees of seniority.

Waiting until his guests have been served Star beer or cola, he lulls them into a false sense of security, praising Shell for its "sheer hard work" which has "opened up the unknown hidden wealth of our country". And then he turns the knife. Listened to attentively by dozens of stony-faced villagers, Agbedetse accuses Shell of "dictatorship".

"On paper, they dialogue with the community on what developments are needed, but in reality Shell operatives dictate what they want, irrespective of the needs of the people," he says.

Not only do communities like the Omadino get little back from local oil exploration, but also Shell, he asserts, is decimating the region's staple occupation of fishing, through oil spills. He adds "The plight of those of us in the rural operation areas is one of depression, neglect and poverty".

As they sit in their green overalls, several Shell officials have clearly heard this all before. Ollerearnshaw

gets to his feet, pointing out that the company has given the community a block of classrooms and public toilets and will shortly be donating a health centre — the latest items from Shell's \$30-million-a-year community assistance programme for the Niger Delta region. A further \$100-million is allocated for the environment annually.

He tries to raise the point that Shell is a company, and

cannot take on all the functions of central government. But one angry young man, wearing blue and white robes, attempts to hijack the meeting, angrily shouting that the company must do more.

Back in Nigeria's capital city, Lagos, the company's managing director Brian Anderson admits that adverse publicity surrounding its involvement in Nigeria has been "very bad" for the company's image, particularly the controversy surrounding the Saro-Wiwa hanging. But Shell insists that the situation in the Niger Delta is far more complex, and Anderson claims that its influence on the hardline national government is far less than the West supposes it to be.

Shell's stance is that it is, after all, a commercial company with a 30% stake in a consortium in which the state-owned Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation has a majority holding. The group, which includes Elf of France and Italy's Agip, pumps

more than half of Nigeria's output of two million barrels a day, giving the country oil revenues worth \$7-billion, of which the government keeps 75%.

At least 3% of this revenue should flow back to the people of the oil-producing areas, according to the terms of a government decree. This is to increase to 13%, although the higher figure has yet to be ratified.

In practice, it appears that government aid has all but broken down, and Shell says that the administration is in arrears with its payments. That puts even more pressure on the funds Shell and its other partners have for community projects.

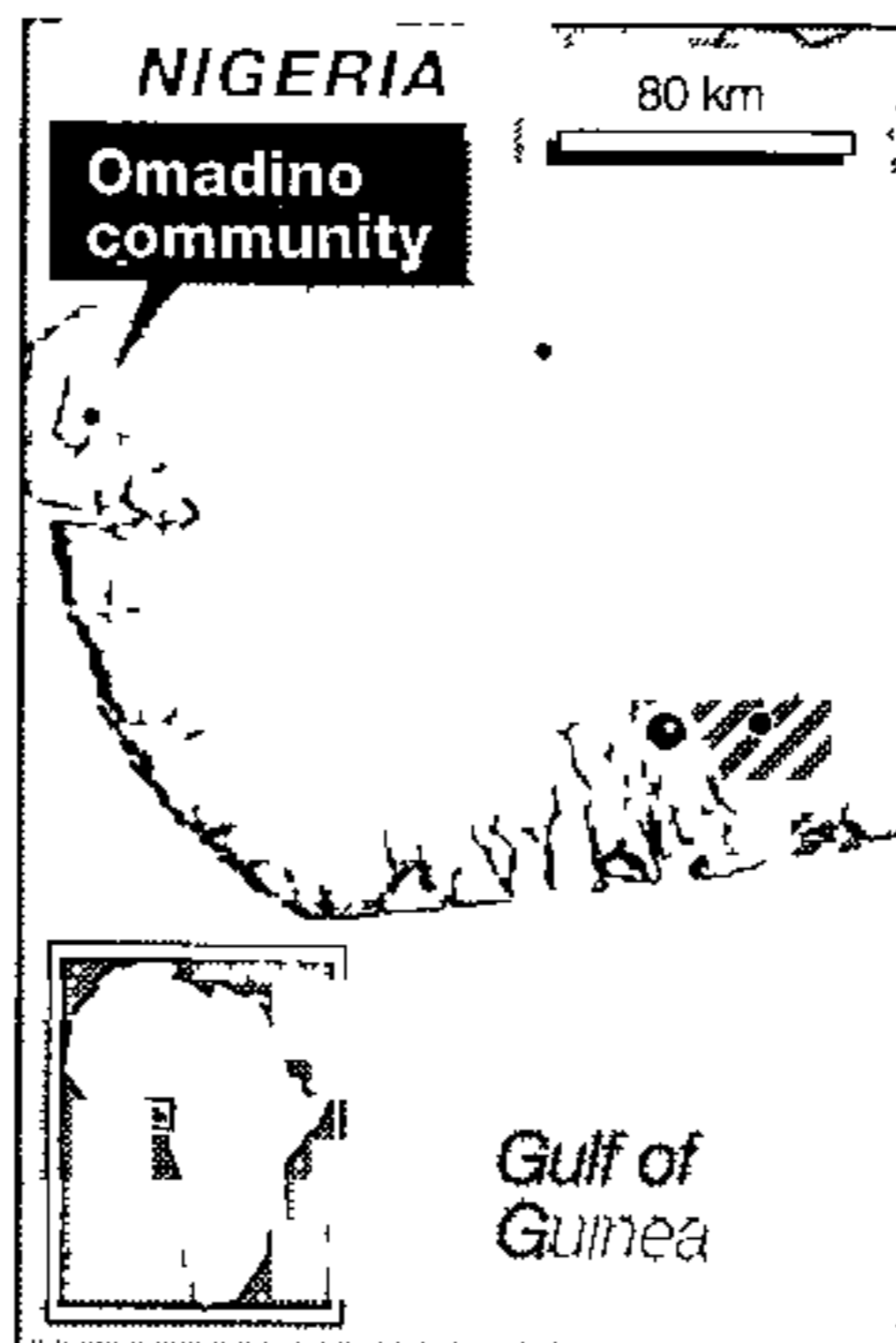
The problem is that for many of the rural inhabitants of the Niger Delta, Shell has effectively become the government. It may protest that it does not aspire to become a 21st century version of the East India Company, yet the more it seeks to pacify local people by taking over the role of building hospitals and providing schools, the more it replaces Nigeria's military dictatorship as a target for civil dissent.

And yet Shell has been extracting oil here for 50 years. It may play the role of the community-minded Western oil company, but why is it only now making such a fanfare about its perfectly laudable programmes to replant the mangrove swamps and bury its pipelines if not to improve its public image?

Of course attitudes change, but Shell cannot ignore the fact that it has drained billions of dollars of profits out of Nigeria during the past five decades. Its payback to the community has hardly been consistent over that period.

And as with all oil explorers, it has inevitably contributed to the pollution of the environment, although there is no obvious sign of any significant spillage within its operating areas in the delta.

But Shell is now having to pay in full. It has played such a pivotal role in Nigeria's economy that it must bear some responsibility when the going gets rough. But the company's predicament may be useful, too, for Nigeria's leader, General Sani Abacha. The controversy diverts attention from the country's fundamental problem — the corruption and inefficiency in its own military government.



Nigeria's second-hand boom

A huge boom in the sale of imported second-hand goods in Nigeria is causing joy, fear, and confusion, and the government may soon crack down to end it all reports **TOYE OLORI** of International Press Service in Lagos

(226) ARG 15/1/96

THE bustling Nigerian markets have become one-stop shops for extremely cheap, second-hand goods

Clothes, shoes, household items, books, cars, vehicle spare parts and tyres, are all available at the second-hand goods markets, known as "Select Markets" or "Bendown Boutiques". These popular shopping spots have virtually driven markets for new products out of business

As the goods flow in mostly from Asia and Europe, poor Nigerians with weak buying power, welcome the trend with relief. They see the flourishing trade as the new employer in a country where more than 10 million are out of work

"The bulk of the Nigerian citizenry now depend almost entirely on imported second-hand goods. It is not as if Nigerians hate using brand new goods, the reason for this near total reliance on such goods is simply due to stark poverty," says Cordelia Onu, a journalist here

Bargain prices at these markets attract people from all classes. Civil servant Ayo Banji said that at one of the markets he was shopping for clothes for his children

"Things like this have never happened here before. We have been so dehumanised that only food is not

second hand in this country," Banji said

Similarly, Funke Ogunrotimi, at the shoe section of the market, said she could not afford a pair of brand-new shoes on her salary

Besides the "Bendown Boutiques", major streets here have been converted into open markets for the sale of second-hand household appliances like refrigerators, freezers and air-conditioners

The second-hand boutiques have popped up not just in the capital, but all over the country. In Ibadan, 120 kms north of the capital, one businessman has become a millionaire from importing second-hand motor engines, television sets and refrigerators

An advert from his company touts his business as a philanthropic venture to help the poor acquire the tastes of the rich by selling to them cheap household goods

But some environmentalists here are not so keen on the boom in second-hand appliances, like refrigerators, because they may pose health and environmental hazards

Late last year, two government agencies - the Standard Organisation of Nigeria (SON) and the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) - called for a ban on the import of such items

James Abalaka, Director General of SON, warned that imported second-hand fridges, freezers and air-conditioners from foreign countries contain ozone depleting substances, like Freon 12 and Freon 22 gases, which are dangerous to the environment and human health

The general public and the thriving dealers in second-hand goods however viewed SON's warning as tantamount to heresy. The ordinary citizen says that without such imports, they would not have owned such luxuries, albeit second hand, while the dealers believe the call was aimed at running them out of business

"Without dealers in these second-hand goods, I would not have been a proud owner of a fridge, a colour television and a video recorder," says John Olorunfoba, a senior manager with an insurance company here

Olorunfoba, who earns R450 a month, pays R108 for his two-bedroom flat, and has three children, one in post primary school and two in a private school, where school fees are as much as R140 per child a term

"This is what the military government has turned Nigerians into. They now want to ban importation of such items. Did they not realise that things will go bad when they

devalued our money and gauged business in dollar terms?"

Dealers in second-hand items have even gone as far as writing an open letter to General Sami Abacha, Nigeria's head of state, to argue a case for their business

In the letter, signed by Chuks Ezezie and Sunday Ekey, the dealers argued that the freon gases used by the imported second-hand fridges and air-conditioners are the same gases used by locally-produced ones

"On face value, the campaign is to protect both human life and the environment in Nigeria. But we know it is an effort to run out of the market those currently involved in the business of importing these second-hand items, to enhance the business of dealers in brand new appliances who have priced their products beyond the reach of the ordinary Nigerian," the letter said

Brand new deep freezers cost between R5 800 and R6 400, while the second-hand ones cost between R510 and R900. Brand new table-top fridges cost between R2 000 and R3 200, and second-hand ones cost between R280 and R500

Local manufacturers are also crying hard times since second-hand goods have put a huge dent in their sales. And they must also deal with

a stifling business climate characterised by the high cost of foreign exchange, high inflation, shortage of raw materials and the rising cost of utility services

"This position of the economy has resulted in the dwindling take-home pay of the average Nigerian, which also has translated to a high build-up of unplanned inventory in our warehouses," says Adamu Yakubu, chairman of a branch of the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria, in the northern city of Kaduna

High prices and Nigeria's battered economy since the introduction of the IMF-inspired Structural Adjustment Programme in 1986, have also forced car dealers to shift to importing second-hand vehicles

"My company was registered in 1985. We sold brand new locally assembled Peugeot brands, but now one cannot afford the prices any more, so I had to change to selling imported used cars," car dealer Bakare Taiwo said

"Initially people were going for second-hand cars, because they could not afford new cars. But their response presently is not encouraging. For the past two years, the car business is not booming because of the state of the economy," Taiwo said

Sapa-IPS

Nigeria's duty-free export zone close to completion

By Eniwoke Ibagere

CT(BE) 16/7/96 (226)

Calabar, Nigeria — Bright lights shine on well-paved roads. The smell of fresh paint wafts from six new buildings bordered by a red-brick wall. Cranes and trucks litter the freshly excavated red earth.

Despite the surrounding thick forest and the threatening erosion which has created deep gullies near the site, officials say construction of Nigeria's premier export processing zone in the southeastern city of Calabar, is almost complete.

Six firms have been given licences to operate in the zone.

"The place is reasonably ready and we don't need to wait for the commissioning before life begins here," said Sunday Akor, the chief executive in charge of the project.

"So we have given approval to six companies to start operations with the few facilities available. It's only when the firms come here that what we don't have becomes obvious and will be provided," he told reporters who toured the site.

Begun in 1991, the export processing zone is aimed at encouraging foreign investment and diversifying Nigeria's oil-dependent economy.

The project, designed like those in South Africa and in Taiwan, Jordan and Cameroon, will provide a self-regulatory economic zone where goods will be produced primarily for export.

Faced with lack of funds, commissioning of the zone has suffered several postponements. Originally billed for opening in 1993, the date was pushed to February this year before a new date of November was announced.

Nigeria's military ruler, Gen Sani Abacha, said last year that his government decided to go ahead with the project because of the need to develop the non-oil sector.

Nigeria derives more than 90 percent of its

foreign exchange earnings from the export of crude oil, of which it is Africa's leading producer.

Since 1986, when world oil prices fell and were slow to rise again, Nigeria had been talking of diversifying its sources of foreign exchange earnings.

Last year, Abacha created a ministry of solid minerals to tap other resources and introduced two new laws to encourage foreign investment.

Akor said "The political situation in Nigeria is the reason why European and American investors seem uninterested for now. We hope that when relations between Nigeria and the West thaw, they will come."

Relations between Nigeria and its traditional trading partners in the West have been strained since 1993 when a previous military government annulled an election meant to have restored democracy.

The West African nation has also been an international pariah since last November when the military authorities hanged nine minority rights activists for murder.

Officials said the economic potential of Calabar, which has raw materials such as rubber, cocoa, palm oil, foodstuffs and fibre, made it an ideal location for the export processing zone.

They said all firms in the zone, expected to operate with a minimum capital outlay of \$500 000, would have immediate access to a power supply, water and telecommunications.

The firms will enjoy exemption from all taxes and levies and will be able to import goods duty-free and without pre-shipment inspection.

Sina Agboluaje, the head of operations and development, said the problems the zone faced now were those of land erosion and lack of modern facilities at the Calabar port to cope with bigger vessels.

NEWS DIGEST

ET(BR) 16/7/96

Nigeria's bourse cuts settlement times to encourage foreign investment (226)

Nigeria's stock exchange cut settlement times yesterday to speed up transactions and encourage foreign investment. "We are moving from 10-day settlements to five-day settlement times. Eventually we will move to three days, but we are moving gradually," Rasaki Oladejo, the head of research at the stock exchange, said.

The slowness of trading on Nigeria's bourse has not helped to woo the outside investment that the government and business are looking for. The daily turnover is often below 0.1 percent of market capitalisation. The main damper to speedy transactions remains certification, the law says no trade can take place without certificates and that can take months.

"By the end of this year we hope to be running paperless settlement," said Oladejo. "Once we have the Central Securities Clearing System in place we will get a waiver from government so that there will be no need for physical certification before transactions," he said.

The system has been waiting for the industry ministry to unblock the \$400,000 United Nations development programme grant to pay for the last installment on the computer software.

Foreign portfolio investment has been growing, but is still at an early stage as Nigeria only lifted a law banning it in the middle of last year. But for Nigerians equities have been a more attractive investment, especially with the government's 21 percent cap on bank interest rates. But, a series of bank failures in 1994 and last year have made customers wary. Equity capitalisation on the stock exchange has grown to 221.4 billion naira (about \$12 billion) at Friday's close from 171.1 billion naira at the start of the year, a rise of about 30 percent — Reuters, Lagos.

Nigeria must import fuel to make up for shortfalls

24 23/7/96
(226)

LAGOS — Oil-rich Nigeria was spending a fortune importing fuel because its four oil refineries were inefficient, a top government official said.

"In 1995 they spent about \$800m to import fuel and in 1996 from January to June, they spent \$451m to import fuel," said Sam Aluko, chairman of the National Economic Intelligence Committee, a watchdog to avoid waste in government agencies.

"And yet the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation needed only \$240m to put the four refineries to work."

Officials of the corporation, where the government recently fired 3 000 people in an attempt to make the corporation run efficiently, declined to comment.

Nigeria is one of the world's leading crude oil producers and a member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, pumping on average 2-million barrels per day (bpd).

But the corporation has been importing refined oil products, especially petrol, to prevent that have caused havoc in the nation.

Last week six tankers were waiting to berth in Apapa port in Lagos while another tanker was expected, the state-run News Agency of Nigeria reported.

Oil product imports have dominated traffic at the port.

"This trend has persisted for about four weeks, indicating that the refineries in the country are not producing enough products," the news agency said last Friday.

Nigeria's four refineries have a combined capacity to refine 445 000 bpd, nearly twice the local consumption. However, its output is often disrupted by reasons ranging from poor management to a breakdown of vital components.

"With the four refineries working, Nigeria will be self-sufficient and have enough to export," Aluko said.

His committee has been critical of the corporation, which oversees the oil industry. Nigeria depends on the industry for more than 90% of its foreign exchange income.

— Reuter

ARG. 24/7/98
Nigerian

democrats to be charged

(226)

LAGOS. - Three members of Nigeria's main umbrella opposition group Nadeco are to be charged with conspiracy to murder Kudirat Abiola, wife of detained politician Chief Mashood Abiola.

Kudirat Abiola was shot by unidentified assailants while driving through Lagos in June.

The three men to be charged include Abraham Adesanya, one of Nadeco's main leaders.

All three men have been in police custody for over a month.

They will be the first to be charged in what has become a highly controversial investigation into Kudirat Abiola's murder.

The three men to be charged are all senior members of Nadeco - an increasingly beleaguered opposition group, most of whose leaders are either in prison or in self-imposed exile.

Abraham Adesanya, Chief Ayo Adebajo and Alhaji Ganiyu Dowodu were detained last month after a police swoop in which members of the Abiola family were detained for questioning over Mrs Abiola's murder. She was a renowned critic of the government.

- Sapa-DPA.

Smithkline Nigeria's profit falls

The profit of Smithkline Nigeria has fallen sharply in the first quarter of 1976, according to a report from the company. The profit for the quarter was only 10 per cent of the profit for the same quarter in 1975. This is due to a number of factors, including a fall in sales and an increase in costs. The company is expected to continue to face difficulties in the second quarter of 1976.

(226) CT (P.2) 25/7/76

Nigerian refineries may be sold

The Nigerian government is considering the sale of its refineries to private investors. This move is part of a broader policy of economic reform and privatization. The government is expected to announce the details of the sale in the next few weeks. The refineries are currently operated by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). The sale is expected to generate significant revenue for the government and to improve the efficiency of the refineries.

A

Nigeria moves to generate investor interest in minerals

(226) CTCBE) 25/7/96
By Toyé Olori

Lagos — Nigeria has been moving to generate investor interest in its solid minerals and curb illegal mining in the sector, which has been virtually abandoned to unlicensed miners for years.

The drive to turn the sector into a money-spinner started last year with the creation of the ministry of solid minerals. "We have, during our short time of existence, discussed investment in the mineral sector with both foreigners and indigenes," Kaloma Ali, the minerals minister, said recently.

Geoscientists say Nigeria has about 32 solid minerals. According to Ali, gold has been found in commercial quantities in nine of Nigeria's 30 states. Coal reserves have been estimated at 1.294 million tons, lignite at 250 million tons, and limestone at 600 million tons.

In areas where deposits of the precious metals have been discovered, thousands of people have become full- or part-time garimpeiros. Danladi Abdulahi, a Lagos public servant, said his village, Gidan-Kwanu, was one community that had been bitten by the gold and diamond fever.

He said he made a large amount from mining, selling the gold and diamonds he found to the businessmen who flock to the village.

But his dreams of going into mining full-time could be hampered by the state's plans.

Concern about Nigeria's excessive dependence on oil, the instability of petroleum prices and environmental problems in oil-producing areas led the government to

turn its attention to other minerals.

Late last year, the solid minerals ministry formed a 32-member committee led by economist Pius Okigbo to draw up policies to encourage investment in line with those of countries with well-developed mining industries.

The committee proposed introducing tax holidays, providing reliable geological data to private investors and introducing more stringent controls and stiff penalties for illegal miners.

"Efforts to fully develop and exploit the sector would come to naught unless investors feel confident that laws would be clear and objectively applied to all corners and that security of investment is guaranteed," Okigbo said when he submitted the report.

Under Nigerian law, prospectors must apply for mining licences. However, since the laws set no penalties, illegal miners have been operating with impunity. According to Ali, a decree making unlicensed mining a penal offence will soon be promulgated.

The ministry has increased licence fees for non-precious minerals from \$19 to \$63; precious metal licences have doubled to \$250.

Ali is confident of the sector's chances. "We are thinking of one to five years during which the solid mineral sector would be able to display a balance sheet that would show an appreciable contribution to the nation's economy."

At present, the sector accounts for 1 percent of Nigeria's \$93 billion GDP. Ali wants to raise this to 15 percent in the next five years. — Sapa-IPS

Nigeria's wings are clipped

National airline almost grounded by debt and bad management

LAGOS - Nigeria's national airline is in the red despite flying lucrative routes and having the largest domestic market in Africa

In the 1980s, Nigeria Airways had up to 29 aircraft. Now it has 13, of which only four are in use. The others have been grounded. Some need repairs, while others are apparently unserviceable.

The airline appears to have fallen victim to management problems, poor service and its huge debt, which - according to its chief executive, Peter Gana - amounts to almost R350 million.

Nigeria Airways has also suffered from overstaffing. In 1984, there were some 12 000 workers on its payroll. Officials say constant purges have since cut staff down to about 4 000. However, given the size of its existing

foreign airports as a result of its failure to settle accumulated air service charges has severely damaged its image.

Even some local contractors have succeeded in getting foreign court injunctions to have Nigeria Airways planes impounded after the national carrier failed to pay for work they had done.

To redeem its image, Gana said, the airline has started settling its debts monthly. Since last September, he said, R28 million have been paid.

But his company is under pressure from new aviation minister, Ita Udo-Imeh, to improve its operations. Udo-Imeh has ordered it to put four more aircraft in operation by next month.

Experts say deadlines alone are not enough and that only good management and strong financial backing will save the airline - *Sapa-IPS*

operations, that number is still too high.

Experts say the airline has no business being in the red. It has profitable routes to African, European and North American destinations. Moreover, it caters for a potential market of 100 million people, many of whom travel widely both within the country and abroad.

Poor customer relations, flight delays and other lapses have dissuaded people from flying on the national carrier. And, over the years the seizure of some of its planes at

(226) source on 26/12/1986

Bring back democracy, Nigeria told

(226) ARG 27/7/96

GENEVA - The United Nations Human Rights Commission has hit hard at Nigeria over a wide range of rights abuses and called on the military government to move to restore democracy in the country without delay

The 18-member commission, made up of independent experts from around the world, expressed deep concern over "the high number of extra-judicial and summary executions, disappearances and cases of torture" involving the army and security forces

The commission issued its strictures in a report after studying Nigeria's performance under the 1976 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which the West African country has signed

The report said violations of the covenant included "the fact that sentences of death are passed without the safeguard of a fair trial" and the staging of public executions which were "incompatible with human dignity"

It said

■ There was "no legal pro-

tection of rights" ■ The growing list of human rights abuses perpetrated by the military government of Nigeria has again prompted the United Nations to speak out on behalf of the victims. The question is: Will it help?

tection of rights"

■ The government had failed to investigate abuses by the security forces

■ Freedom of speech, association and assembly were largely restricted

■ Women were widely subject to forced marriage

"The committee recommends that immediate steps be taken to restore democracy and full constitutional rights," the report said.

Last November military ruler General Sani Abacha aroused worldwide condemnation after spurning appeals for clemency and executing minority rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight associates

They had been found guilty of inciting the murder of four pro-government Ogoni chiefs, but human rights groups said they were the victims of a political trial

Last month unidentified gunmen shot and killed the senior wife of Nigeria's detained presidential claimant Moshood Abiola Abiola, who won annulled presidential elections in 1993, was arrested and charged with treason in June, 1994, after declaring himself president

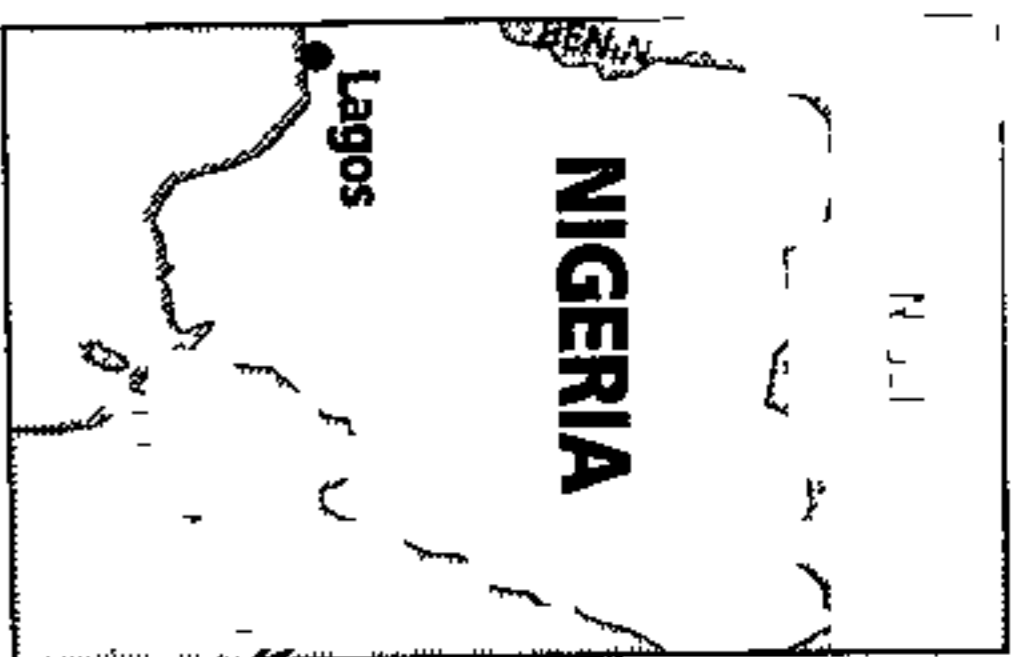
Two months later many labour leaders and Abiola lieutenants were arrested in a crackdown on strikes which forced opposition figures such as Nobel Literature laureate Wole Soyinka to flee abroad

Last July a group of alleged coup plotters, among them former army ruler retired General Olusegun Obasanjo, were jailed in a secret trial which shocked the world

Last October General Abacha unveiled a transition to democracy programme to hand over to an elected president in three years - Reuter

Can Nigerian democracy win?

It is difficult to believe in transition while Abiola remains a political prisoner, writes Ross Herbert



Could South Africa have had a real transition to democracy if Nelson Mandela had been held in prison until after the 1994 election?

The democratic opposition in Nigeria is now facing a similarly vital question regarding Moshood Abiola, who has been in jail in treason charges without trial for 25 months since he claimed victory in Nigeria's June 12 1993 presidential elections

This is not to suggest that Abiola is in the same league as Mandela in terms of liberation credentials. But Abiola symbolises the pointed question can a transition to democracy be put in process while people remain jailed for political reasons?

According to Nigerian press reports, the government is negotiating a deal with Abiola's family under which Abiola could be released to house arrest or exile on condition that he renounce his claim to the presidency, stay out of politics for three years and make no political statements

A weekly Lagos political magazine, The News, reported this month that Abiola

would also have to produce three Nigerians to act as guarantors for the deal, which would make them subject to arrest if Abiola violates the terms

If reports are accurate, the stakes for Nigeria are high. Nigeria's military dictator, Sani Abacha, has been pushing what he says is a three-year transition programme to bring democracy to the country

A release that results in Abiola renouncing his claim to the presidency would effectively legitimise the transition programme, smother debate over the dubious transition rules and leave little latitude for the opposition if, as many suspect, Abacha ultimately delays the transition or manipulates the rules to install a government of his choice

Abandoning the June 12 mandate, as Abiola's claim to the presidency is known in Nigeria, would fundamentally weaken the democratic opposition, by taking away the moral claim that stands as a challenge to the legitimacy of everything the Abacha government does

Significant headline pro-democracy

groups have refused to participate in the transition, saying that Abiola is the legitimate winner of the last elections and should be installed in power

If Abiola agrees to a conditional release, he would undercut the stand of the most outspoken pro-democracy groups. If he concedes that Abacha's coup was legitimate and the previous elections flawed, who are the opposition groups to complain?

The transition programme itself is flawed and the rules for registering political parties so strict that many Nigerians suspect the whole exercise is designed to keep democratically minded parties off the field while buying Abacha time

For example, political parties had until July 25 to meet registration guidelines. But critics say the rules are impossible to meet in the five-week period allowed. Each party must register 40 000 members in each of 30 states, including passport photographs

Abacha's predecessor, Major-General Ibrahim Babangida, then Chief of Army Staff, used similar tactics to delay the transition to democracy by eight years. In the end, elections were held, on the thinnest of pro-

cedural grounds the results annulled, and a weak civilian caretaker government installed

In November of that year, 1993, Abacha took power in a bloodless coup

"No one will fulfil the qualifications. If they do they will have to bend the rules or register fraudulently," said Ayo Obe, president of the Civil Liberties Organisation

Several of its members have been in detention for months without charges being brought against them

Instead of dictating the terms of the transition as he has done, Abacha should negotiate with opposition groups and make genuine concessions to win their support. If Abacha can squeeze Abiola into surrendering his claim to victory, Abacha will bypass debate over the transition because it will be the only game in town

However, if Abiola remains in prison, his presence will hang over the entire transition. If the transition comes to a flawed or corrupt conclusion, Abiola will remain an ever-present threat to Abacha

Abiola's family is under increasing pressure to make a decision. The family business is said to be crumbling because the government has withdrawn its contracts. Abiola's murdered wife, Kudurat, was one of the strongest advocates of the June 12 mandate

Her murder weakened the family and gave Abacha the excuse to arrest six members of the family, who have now been released. Abacha successfully forced Abiola to dump his defence lawyer in favour of a less militant lawyer

South Africa cannot force Nigeria to do anything, any more than the Chinese are willing to appear to succumb to American pressure. But Nigeria remains very sensitive to South African criticism.

Trying to rally the world to oil sanctions is almost impossible but South Africa could effectively lead a diplomatic and public campaign calling for Abiola's release. South Africa could make an offer to recognise and support the transition in exchange for the unconditional release of Abiola and the country's other political prisoners - Independent Foreign Service

(226) RHW 29/7/96

Robbery becoming a way of life for Nigerians

BD 30/7/96

226

S IN SA, everybody in the Nigerian capital of Lagos has their favourite crime story

There is the one about the family which returned from church one Sunday to find armed robbers waiting for them at the entrance to their apartment. The wife became hysterical and chanted repeatedly, "This case is covered with the blood of Jesus." One of the robbers, unable to take any more yelling, told her she would see blood that day and hacked the entire family to death.

Another has a young man apologising to armed robbers for having only a black and white television set and an old cassette recorder, and attempting to make a joke of it by quoting a Nigerian proverb to the effect that all fingers are not equal, meaning some people are richer than others.

This turned out to be his undoing. The robbers rectified the matter here and then. As a parting shot, they told him to work harder in future so that their next visit would not be wasted.

Armed robbery is a way of life in Lagos. Ordinary people, who cannot rely on the police to rescue them because of a lack of manpower and vehicles, now consider it prudent to keep sufficient cash in the house in order to bribe them when they do come. Many live behind solid steel doors, and the main streets are deserted at night.

Indeed, the forces of law and order, who are themselves sometimes cited as accomplices in, if not instigators of robberies, are often just as helpless. Recently, a senior police officer was murdered in his house one evening. The victim's bad luck was to have been a policeman.

This execution gives some credence to a growing rumour that police themselves deal with armed robbers the same way if they manage to catch them.

The idea behind this seems to be that police cells are full to overflowing, the courts are congested and the entire system is open to the same levels of corruption that have eaten into the rest of the society.

ADEWALE MAJA-PEARCE in Lagos

It is rumoured that in at least one case a prisoner doing time for a lesser charge found himself facing a capital punishment firing squad in somebody else's stead.

So bold have the armed robbers become that they have even taken to circulating letters announcing their impending visit.

One such letter warned residents of five named streets to "get ready for us, we are coming", saying that the police or army could not stop them. They signed themselves "men of the underworld".

Obviously no government can take such an open challenge to its authority without at least some pretence of fighting back. This is especially true of a military regime, which can only hope to justify its continued role in politics in these days of multiparty democracy by guaranteeing, at the very least, the safety of those it seeks to rule.

For this reason, Nigerian leader Gen Sami Abacha announced last month the launch of Operation Sweep which he said was designed to send a strong signal to criminals that crime does not pay. Roadblocks were set up around the city and combat-ready soldiers were drafted in to assist police.

The authorities later claimed that the operation had an immediate and dramatic effect, and that reported cases of armed robbery fell by almost half over a four-week period.

But in some cases roadblocks simply meant more opportunities for the gamekeeper to turn poacher. On one occasion, I had foolishly left home without my ID card. This obviously meant that I was a spy. After spending three hours at a police station I was allowed to "settle" with policemen for about R100.

Another man, who was moved to write about his experience in a local newspaper, was found in possession of his niece's passport. This, too, was a serious matter in need of settlement. But it cost him only R20 after

considerable haggling. However, there are signs that ordinary citizens, fed up with being held hostage from both sides, are beginning to strike back.

Just a fortnight ago, residents of three streets in a busy area of the Lagos mainland set fire to a makeshift structure which they insisted was the hideout of armed robbers who had been terrorising them for the past month.

They recovered some stolen electronic items before frog-marching the suspects to the local police station. These particular "culprits" were fortunate. Elsewhere, vigilante groups are known to have simply killed suspects and burnt their bodies.

But the danger always exists that vigilantes, who are beginning to demand the right to bear arms, will not be above oppressing the people they claim to be protecting.

□ Maja-Pearce is the Africa editor for the London-based publication Index on Censorship.

LETTERS

NIGERIA - GENERAL

1996 → 1997

and local food stores should be advised to stock up on these items

Nigeria focuses on coal

PORT HARCOURT (226) BD 1/8/96
African oil giant Nigeria has shipped its first consignment of coal in more than 20 years as it moves to diversify its oil dependent economy

"I consider this historic," said Solid Minerals Minister Kaloma Ali at yesterday's ceremony on the coal jetty of the southeastern city of Port Harcourt.

The first trial shipment of 3 000 tons to Italy was little more than symbolic, but Ali said Nigeria could export 15-million tons a year — translating into an income of \$675m

Africa's most populous nation is dependent on pumping about 2-million barrels of crude oil a day for over 90% of its export earnings.

Other exports including coal, tin and other minerals, as well as agricultural produce, were neglected during the 1970s in a headlong rush for oil money.

Nigeria's coal reserves are put at 2,75-billion tons, spread across 13 of its 30 states

"Nigerian coal with low sulphur content is in high demand because it is environment-friendly," said Ali.

"It has unlimited potential for export .. it will therefore be quite safe to assert that any subsequent investment by government in this sector will be worthwhile."

A total of 370-million naira has been spent since last year on reviving state-run Nigerian

Coal Corporation mines at Enugu, eastern Nigeria and Okaba in the central Kogi state

Loading facilities at Port Harcourt have been repaired and a new coal loading quay with conveyor system is to be built

The rail link from Enugu to Port Harcourt has been reactivated to cope with the volume of exports planned to Israel, SA and Korea

Ali said the ministry already had foreign orders for 15-million tons of Nigerian coal — Reuter.

**LEGAL
NOTICES**

Credentials of Nigerian envoy accepted by Mandela

(226) ARG 7/8/96

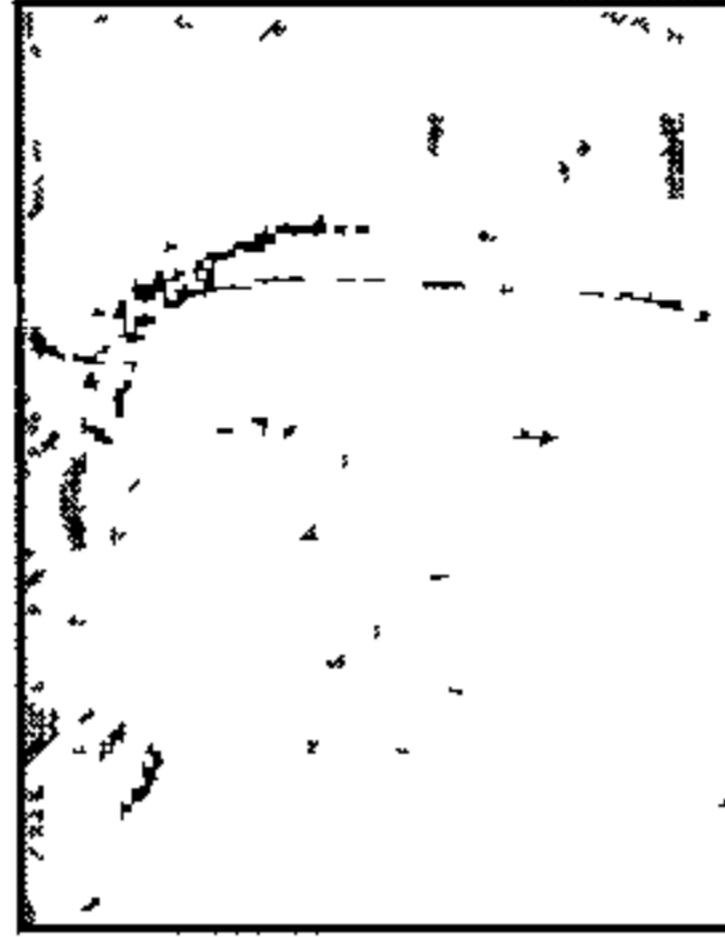
JOHANNESBURG. - President Mandela has accepted the credentials of Nigeria's first high commissioner to South Africa.

This indicates a strengthening of diplomatic relations with the West African state

Nigeria was expelled from the Commonwealth and was denounced by the world for its dismal track record on human rights.

The new high commissioner is Alhaji Shehu Malami, a businessman from northern Nigeria.

Presenting his credentials to Mr Mandela in Pretoria, Mr Malami said he brought greetings to the nation from Nigeria's military dictator General Sani Abacha. "It is my fervent desire to pro-



Sani Abacha

note the new spirit of friendship and co-operation between our two countries," said Mr Malami.

Nigeria was in a transition to democracy and a transition programme was being implemented.

"We seek the understanding and support of our friends, such as South Africa, at this crucial juncture," he said.

General Abacha seized power after refusing to accept the results of a general election won by an opponent

Nigeria was catapulted into the spotlight

with the execution of a number of political activists last year, among them human rights champion and poet Ken Saro Wiwa. - Sapa.

AFRICAN BUSINESS

Omnes gives telecommunications sector 'new lease on life'

New satellite service will boost Nigerian business

CT(PR) 7/8/96 (226)

By Eniwoke Ibagere

Lagos — Omnes Communications is providing Nigeria's telecommunications sector with a domestic satellite service for corporate use, the communications firm said yesterday.

Omnes Communications, which is jointly owned by Cable and Wireless and Schlumberger, said the service would be available to banks and multinational companies.

"We have started test transmission of the (satellite) services already and the official launch is on August 30," said Jonathan Powell, the managing director of Omnes Communications.

"Our first customer here is a big multinational oil company," he said. "Others are interested but are adopting a wait-and-see attitude."

Industry sources said the service should give a new lease of life to the telecommunications sector, which had been performing poorly for a long time.

Nigeria was gradually opening up its telephone market to the private sector. The state-run Nigeria Telecommunications signed interconnection agreements with five firms last month. But these firms, which had been given provisional licenses, had yet to start operations.

The domestic satellite project in Nigeria, Africa's biggest oil producer, would allow voice and data messages to be transmitted regardless of distance.

"Essentially, it means firms can exchange information even if they have different electronic mail systems, as well as access one another's databases, both at high speed," Powell said.

"It is an interactive facility mainly for the

oil industry, banks and other corporate bodies. It is not for residential purposes because it is too expensive," he said.

The system would also allow banks to do business more easily. Business communications in Nigeria are erratic and companies hope that they will be improved by private-sector participation.

Widespread fraud and illegal connections have led to the sacking of many top executives of Nigeria Telecommunications as well as a new law that prescribes a penalty of 21 years imprisonment for telephone-related fraud.

Powell said Omnes had spent more than \$2 million on the Nigerian project.

"Once we begin transmission we will be servicing about 400 customers, but our target is 1 000 at full run," he said.

Omnes also operates in Equatorial Guinea and Algeria — Reuter

Nigerian tyranny 'far worse than apartheid' ⁽²²⁶⁾

Nov 14/8/96

A meek populace, left to fend for themselves against brutal, corrupt rule, have lost all hope that the West will ever come to their aid



By ROSS HERBERT
Lagos

Why does oppression wielded across racial lines provoke world reaction so much more quickly than when oppressor and oppressed are of the same race?

Many in South Africa would surely say that racial injustice is a greater evil than oppression of the intra-racial sort

But a growing number of Nigerians, who feel the world is unfairly losing interest in their plight, take a different view

It is only now that we are beginning to see that the black oppressor is as devious as the white oppressor. If you look at apartheid in the 1960s and Nigeria in the 1990s, apartheid is a more humane system," Abdul Oroh told me a few weeks after his release from a Lagos prison, where he was detained for 11 months without trial or even being charged

Such a view might seem predictable coming from a civil-rights activist talking to a journalist from a South African newspaper - Oroh is executive director of the Nigerian Civil Liberties Organisation

However, parallels between South Africa and Nigeria are increasingly on the minds of ac-

tivists, diplomats and ordinary citizens in Lagos

Oroh, who was arrested along with two other CLO officers a year ago, said he read Nelson Mandela's autobiography while in prison and it made a deep and lasting impression

"A lot of people say Mandela never could have survived the Nigerian prison system for 27 years," Oroh observed

When Nigeria's presidential elections were annulled three years ago, there was a vague notion that the West

or at least the United States would come to the rescue

But in the wake of the hanging of Ken Saro Wiwa and other Ogoni activists, Nigerian attention and hopes increasingly focused on South Africa

Oroh was released in June as a sort of human bargaining chip two days before the meeting of the British Commonwealth action group on Nigeria

His two CLO compatriots, Chimi Ubanu and Nnummo Bassi, are still in prison along with most of the country's prominent pro-democracy politicians, assorted journalists and unionists

The spectacle of Nigeria freely

participating in the Olympics galled many in Nigeria, who legitimately asked why the world could find the will to ostracise South Africa but could not do anything about Nigeria

One can argue that oppression directed at another race is often done with greater abandon because it seems to provide the oppressor with a justification that sits easier in the human mind "They are simply different from us and it is impossible to change or reform them"

Mandela would have died in a prison here

But oppression of the intra-racial sort is arguably more evil precisely because it is applied without mental camouflage

It is pure and naked violence to maintain power

As thought-provoking as such a comparison is, it gets one no closer to deciding what to do about Nigeria, in part because analysing Nigeria is not like working through a chess game

It is more like wrestling a giant octopus just when you firmly grasp one arm of the problem seven other aspects wrench you in other directions

The only unequivocal thing about Nigeria is the utterly de-

spicable nature' of its government

Major-General Musa Bama, head of the drug agency, explained to a Lagos magazine

"If the rights of any individual are violated in the process of making the State a better place, there is nothing wrong with that because without the State there is no individual"

That attitude imbues every aspect of General Sani Abacha's government.

Arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, torture, and assassination are routine

On suspicion that car dealers were involved in money laundering, Bama's troops arrested 30, who have been detained for months

Without trial or right to appeal, he closed their businesses and soon began liquidating their assets

Worse, the police and soldiers that swarm over Nigerian streets routinely and shamelessly shake-down anyone from whom they can extort money

A British consultant, whom I met in Lagos, tells a typical story. He was hired to analyse some infrastructure projects and was pulled over for no reason by soldiers in Lagos

"I have done nothing," he maintained

"Pay us or we can take you

behind the wall and shoot you," was the response

Oil sanctions could conceivably topple Nigeria's military government, but what would replace it?

And how would a civilian government domesticate a police force used to running wild?

"It would be living in cloud cuckoo land to think it would be any better under civilian rule," said Ayo Obe, a tiny, deeply dignified woman who is president of the Civil Liberties Organisation

Nigeria's opposition groups are divided and Nigeria's many military dictators have successfully stoked tensions between Christians and Muslims, northerners and southerners, and various tribes

Unlike South Africa, most of the institutions of civil society are very weak. Abacha has co-opted most major unions and civic groups by appointing their directors

President Mandela was right in saying that Nigerians must be willing to wage their own struggle before anyone from the outside can help them

Ordinary Nigerians I spoke to in Lagos deeply disliked the military government but were hesitant about open rebellion

The ill-fated secession of Biafra in the 1970s still hangs heav-



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sol- The ill-fated secession of Bi-
he fra in the 1970s still hangs heav-

ily in many memories

Nigerians also fear losing the
little that they have. During the
fat years before corruption and
mismanagement destroyed the
economy, many people acquired
radios, air-conditioners and other
middle-class goods that they
could never re-purchase today

As Obe explained, too many
Nigerians, and military leaders
in particular, are fixated on the
short term

"If any business is to be suc-
cessful you have to invest in it
and allow for a
five-year return.
But the way
Nigerians operate
is to steal as much
as they can as
soon as they can

"For them
there is no tomor-
row. For example,
if there is a road-repair contract,
the contractor and the contract
officer will split the fees, spread a
tiny bit of gravel on the road then
leave

"There is no notion that re-
pairing a road helps everyone
and makes everyone better off,"
she said

The other complication is
Abacha's transition-to-democra-
cy programme, which he claims
will result in democratic govern-
ment by 1998

Pro-democracy parties are

split over whether to participate
One reason is the party registra-
tion rules, which are so stringent
that almost no one believes that
they can be met honestly

Cynics believe Abacha will
use the rules to block unfriendly
parties and ensure he or his
cronies remain in power

Nigeria deeply dislikes the
present system. But the country
will not come right until that dis-
like crystallises into a clear un-
derstanding of the virtues of
democracy and honest govern-
ment

People fear losing the little that they have

That does
not mean that
outsiders
should do noth-
ing. Every time
that Mandela or
other leaders
speak about
Nigeria, it gets
into the opposition newspapers.
It is broadcast on the BBC and
Nigerians listen and debate

Some South Africans, includ-
ing politicians, seem to boast that
South Africans showed a greater
willingness to battle their oppres-
sive government while Nigerians
have been largely passive

They forget that sanctions
played a key role in South
Africa's transformation

And ANC leaders did receive
substantial outside assistance,
which strengthened the organisa-

tion and helped educate and nur-
ture the leaders who now gov-
ern.

South Africa has retreated be-
hind a fig-leaf of multilateralism
ever since Mandela's call for
sanctions on Nigeria was re-
buffed

That quiet policy should raise
some important questions for
South Africans

How would Mandela have
held up psychologically if there
had been no international moral
support? Would South Africa be
free today if other countries had
applied the kind of quiet policy
that South Africa now follows to-
ward Nigeria?

Is such a policy the moral
choice for South Africa, which
benefited so directly from activist
foreign policy?

ANC allies in the United
States endured years of legisla-
tive defeats before finally win-
ning the argument that the US
should impose sanctions on
South Africa

Surely, Nigeria must struggle
for itself. But any nation that
cares about Africa must lend its
resources to developing those
leaders who will one day lead
Nigeria down the path to honest,
democratic government

And it must continue to press
loudly and publicly for a free, de-
mocratic Nigeria - Star Foreign
Service

Nigerian natural gas plant 'will not cause pollution'

(226) CT (PR) 14/8/96

Lagos — The \$4 billion liquefied natural gas plant being built in Bonny in the southeast of Nigeria will not cause pollution, said the head of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency at the weekend

"Everything humanly possible in protecting your environment has been anticipated and taken care of," Evans Ama, the agency's chief executive, told Bonny residents when he visited the town at

the weekend

Local and international pressure was on the Royal-Dutch Shell group to pull out in protest over Nigeria's hanging last year of nine minority rights activists

Shell weathered the pressure and went ahead with the construction of the plant, which began in March and is expected to come on stream in October 1999
— Reuter

Democracy in Nigeria is irrevocable, says envoy

Dianna Games

NIGERIA was well on the road to democratisation and the elections in 1998 would see the end of Gen Sani Abacha's rule, new Nigerian high commissioner Alhaji Shehu Malami told journalists in Johannesburg yesterday.

Malami, whose credentials were accepted by President Nelson Mandela last week, stood firmly by Abacha's government in fielding questions relating to human rights, the execution of author and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and the vagaries of military rule.

He stated that his government was on track with its timetable towards democratic rule, which he claimed had helped to improve relations with SA.

Several questions were asked about the country's strongly criticised human rights record. Malami said: "Because of the importance Nigeria attaches to human rights, a commission has been established to look into the ramifications of human rights problems in Nigeria."

Asked about journalists, professionals and academics, among

others, who were in jail purely for their political convictions, Malami said he was not aware of any such case. But he said people would not be in jail unless they had breached the law.

He said that following a report by a UN team into Nigeria, "obnoxious" laws had been looked into and amended.

Malami, when asked about the Ogoni people and the Saro-Wiwa execution, which caused international outrage last year and damaged SA's diplomatic relations with Nigeria, stood by his government's response to the events.

He issued a government fact sheet dealing with "myths and facts" relating to the execution, most of which was contrary to how the issue was reported in the media at the time.

It said that no member of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People had been arrested or castigated until Saro-Wiwa "hijacked the organisation".

"He turned the pressure group into a terrorist organisation with its full complement of vigilante gangs and trained militia that burnt police stations, schools,

BD 15/8/96 (226)
neighbouring communities and residential buildings."

The fact sheet said since 1990, the only movement members who had been arrested and tried were those connected with Saro-Wiwa's "reign of violence in Ogoniland".

It listed as a myth that Saro-Wiwa was a martyr for human rights. "Ken Saro-Wiwa was an evil man whose life was guided by a complex craving for vainglory... He was consumed by those passions of hate and venom he preached and lived for."

Pressed on the human rights issue, Malami said: "We believe we have gone through the worst stage. We made a mistake. We are ready to see how far we can go to make things right." He pointed out SA had also made mistakes.

Asked about the illegality of the current military government, he said: "It is immaterial if it is illegal or not; it is in power".

Referring to annulment of previous poll results, Malami said the government had not been ready to give up power, but civilians in Nigeria were tired of military rule. He claimed progress towards democratic rule was "irrevocable".

Nigerian army strongman sacks leaders

(226) Star 16/8/96

Lagos - Nigeria's military ruler General Sani Abacha has swept out of office all military administrators of the country's 30 states, a move that cements his position.

Speculation that the state chief executives would be changed had filled newspaper columns for some time, but the terse announcement on state television on Wednesday night caught many people by surprise.

The change is the most sweeping at state level since Abacha took power in November 1993.

The statement named new administrators who, like their predecessors, are from the middle rank of colonel or its navy, air force or police equivalent, and said they would be sworn-in next week.

The administrators are the second tier of authority in Nigeria after the federal government, which is based in Abuja - Reuters

A QUESTION OF

EARLYNING TRUST

226

CRITICISED for its undemocratic actions, the military government in Nigeria is desperately trying to clean up its image. But are its promises to bring back civilian rule by 1998 genuine – or merely a gimmick to get the world off its back? SEKOLA SELLO looks in vain for concrete progress with restoring democracy.

Please understand us, begs hard-line regime

of 18/8/96

including Abacha, were the real powers behind the throne

A less greedy and more calculating military strategist would have allowed Shonekan to continue in office to perpetuate the sham of civilian rule

Instead, greed or arrogance (or both) compelled Abacha to oust Shonekan, and since then the country has been limping from one crisis to the next

After that initial blunder, Abacha compounded his mistake when he defied world opinion by arresting Moshood Abiola on the flimsy charges of treason. Abiola's only crime was to declare that he had won the presidential elections, which most observers believe he had

Abacha's regime plucked the depths when they arrested Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other Ogoni tribesmen on trumped-up charges of murdering a local Ogoni chief and a tribunal established by the military sentenced them to death

These judicial killings unleashed worldwide condemnation, which the military regime had not expected

The West, the United States and the Commonwealth all considered various punitive measures, short of an oil boycott

It is this bad image of the military government and, to a lesser extent, the limited sanctions that have been imposed, which are behind the regime's latest frantic efforts

Their hard-sell campaign has taken them to the United States and Europe, and they made a foray into South Africa this week with High Commissioner Alhaji Shehu Malami taking the unusual step of hosting a media luncheon in Johannesburg to discuss "anything on Nigeria"

There is something disarmingly informal about Malam. Not for him the stiff aloofness of most people in such exalted positions. A former journalist, he mixes well with the audience

Sam Abacha is simply "Sam the young boy who was my junior at school" Again, it is not for him to introduce Abacha with a long list of honorifics typical of representatives of despotic governments

There are two ways of looking at the Nigerian situation. By being open with the media, Abacha could indeed be sending strong overtures to the rest of the world that he is committed to re-turning the country to civilian rule by 1998

The government has put in place a transition timetable which they say they will honour. Malam said of Abacha, "I trust him, I have known him for years"

The second way of interpreting the Nigerian situation is that this could be a colossal public relations hoax. Sell the country with promises of returning it to civilian rule by 1998, ease off pressure on Abacha and forget he ordered the killing of Saro Wiwa and the other Ogoni activists

But if multi-party elections take place in 1998, as seems likely, this in itself is no guarantee that the military will return to the barracks, stay there and let Nigerians enjoy a free, democratic government

It is possible that Abacha – like Babangida before him – is hoping the elections will instal a party favourable to the army so that they can continue wielding real power behind the scenes

The present regime could achieve

this by ensuring that only those parties favourable to them will qualify to stand for elections

Spokesmen for the military government acknowledge that the regime is unrepresentative, but plead with the rest of the world to "understand Nigeria and help its democratisation process"

The High Commissioner points out with uncharacteristic frankness that although Abacha came to power through a military coup, his government is a reality that cannot be washed away

While the Abacha regime is trying to show an acceptable face to the world, they are not prepared to go the whole hog in bringing about democracy to the country

As long as Abiola remains incarcerated, they are not likely to get much sympathy

And as long as they continue to imprison journalists, political opponents, professionals and members of the civil liberties organisations, their claims that they are turning over a new leaf will ring hollow

Malam denies that there are any Nigerians in jail for their political beliefs. "Those in jail must have broken the laws of Nigeria. We cannot allow people to break the law and go free"

South Africans are familiar with this. Down the years Hendrik Verwoerd, John Vorster and P.W. Botha insisted that Nelson Mandela and other prisoners on Robben Island were not held for political reasons but for breaking the country's laws.

Nigerians, says Malam, are fed up with military rule. Indeed. And so is the rest of the world

Public relations gimmicks will not fool anyone



CAN THE LEOPARD CHANGE ITS SPOTS? ... General Sani Abacha seized power from a semi-civilian government and cracked down hard. Now he is promising a return to democracy.

Mission to Nigeria uncertain

Lagos - Nigeria's military rulers yesterday set out terms for a proposed Commonwealth visit to discuss the country's suspension, but they are so strict that the mission could be in doubt.

"The invitation should not be construed as a request for a Commonwealth fact-finding mission," a Foreign Ministry statement said in the capital Abuja.

A Commonwealth diplomat called the terms "disappointing".

"These terms effectively mean that the group would only be able to meet the government. There will clearly have to be serious thought about whether a visit could go ahead next week," another diplomat said.

The Commonwealth suspended Africa's most populous nation after author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists were executed for murder

in November last year.

Nigeria has consistently refused to allow a Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) fact-finding mission to investigate the alleged human rights abuses.

But this month Nigeria invited the Commonwealth to visit the capital Abuja next Thursday and Friday to continue discussions begun in London in June.

There has been no official response to the invitation.

When the two sides met for the first time in London, Commonwealth foreign ministers decided not to impose further sanctions on Nigeria pending more talks, a decision which angered pro-democracy activists.

The Nigerian statement said CMAG had no mandate to carry out a fact-finding mission and that the UN had already carried out its own - Reuters.

(226) Raw 23/8/96

Nigeria's clean, I con you not, says its official ambassador

By JACOB DLAMINI

(226) ST 25/8/96
NIGERIA'S first High Commissioner in South Africa is on a charm offensive

Alhaji Shehu Malami says he is not aware of any political prisoners and detainees rotting away in the West African country's jails and insists that military ruler Sam Abacha is a man of honour

The 59-year-old businessman says Nigeria's image problem is not of its own making but the work of faceless enemies bent on tarnishing the achievements of Africa's most populous country

"We don't grow cocaine in Nigeria," he says in response to claims Nigerian nationals control a substantial portion of South Africa's drug market

"There are always three sides to a story and at least two of those are subjective," he says

Abacha, who Malami has known since school-days, appointed him high commissioner in a bid to improve Nigeria's relations with South Africa

"My brief is very simple. Nigerians and South Africans have always been great friends, we played an active part in the struggle for liberation and the

whole of South Africa is very appreciative of that

"But the relationship between the two countries is not that warm and I am going to do everything in my power to ensure that warm relations are restored, by making contact with the right people, seeking advice and sharing our wealth of experience," Malami says

If South Africans do, in fact, appreciate Nigeria's role in the fight against apartheid, they sure have a funny way of showing it. When Malami presented his credentials to President Nelson Mandela two weeks ago, there was hardly a journalist in sight

But with more than 100-million citizens and vast natural resources, Nigeria cannot be ignored. And Malami knows this

"Nigeria has the market and South Africa has the technology and if any two countries can get their act together, these two can

"We have been fighting



ALHAJI SHEHU MALAMI

for South Africa but now we have to work together for the development of Africa. We have all the resources here and don't need to buy from Europe. This is the continent of the future but there are people who would not want us to reach a stage where we can say to Europe 'Go to

hell,'" he says

Who are these people, these enemies?

"These are people who have not forgotten that we played an active part in the fight against apartheid and colonialism. They are scared of Nigeria's potential and don't want us to use that potential for the benefit of the whole continent of Africa," he says

The high commissioner seems to think the world overreacted to the hanging of writer and activist Ken Saro Wiwa, whose execution last November led to Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth

He insists Saro Wiwa was tried and found guilty of the murder of four politicians from the oil-producing Ogoniland, and defends his country's crackdown on crime and political dissent

Malami owns property in England, Saudi Arabia and France, and has limited business interests in South Africa

BUSINESS TRAVEL

Number of foreign tourists bodes well

IN MAY last year foreign bed nights sold by hotels in SA increased 6,9% compared with May the previous year, a period that saw a higher than average influx of foreign visitors because of the rugby World Cup.

Kessel Feinstein's Gillian Saunders says achieving additional growth this year of almost 7% indicates good continuing growth in foreign tourism to SA.

"On a year to date basis, hotels are reporting a 25,5% increase in the number of bed nights sold to foreign tourists. This is phenomenal growth, especially as 1995 growth rates were exceptional and flattered by a relatively poor first five months in 1994 due to the election, and the world cup.

"In the Western Cape there has been almost 17% growth in bed nights sold to foreigners during January to May 1996. This compares to 24% growth in Gauteng and 32% growth in Kwazulu-Natal," Saunders says.

However, the number of foreign tourist statistics cannot be compared to number of hotel foreign bed nights sold as many foreign tourists, especially in the Western Cape, do not stay in hotels.

"Patronage of guest houses and bed and breakfasts is extremely popular with foreigners and even self-catering establishments are attracting more and more overseas visitors.

"The hotel foreign bed night statistics do not therefore necessarily show the whole picture, and Cape Town foreign tourism could be growing at well above 16%. "Furthermore, the length of stay of foreign visitors impacts on number of bed nights sold. More tourists may be arriving, but staying on average for a shorter period."

AFRICA

Nigerian blunder on mission's visit

BD 26/8/96

(22b)

LAGOS — Nigeria may have seriously blundered by imposing conditions on a Commonwealth delegation which as a result has called off a visit planned for next week, diplomats have warned.

Nigeria's military rulers angered Commonwealth officials when they sought to limit the scope of the two-day visit which the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group was due to make on August 29.

The foreign ministry in Abuja said last week that the trip to the capital was for "dialogue" and was not a "fact-finding visit".

The ministry said a UN fact-finding mission had already visited Nigeria in April and that Nigeria had begun implementing its recommendations.

It said the Commonwealth mission had been invited to Nigeria to continue talks after the country's suspension last November from the Commonwealth after the execution of writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his associates.

The government has described the suspension as unfair.

A Commonwealth member, requesting anonymity, said the conditions amounted indirectly to telling the delegation to mind its own business.

Canadian Foreign Minister, Lloyd Axworthy, announced on Friday in Ottawa that plans for the mission to Nigeria had been cancelled because the group did

not receive sufficient guarantees from the Nigerian authorities.

"It looks as if the Nigerian government has something to hide," said an east African diplomat.

Nigeria could have used the opportunity to claim to the international community that all the allegations about human rights abuses were untrue, he said.

"It is a golden opportunity thrown away cheaply and Nigeria may have taken a wrong step," a Western diplomat stated.

The delegation comprises the foreign ministers of New Zealand, Malaysia, Zimbabwe, Jamaica, Ghana, Britain, SA and Canada.

Political observers in Nigeria say the government may have imposed the conditions on the mission to prevent it from meeting political detainees, opposition members, including pro-democracy and human rights activists, who have prepared their briefs to submit to the mission.

"The fact that Gen Abacha was recently elected chairman of the 16-nation Economic Community of West African States, some of whose members are Commonwealth members, should have been weighed before Nigeria took that decision on the Commonwealth visit", said a Lagos University lecturer in political science.

The Nigerian government has yet to make a formal reaction to the cancellation of the Commonwealth's mission — Sapa-AFP

All change, no change

LAGOS — NFW MILITARY and police officials got down to the business of governing Nigeria's 30 states on Friday after a change of administrators — but observers say it is unlikely to make much of a difference on the ground

The new administrators — 20 from the army, four each from the navy and the air force and two from the police — took their oaths of office last Wednesday before General Sani Abacha and key members of his administration

As the new administrators replaced their predecessors, who also came from the security forces, there were varied interpretations of the substitutions, including the idea that they were part of preparations for a change in Abacha's cabinet

But it is doubtful whether the changes will lead to any improvement in basic infrastructure such as roads, water and health services, which remain undeveloped in many states, or in job opportunities — unemployment is high in all 30 states

The new administrators appeared anxious to avoid the mistakes made by some of their predecessors, who had offended some people's sensibilities in their first comments as the heads of state administrations

Colonel Mohammed Marwa, a former defence attache in Washington, described his new fief, Lagos state, as "the most complex in Nigeria" but promised to rule 'with an open mind'

Ogun state, home of the presumed winner of the June 1993 presidential election, detained politician Moshood Abiola, fell to Wing Commander Sam Ewang

His interpretation of his new appointment was as follows "I was assigned by God and ordained by man I am in this government because the government is ordained by God"

The administrators all received a warning from Abacha "Bear in mind at all times that your appointment is just another military posting from which you can be reassigned at any time"

They also received guidelines from Abacha, who has been the military leader of the West African country since November 1993 "Since you do not have a fixed tenure, your daily undertaking must be guided by decorum, dedication, discipline, honesty and patriotism at all times

"There is a new thinking in government altogether," he said "Government is no longer to be seen as a power above the people It is a veritable instrument for national development"

But it could take more than that to convince Nigerians rendered sceptical by the broken promises made by former state administrators, a pledge by the armed forces some years ago to

There are doubts that the changes in Abacha's cabinet will lead to any improvement in basic infrastructure. Reshuffling government officials is nothing new in Nigeria, says **Remi Oyo.**

stay in the barracks and the political crisis that followed the military's annulment of the 1993 election

Nigeria is now undergoing a transition to democracy which, according to its military rulers, is to come in in October 1998

Allegations of maladministration and corruption against military administrators have often been difficult to substantiate

As a result, overt criticism has tended to be limited to issues such as inadequate infrastructure, salary delays and dismissals in the civil service

Sources in presidential circles have said that some of the military administrators relieved of their commands last week may be probed for misdeeds but analysts wonder whether there might be political reasons for their replacement

"It is possible that the head man has realised that some of the old officials had sufficiently got their hands soiled in partisan politics and could create credible problems for his regime," Steve Ekiyor, a political scientist at the state university here, told *Sapa-IPS*

Ekiyor recalled media reports that some of the former administrators were accused of 'subverting the people's will at the last non-party local government polls' in March

New blood

Another possibility, he said, is that "Abacha needed to inject new blood into his administration now that the transition programme is expected to enter a decisive phase"

His gut feeling is that "it is basically about giving plum jobs to the boys" "I believe Abacha has been under tremendous pressure to satisfy loyalists," he explained

He noted, though, that "changes at that level



Flashback . . Nigerian opposition leader Moshood Abiola, the presumed winner of the 1993 presidential elections.

are also done to send signals to some quarters that the chief is still fully in charge as well as to make others tow the official line"

Ekiyor admitted that all this was conjecture as it is difficult to read the mind of a person (Abacha) who hardly talks or socialises"

In any event, he added, 'shuffling key government officials is nothing new in Nigeria, where public officials count themselves lucky if they survive a year in office'

While the new administrators grapple with learning the rudiments of running a state, some of them will have to unravel how government property in their states disappeared within a week of the announcement of their predecessors' recall

According to reports from the northern state of Borno and the central state of Kwara, a number of vehicles have disappeared from the government parking lot in their administrative capitals — *Sapa-IPS*

Sawetan
27/8/96 (226)

Nigerian business presses for reflation

CT(BR)28/8/96

(226)

From Reuter

Lagos — Nigerian manufacturers have begun this week to press for reflationary measures from General Sani Abacha's military government to stimulate a depressed economy

"The continuing sagging consumer demand should be revived through effective reflationary measures that can serve the twin objectives of employment and income stimulation," a half-yearly report from the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria said

The association said that though the average use of manufacturing capacity had grown to 31 percent from 28,75 percent in the first half of this year, unsold goods in warehouses had risen to 6,03 billion naira from 5,90 billion naira at the end of last year

Nigeria's economy has been mired in recession since a rash of strikes, demonstrations and rapid changes of government policy in the wake of abolished 1993 elections

The main goal of General Abacha's tight fiscal policy is to cut inflation

The figures show some gains, with May's annual consumer price inflation at 31 percent compared with 89 percent a year earlier

Anthony Ani, the finance minister, this month reported a budget surplus of 8 billion naira (about R4,58 million) for the first half of this year. He said there was a 1 billion naira surplus for last year and an 81 billion naira deficit in 1994

The association hailed the drop in inflation and asked the govern-

ment to continue its efforts, but cautioned against too narrow an approach. "The instruments of the policy should be broadened to move away from the apparent sole reliance on the orthodox monetarist deflationary measures. Sufficient emphasis should be placed on supply-side stimulation," its report said

The association recommended spending on improving infrastructure, roads, communications, security and education

"The fight against inflation can be a futile exercise if the government fails to come to grips with the problem of high costs of investment and industrial operation. The call for efficient and adequate infrastructures can never be tired," the report said

Some areas are already benefit-

ing from off-budget spending through the Petroleum Trust Fund, which was set up to administer more than 30 billion naira realised from the fourfold increase in domestic fuel prices in 1994

Contracts have already been handed out for road construction and for the supply of drugs to government hospitals

But an immediate result of the first rush of the fund's money into the banks in May was an increase in inflation to 5,5 percent from 1,3 percent in April

Nigerian manufacturers rely on imports, and therefore on foreign exchange from oil exports

The association said that local sourcing of raw materials had risen marginally to 54,24 percent in the first half of 1996 from 53,86 percent at the end of last year

Nigerians Will

have democracy

By Coudjoe Amankwaa

Sunday 28/8/96 (226)

Abacha will relinquish power his own way and is not worried by criticism

DESPITE WORLDWIDE scepticism that Nigeria is moving towards democracy, the leader of the country's military *junta*, General Sani Abacha, will definitely not be in power after 1998

That is according to his representative in South Africa, High Commissioner Mr Alhaji Shehu Malam

He insisted in an interview with *newsworld* that the Nigerian ruler's intention to step down from power was genuine. Besides, he said, there was a sense in Nigeria that the people were tired of military rule

The charming and eloquent Malam stressed that despite Abacha's rise to power through a military *coup*, the process of democratisation in Nigeria was on track

Human rights abuses

He said a Constitutional Conference was already in place to look into Nigeria's problems

It was established last year after the international community accused Nigeria of human rights abuses and dictatorial rule

"People sent representatives and the government elected individuals from the trade unions, medical, academic and other fields to discuss all the problems of the country last year"

Malam said the Constitutional conference recommended a course of action and a time frame of three years, after which Abacha's military government would hand back power to civilian rule

This time frame has been sharply criticised by the international community as too long, but Abacha has insisted that he will relinquish power as way

"All the recommendations issued during the Constitutional Conference

are being religiously implemented by the government," Malam said. The registration of political parties was now taking place

"Parties are being registered to ensure that parties are not based on tribal, religious or regional sentiments, but on the true unity of Nigerians"

Malam said local government elections would be held first, followed by elections at state level and later at federal level to elect representatives and senators

Presidential elections would be held in 1998 to usher in a democratically elected government

Malam could not be drawn into commenting on whether the military would step in again if things went wrong after the elections. "We will cross that bridge when we get to it"

He said he was not in South Africa to defend Nigeria, but simply to explain matters which were misconstrued by the media and others

Strained relations

Relations between the two countries have been strained since South Africa took the lead in Africa against human rights abuses in Nigeria, while Nigeria feels South Africa was not doing much to help the economic improvement of other impoverished African economies

Malam, though, denies that there are human rights violations in his country. "If the people here understand the position of Nigeria in the right context, then relations between the two countries would be improved"

However, he said Abacha's regime did not have regrets about the execution of activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and

his eight Ogoni countrymen, whose deaths last year sparked off an international outcry

He reiterated his government's view, stated after the deaths, that the Saro-Wiwa affair was an internal matter and accused the outside world of meddling in Nigeria's affairs

"Saro-Wiwa was not killed as a result of his political convictions and human rights activism. He was killed after a criminal case, after being tried by a tribunal in an open court"

Militant youth

Malam said that during a meeting between the elders of Ogoniland and Saro-Wiwa's group to sign a peace accord, all the elders signed the accord. When it was Saro-Wiwa's turn to sign the accord, he refused himself

"Immediately after he excused himself, his group of militant youth came in and killed four elders"

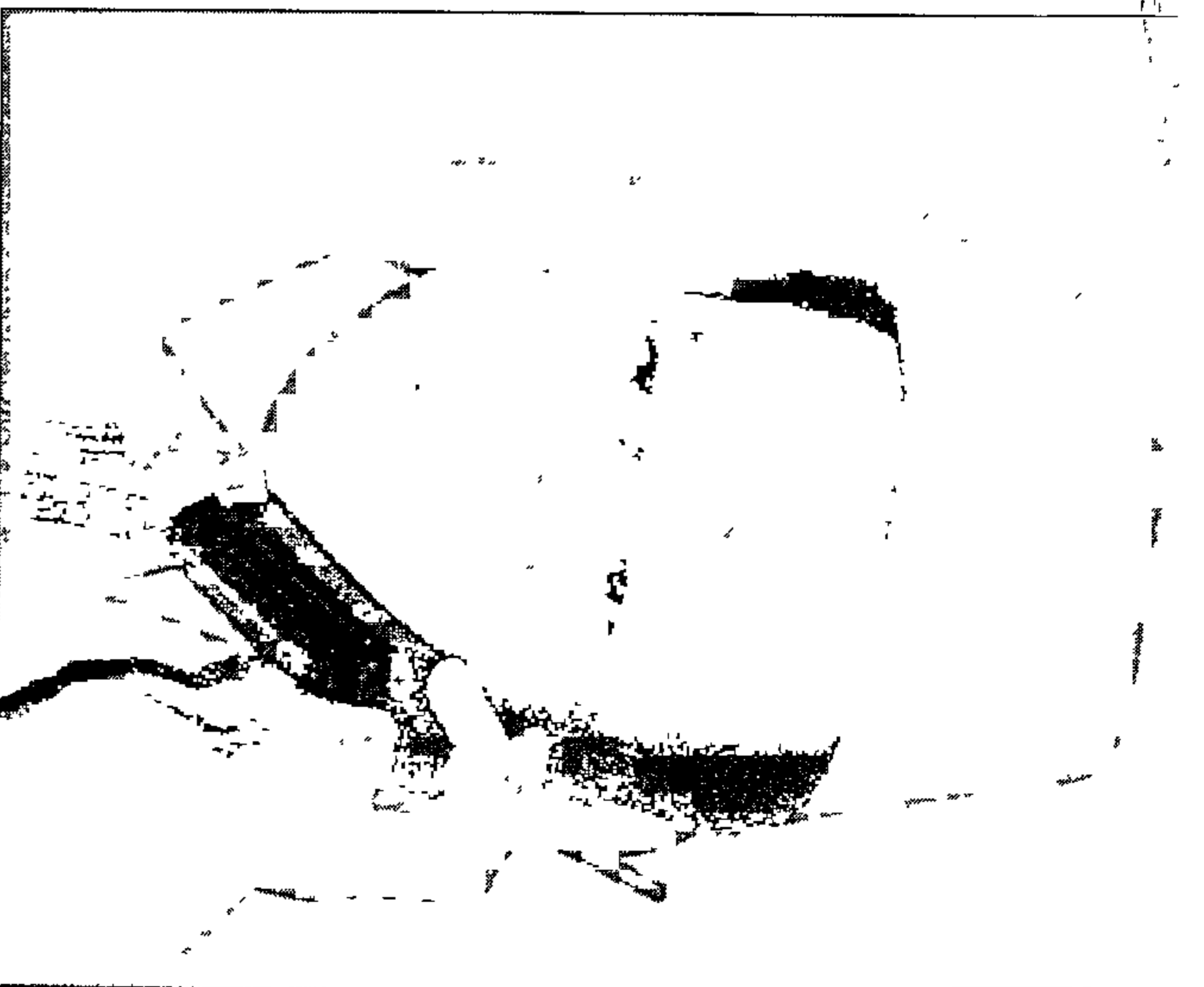
Malam also said Saro-Wiwa had the Ogoni national anthem, a national flag and his pictures displayed as the head of state of Ogoni

"If the Biafran war did not succeed in dividing Nigeria after independence in the 1960, how do we allow ourselves now to be divided?" he asked

He said the world could not expect Nigeria always to be lenient, as in the case of General Oluasegun Obasanjo who was pardoned after President Nelson Mandela's intervention

On the issue of trade between South Africa and Nigeria, he said the two countries were the only giant economies in Africa

But, he insisted, trade would have to be two-way. "Nigeria imports wine



High Commissioner Alhaji Shehu Malam he is confident that the process of democratisation in Nigeria is on track PIC SIPHIWE SIBEKO

and electrical transformers from South Africa, while South Africa buys nothing from Nigeria"

Malam said perceptions that Nigerians were involved in crime in South Africa were justified

He said he was monitoring the situation but could not investigate as that was the South African government's responsibility

Bad blood

The bad political blood between South Africa and Nigeria has spilled over into sport

The Nigerian national team has declined an invitation by the South African Football Association to play in the Simba Four Nations tournament next month

This followed Nigeria's withdrawal from the African Cup of Nations tournament at the beginning of this year

However, Malam blamed this on South Africa's Government and said it should divorce politics from sports before South Africa can play Nigeria

"It will take time before Nigeria plays South Africa on a friendly basis, it will only play South Africa in a competitive match such as the World Cup," he said

In any event, he felt Nigeria has nothing to prove against South Africa - the Super Eagles beat Brazil, Mexico and Argentina on their way to winning gold in the under-23 Olympic tournament last month

He said this attested to their supremacy in African and international football

Nigeria confounds the oil companies

From AP-Dow Jones

ET (BR) 28/8/96 (226)

benefit Nigeria

Houston — Western oil companies, owed hundreds of millions of dollars by Nigeria, are confounded by the west African government's accusations that they are cheating the country out of its rightful share of petroleum profit, the Wall Street Journal reported yesterday

Chevron and Mobil got a tongue-lashing last week from Dan Etete, Nigeria's oil minister, for a behaviour that "almost made Nigeria the laughing stock of the international petroleum industry"

Etete said the companies were failing to give the government its "fair share" of the take from the production of oil

Six joint ventures headed by Western companies pump about 95 percent of the 1,89 million barrels of crude produced daily by Nigeria, which depends on oil for the most of its revenue

Etete threatened to reclaim those fields within the companies' concession areas that were not being fully developed

He also said a number of petroleum laws were being re-written to

Western companies would have to receive permission before employing non-Nigerians, he said, and could no longer hire foreign companies to provide support services

The companies would also be obligated to set up escrow accounts that would let the government track its contributions to joint venture production and exploration costs, and would be required to submit their operating permits to government review

Etete made remarks viewed by the industry as ominous. He declared that "there has been tax evasion on a massive scale" in the oil services sector

Mobil said the company was "somewhat surprised" at Etete's allegations and hoped that discussions with the government would assure Lagos that "the joint ventures are being managed efficiently and in the best interests of Nigeria"

Juhan Lee, an analyst with the Centre for Global Energy Studies in London, described the tough line taken by Nigeria as "sabre-rattling"

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Nigerian scepticism over free poll

(226) / Nov 12/9/96

Lagos - A year after Nigeria's military government announced the latest plan for a transition to democracy, many civilian politicians are actively organising for elections due in 1998 despite an air of scepticism.

The previous transition, by another military government, abruptly ended in 1993, when the country's military rulers annulled a presidential election widely believed to have been won by Moshood K. Abiola, a businessman who is now languishing in prison.

Nevertheless, leader General Sani Abacha in-

sists he does want a genuine transition to civilian rule and, in total, 18 political groups have responded to his lifting of a three-year ban on party politics in June.

But on the streets of Lagos it is hard to find anyone who has much faith. "Even if they do," said Osita Okechukwu, a public relations consultant, "there is not much hope that something will come out of it."

The government has set stringent conditions for groups to qualify as parties. Some analysts worry that if they fail to meet the requirements,

the government can decide which it will allow to function.

During local elections in March, the first stage of Abacha's transition programme, hundreds of elected candidates were disqualified. This produced an outcry.

Longtime watcher of Nigerian politics and critic of the military, Father Matthew Kukah, secretary-general of the Roman Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, says: "I am quite optimistic that there will be elections because to think otherwise is to court disaster," he said. - New York Times News Service

Lessons for SA from Nigeria's example

THE financial law enforcement arm of the US treasury told Congress last week that it receives 100 telephone calls and at least 300 letters a day from victims or intended victims of Nigerian con-

men whom it estimates are lightening the wallets of their US targets by a staggering \$250m a year

That is the value of Uganda's total merchandise exports in 1994, and much of it, says the secret service — which has arrested 545 Nigerians on related charges in the past year — is used to finance other criminal operations, including drug traffic

At one level, one is tempted to say the figure is testament to the ease with which greedy fools are parted with their money

The Nigerian 419 scams, named after the Nigerian law supposed to prevent them, have been going on for at least 10 years and ought, by now, to be transparent

If you receive an unsolicited proposal from a Nigerian stranger promising to let you have millions of his dollars if only you will stake him to various fees he says he needs to get the money out of his country, it should be pretty obvious you are about to be had

It should be even more obvious if the stranger tells you, as has been common in one variant of the con, that the money he wants to share with you for your trouble in helping him move it offshore, he himself obtained by ripping off his own government

He is telling you — indeed wants you to believe — that he is a crook, on the theory, all too often proved correct, that it will make

The international repercussions of spiralling crime in Nigeria should serve as a warning to SA, writes Simon Barber from Washington

his story more credible because (a) the means by which he claims to have come by the loot is, alas, very plausible and (b) he is being "honest" enough to let you in on his dirty secret

That line has now become a little passé, though "Fraud letters are becoming more sophisticated," said commerce department Africa office director Sally Miller

"The latest proposals feature offers of large donations to charities, requests to purchase US real estate, opportunities to settle unexpected inheritances, and forged tender documents for sizeable government contracts.

"These letters may use the names of (real) companies, ministers, or government contracts, use an official-looking letterhead, and display an array of 'government' seals, stamps and signatures to convey a sense of validity to their offer. The authors have crafted an impressive array of follow-up letters, supporting documents and contracts, in an effort to convince US firms of the alleged importance and authenticity of their propositions"

It is an unhappy fact a major part of law enforcement consists of protecting the innocent from their own human frailties, whether manifested as simple greed or as a desire to consume substances known to be both addictive and

life-destroying. For some reason, Nigerians are earning themselves a reputation as world-class predators on such weaknesses

Indeed, on international advance fee fraud they seem to have acquired a virtual monopoly. As Michael Stenger, special agent in charge of the secret service's financial crimes division, told the House Africa subcommittee last week "These schemes emanate solely from Nigeria, though our investigations indicate Nigerians and non-Nigerians based in the US, Great Britain and other countries are acting in complicity"

More broadly, the adjective "Nigerian" is starting to carry the same freight as "Sachan" Jonathan Winer, deputy assistant secretary of state for international narcotics and law enforcement, told the hearing that Nigerian criminal enterprises were organised and active in at least 60 countries worldwide.

"They are adaptable, polytrime organisations. They launder money in Hong Kong, buy cocaine in the Andes, run prostitution and gambling rings in Spain and Italy, and corrupt legitimate business in Great Britain..

"Nigeria's neighbours have even worse problems, as Nigeria's criminals literally fan out through Africa. Last year a businessman from Niger was lured by Niger-

ian scammers to his death. SA authorities have advised the US of their deep concern over Nigerian criminal penetration of the entire southern African region, including heroin and cocaine trafficking, frauds, car theft, alien smuggling and gang activities"

Authorities in an unnamed African country recently told the US that a Nigerian group was approaching its citizens with a box containing what the scammers purported to be newly minted \$100 bills, dyed black for "security" purposes

A special chemical was needed to remove the dye, they said, but they had enough of it only to show how the process worked on one bill. The targets were then told that if they would advance the cash for more of the chemical, they could have half of the money in the box. Once they had the cash in hand, the con men disappeared

That's an old trick, and one on which Nigerians have no patent, which suggests a danger that Nigeria is on the way to becoming a scapegoat for any and all crimes in the continent. Yet this is not a danger that Nigeria's government seems to be doing much about.

To the contrary, as US officials tell it, Nigeria has become a country where you can get away with almost anything except challenging the authority of Gen Sani

(226) BD 17/19/96

Abacha's military regime. For that, you hang

Nigeria, as described to a congressional subcommittee by Mark Richard, a deputy assistant attorney general with the US justice department's criminal division, is a place where criminals are pretty much immune from prosecution for crimes committed elsewhere

This is not simply because the authorities ignore extradition requests; they are for the most part so inept or corrupt, and fraud so endemic, that it is impossible for honest investigators, especially those charged with obtaining evidence that will stand up in US courts, to obtain authentic birth certificates, let alone banking and business records

Moreover, all key Nigerian institutions are, at some level, in on the game. For example, Richards said, victims of advance fee fraud who contact Nigeria's central bank seeking to learn the status of funds they think have been released, "may later learn their calls have been transferred to fraudsters inside the bank, or to outside exchanges used by the schemers"

The situation is so bad the US government is afraid to offer anti-fraud training to Nigerian police or central bankers for fear that the training will merely increase the sophistication of Nigerian crooks. The commerce department,

whose job is to promote US exports, pleads that rewarding business can still be transacted with Nigeria if sufficient care is taken, but that is a minority view

The state department recommendation is not to go near the place unless, like certain oil companies, you really know what you are doing

So you thought that SA was a rough environment? Consider this recent state department "consular information sheet"

"WARNING: The Department of State warns US citizens of the dangers of travel to Nigeria. Violent crime, practised by persons in police and military uniforms, as well as by ordinary criminals, is an acute problem. Harassment and shake-downs of Nigerians and foreigners alike by uniformed personnel and others occurs frequently throughout the country.

"Business, charity and other scams target foreigners worldwide and pose dangers of financial loss and physical harm. Visitors, as well as resident Americans, report widespread armed muggings, assault, burglary, carjacking, roadblock robberies, and armed break-ins occur often, with victims sometimes shot by assailants for no apparent reason. Law enforcement authorities usually respond to crimes slowly, if at all, and provide little or no investigative support to victims"

One feels sorry for the majority of innocent Nigerians thus stigmatised. At the same time, one cannot help worrying that the state department might one day feel obliged to issue a similar warning about SA

Nigerians torch murder buildings

(226) Nov 27/9/96

Lagos - Furious crowds set fire to a church connected with a series of gruesome ritual murders and burnt down a score of other buildings in a town in south-east Nigeria before police and troops restored order yesterday.

Residents of Owerri said the security forces appeared to have stopped the rioting, which began on Tuesday after police handed the body of a murdered headless child to his parents and uncovered a trail of bloody killings.

More human remains, including two heads and two tongues, were found in the church on Wednesday before angry residents of Owerri burnt it down and torched other buildings.

The government-owned Daily Times said no fewer than 20 human skulls had been found in different parts of Owerri.

Local people linked the ritual murders to notorious alleged swindlers in the town and burnt down their homes during the rampage. The military administrator of Imo state, Colonel Tanko Zubairu, imposed an overnight curfew on Owerri on Wednesday.

■ Washington - A major US human rights group says recent legal and political reforms undertaken by the military government in Nigeria are purely cosmetic, and the international community should now impose additional sanctions against the junta.

In a major new report released here today, Human Rights Watch/Africa charges that head of state General Sani Abacha's stated commitment to return Nigeria to elected civilian rule by October 1998 is belied by continuing violations of Nigerians' political rights.

"Nigeria appears to be in a state of permanent transition, still governed by the armed forces a decade after a programme to restore democracy was first announced by General Ibrahim Babangida," the report says. - Sapa-AFP, IPS.

MD of major Nigerian (226)

newspaper

gets the boot

Star 28/9/96
Lagos - Nigeria's military ruler General Sani Abacha has sacked the managing director of the government-owned Daily Times of Nigeria, the nation's biggest newspaper publisher, the paper said yesterday.

It said an official statement had announced that Innocent Oparadike had been replaced by Peter Enahoro, Nigeria's most celebrated journalist.

No reason was given for the changes but journalists at the Times group, which is one of the biggest and oldest newspaper publishers in Africa, hailed the changes.

"We knew this was coming since there has been a lot of opposition to Sir Innocent in the Times," said an editor.

Oparadike and his predecessor, Tunji Oseni, a former editor-in-chief of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries News Agency, have been locked in a duel on the pages of newspapers over their tenures at the Times.

The new chief executive, Enahoro (61), was the youngest editor of the Daily Times at 27 in the early 1960s.

Known as "Peter Pan" after a critical column he wrote in the paper at the time, Enahoro went into exile in Britain where he published a magazine called Africa Now.

He returned in 1993 and was appointed chairman of the country's broadcasting commission.

Enahoro's younger brother, Anthony, heads an exiled group opposed to Abacha's government - Reuters

AFRICA

Commonwealth appeases Nigeria

NEW YORK — The Commonwealth has swapped idealism for pragmatism in a bid to draw renegade Nigeria back into the fold

However, the new policy could end in humiliation for the division-ridden body

The eight-nation Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group managed to overcome internal splits on Sunday by dropping a demand that its planned fact-finding mission to Nigeria be allowed to meet opposition and human rights groups

It was a major concession to Nigeria — which critics say is guilty of wide-scale human rights abuses — especially given that the action group scrapped an identical mission last month precisely because access to the opposition had been denied

But with the prospect of the embarrassing deadlock stretching into next year, ministers decided they had little choice but to put away their moral stick and produce a carrot instead

Activists were fast to pounce, saying Nigeria would seize on the announcement as a sign of weakness

"I'm very disappointed the Commonwealth has let Nigeria off the hook.

"Before dialogue starts with the Nigerians we should see some serious improvements," said Bronwen Manby of the London-based Human Rights Watch/Africa group yesterday

Commonwealth ministers somewhat lamely said they "trusted" that the Nigerians would let them talk to opposition groups but this was offering a large hostage

to fortune to Abuja, which has shown little sign of co-operation so far

And if the fact-finding mission is rebuffed, it will focus further unwanted attention on an unwieldy 53-nation grouping hampered by the tradition of working by consensus and as a result rarely capable of taking strong action

The Commonwealth, a grouping of Britain and its former colonies and protectorates, did unite to suspend Nigeria last November after the controversial execution of author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other human rights activists

It set up the action group to investigate the situation in Nigeria, but since then much to the irritation of human rights advocates like Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, splits emerged and the grouping has been stuck in the slow lane

The action group agreed to a set of sanctions in April, but suspended them until September in order to give Nigeria more chance for dialogue

The Commonwealth compromise over the weekend means the measures are off the agenda for the time being

Prof James Manor, director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in London, said that the Commonwealth grouping worked best when a recalcitrant member state showed some goodwill

"When that goodwill is absent, then action through other international agencies and bilateral relations with the errant government are more effective means of tack-

ling the problem," he said in June, using words which are still valid today

This comes as little comfort to Axworthy, who denounced fellow Commonwealth officials as "appeasers" last week for what he saw as their reluctance to crack down on Nigeria's capital Abuja

On Friday he was still insisting that a fact-finding mission would be useless without any guarantees of whom it could meet. On Sunday he glumly conceded that Nigeria would not give the necessary assurances to the Commonwealth

"I do not think Axworthy went home a happy man, but what else could he do? At least the action group members are now all singing the same tune," said one Commonwealth official

But whatever the weaknesses in the Commonwealth position, it still has one ace to play — Nigeria will stay suspended until it falls into line

"It may have been accidental, but the Commonwealth hit the Nigerians exactly where it hurt the most — their pride," said an observer on Nigerian affairs who asked to remain nameless

"They are exceptionally upset about this. There they were, a grown-up country playing a major role in the Commonwealth, and suddenly they found themselves suspended. It is very hard for them to accept."

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group consists of Malaysia, Zimbabwe, Jamaica, Ghana, Britain, New Zealand, SA and Canada — Reuter

Abacha to contest election

(226) Sowetan 3/10/96

By Coudjoe Amankwaa

NIGERIAN high commissioner Mr Alhaji Shemu Malami said it was up to General Sani Abacha to decide whether he would be standing as a presidential candidate in the 1998 elections

Malami said this amid speculation in newspapers that Abacha would contest the 1998 presidential election "No one can decide for him (Abacha) except himself," he said

However sources within the embassy told *Sowetan* that Abacha was trained as a soldier to take orders or give orders and therefore could not fit in properly within

a democratic set-up since he was not used to dialogue

Observers believe Abacha's intention to stand as a presidential candidate has turned the democratic transition process into mockery. The move seems to confirm worldwide suspicion of the military's intention of hanging on to power against the will of the masses

Meanwhile there are mixed feelings in Nigeria, because some people feel that Abacha can stand as a presidential candidate only if he resigns and forms his own party. Others say the military should return to barracks and not get involved in politics

Opposition figures absent in Nigeria

By Jacques Pinto

LAGOS - Ministers from former governments are prominent among groups of conservatives, liberals, centrists and moderate democrats leading the five political parties officially registered in Nigeria to contest elections for the return to civilian rule

But leading opposition figures are conspicuous by their absence from the officially approved political movements, and diplomats said military chief General Sani Abacha was still in a commanding position

Under the timetable set by the ruling junta, the new parties' first test should be in municipal polling by the end of December Abacha has pledged to hand over power to a democratically elected president on October 1 1998

Some of the senior members of the new parties were ministers in the first government Abacha formed when he took power in November 1993

Others took part in the constitutional conference assembled by the military in 1994 to establish the foundations for lasting democracy in Africa's most populous country

The United Nigeria Congress Party vows to work for the unity and stability of Nigeria under the banner of justice and truth

Its leadership is drawn mainly from participants at the constitutional conference and flag-bearers include Emeka Ojukwu, leader of the Iboland secessionists in the bloody Biafra civil war of 1967-1970, who is a staunch ally of the current regime

Prominent fellow easterner, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, proprietor of the independent daily newspaper *Champion*, is a UNCP colleague, as are Abacha's one-time transport minister Ebenezer Babatope and retired general Joe Garba, who was foreign minister during the military administrations of Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo from 1975-1978

Conservative senator

The centrist Committee for National Consensus includes conservative former senator Olusola Saraki and Jubril Ammu, who held the education and petroleum resources portfolios under previous military ruler Ibrahim Babangida

Also in the CNC is Barnabas Gemade, who played a pre-eminent role in the constitutional conference. He was a minister in the interim government of Ernest Shonekan, the non-elected civilian put into office by Babangida in August 1993, when the general suddenly stood down two months after holding elections for a civilian president and

(226) Sowetan 8/10/96



General Sani Abacha ... he has systematically brought the Press into line, tamed the unions and jailed pro-democracy activists.

then voiding the results

The National Centre Party of Nigeria, also centrist, advocates dialogue and peaceful methods to move the country forward by appealing to "men of goodwill"

It includes leading liberal Don Enebet, minister for petroleum

and detained for several months

The Democratic Party of Nigeria comprises an essentially conservative leadership, including retired general AB Mamman, who was interior minister under Babangida, and controversial Yoruba politician Lamidi Adegibun, who caused some consternation among pro-democracy activists when he recently voiced support for the military regime

Ambition

The party's ambition is to represent Nigeria's three major groupings - regions - the Yoruba in the southwest the Hausa-Fulani of the north and the Ibos in the east

Little is known about the fifth party registered the Grassroot Democratic Movement headed by Gambo Lawan, who like several of his associates, was chairman of one of the municipal councils set up by the Babangida's military regime. It claims to stand for "the common man"

Since seizing power, Abacha has systematically brought the Press into line, tamed the trade unions and jailed or executed pro-democracy activists in the face of strong criticism

The pressure has now eased somewhat and diplomats are now openly predicting that Abacha himself will now run for president in 1998 and end up handing over power to himself - *Sapa-AFP*

BUSINESS

FOOD *Test results show brown beans are now safe for eating*

'Killer' beans jump back on to Nigerian menus after scare

TOYE OLORI

Lagos — Brown beans, the main source of affordable protein for most of Nigeria's 100 million people, are back on the menu after reports this week that the popular legumes are safe to eat.

For about a month, most Nigerians eliminated brown beans from their diets after it was reported that about 16 people in the country's south-western states had died after eating beans.

Nigeria's National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control quickly collected samples of the "killer beans" from markets in Lagos, Ogun and Oyo states.

Preliminary results, according to Gabriel Osude of the food agency, showed that the beans were safe for eating.

"As soon as the investigation is concluded, the results will be forwarded to the Lagos state ministry of agriculture, which called for the investigation,"

Osude said. Armed with the results, Colonel Muhammed Marwa, the Lagos state military administrator, told journalists he had himself eaten the popular akara (bean cake) at Ketu market and that the reported deaths in some areas were due to cholera and not the beans.

"The result of the investigation carried out by the state health officials and the ministry of agriculture showed that there was no proof linking some deaths recorded recently to the consumption of beans," Marwa said.

Despite the state official's assurance, some people are still shying away from a plate of beans. "I have not started eating beans though they say it is safe to eat them," said Shina Ogundipe, a civil servant. "I want to be doubly sure nobody is dying of beans before I can join them," said Shina Ogundipe.

Roseline Kehinde was also sceptical. "The administrator

ate akara in public, but government officials could have taken the beans to the woman who prepared the cakes, and who knows if it is the old stock," said Kehinde.

While citizens are gradually returning beans to their menus, traders are still counting their losses. In some markets, the price of beans fell by more than 50 percent.

Before the scare, a bag of beans sold for between 10 000 (about N571,2) and 13 000 naira. Now it fetches between 4 500 and 6 000 naira.

The Market Women's Association in neighbouring Osun state lost 10 million naira, according to reports.

Their Lagos state counterparts are also bemoaning their losses. Unsold beans in the state were valued at 400 million naira with the average loss a week put at 50 million naira.

In Agege, a Lagos suburb, about 500 bags of beans were sold weekly, with an income of

about 3.5 million naira before the scare. In some other markets, the average weekly sales ranged between 1 500 and 2 000 bags.

But Kingsley Chukwu, the public relations officer of the Association of Lagos State Bean Sellers, said the falling prices were due to the seasonal appearance of new beans on the market, and not the fear that the beans might contain poisonous substances.

A seller of cooked beans said her business is slowly picking up after the food agency's announcement this week. "We have started cooking beans, but not on a large scale as many people are still afraid to buy them," said Bose Humpati.

Before the "killer beans" episode, Humpati, who cooked beans and yam porridge in her canteen at Onike, a Lagos suburb, made about \$75 a day. But during the scare, she earned only \$2.50 a day from cooked yams — Sapa-IPS.

(226) CT (BR) 8/10/96

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Nigeria floats idea to privatise oil refineries

(226) BD 9/10/96
LAGOS — Nigeria has floated the idea of privatising or contracting out management of its problem-plagued refineries.

"Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation despatched a letter to oil companies asking whether they would be interested in participating in part or total privatisation of oil refineries, and if they are they should feel free to discuss it with us," state-run corporation spokesman Edem Duke said.

"It has not gone beyond an exploratory level, there has been no discussion of a time frame and no discussion of modalities," he said.

Despite pumping more than 2-million barrels of crude oil a day Nigeria has frequently had to resort to fuel imports because of technical problems at its four refineries which have not come close to running at their full capacity of 445 000 barrels a day. In September, after a series of repairs the four were running at about 230 000 barrels a day.

Corporation MD Dahiru Bayero has estimated the cost of bringing the refineries to capacity at \$859m.

Oil marketing companies welcomed the possibility of involvement, but warned it would work only if government freed up subsidised prices. "There is clearly a large domestic market as well as regional potential," said an oil marketing company executive.

"I could certainly see involvement on the management side, but to get anyone else to invest money would be unlikely unless they are sold outright at a very low price and pricing margins are changed."

The petroleum corporation receives only \$0.021/l for refining and distribution, which the World Bank says should cost at least twice as much. — Reuter

mixture of cash and chaos

Business Day news editor **Dianna Games** discovered on a recent trip

(226) BD 22/10/96

furrowed brow But, after all, this is Nigeria and people are loathe to refuse money, no matter where it comes from However, there was no precedent for changing rands and a realistic rate could not be agreed on

Lagos is also closely associated with crime and violence The sheer volume of crime, poverty and hopelessness make this reality

Armed robbery is prevalent and the expressways, particularly from the airport, seem to be a target The infamous "area boys" as they are known — thugs who operate in certain areas and threaten people in order to extort money — made themselves known to me at the window of a taxi in the middle of a traffic jam on Lagos Island. The taxi driver managed to fight them off, and surprisingly the car's unlocked doors were not tried once in the altercation The citizens are tired of crime, and act when a thief is exposed

Crime stories are an integral part of everyday conversation in Lagos — much as they are in Johannesburg But, in fact, there seem to be differences

The city itself seems menacing to the outsider because of its size, condition and large population, all of which make it surprising that crime is not more common

But, on balance, it would seem that the crime is not as random and violent as it is in SA People tend to know where they are most likely to encounter it and what to do to avoid it Ironically, people in Lagos voiced

fears about visiting Johannesburg because of the crime there

There is a good and little publicised side to life in Lagos

Ordinary Nigerians are the victims of successive military governments, widespread corruption, hopeless poverty, crime and serious air and noise pollution

Nevertheless, they are unfailingly friendly, polite and decent

Many thousands of people do not resort to the more notorious money-making schemes Nigerians have become known for

These people are out in the streets in their thousands selling anything they can get their hands on in an attempt to eke out some kind of living They crowd around cars, risk their lives on the expressways and narrowly miss getting crushed in the traffic just to sell chewing gum, ties, kitchenware, bread, water and so on for what can only be a pitiful income

People survive on their instincts, which also lends the place an incredible dynamism People also find solace in a profusion of churches and religions, music is an essential opiate and having fun is a pursuit not to be trifled with

People are openly contemptuous of the military and police Newspapers are largely hostile towards Gen Sani Abacha's regime, and the ubiquitous armed — and badly paid — policemen manning roadblocks as part of a fight against crime, are treated as a nuisance as many harass motorists in order to

extort petty amounts of money People also voice irritation at the police convoys, complete with screaming sirens and heavily armed personnel, that regularly race through the city's congested streets

The regime's poor human rights record is well documented, and Nigerians have great respect for President Nelson Mandela for his public denunciation of their government However, the same cannot be said of deputy president Thabo Mbeki, for whom there seems to be little regard among ordinary citizens after his handling of the case of hanged activist Ken Saro-Wiwa

There is general public scepticism about the Nigerian government's ability to deliver democracy, despite the fact a process is under way to restore it

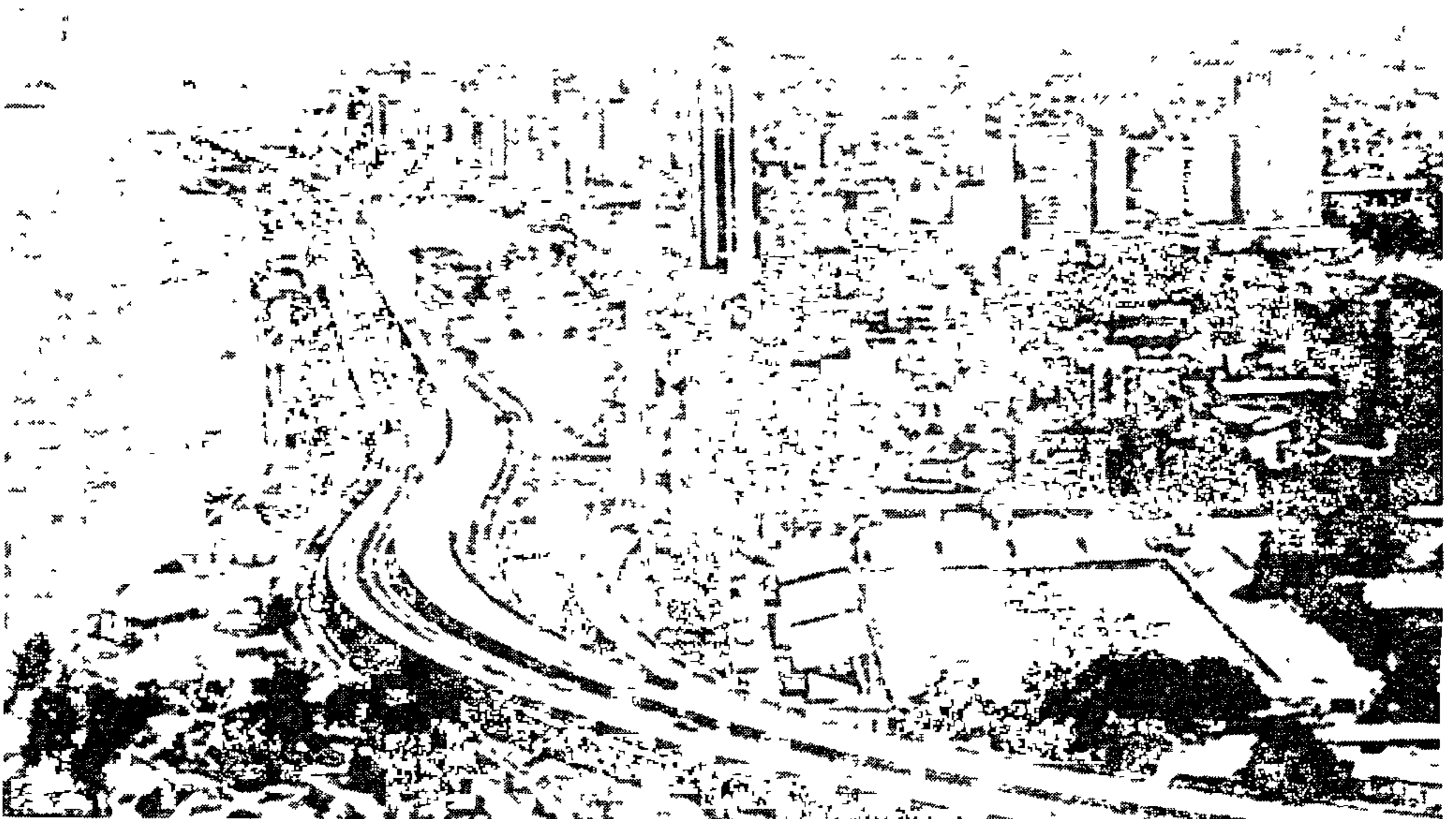
But, at the same time, the prospect of democracy is something that people have to believe in as it offers the only hope for the future of a distressed nation

The country's bad reputation, caused by a relative handful of criminals and defrauders outside the country's borders, has exacerbated the problems faced by ordinary Nigerians People complain of difficulty in getting visas to visit many countries and a lack of credibility for genuine Nigerian ventures outside the country's borders

Those who do travel abroad, face general suspicion and even contempt And everybody wants to be somewhere else

Lagos gossip has it that 3-million Nigerians applied for the US green card lottery

What was once known as the "giant of Africa" has a long way to go to earn that reputation in any meaningful sense in the future



Skyscrapers can be found in selected parts of Lagos, the rest of which is dominated by a mass of apartment buildings, low-cost flat blocks, shacks and small houses — jammed together to accommodate 8-million-plus people

Picture NIGERIAN INFORMATION MINISTRY

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22/10/96

Large, sprawling Lagos — a

NIGERIAN officials are suspicious of tourists. And well they might be. Why would you go to Lagos as a tourist? The taxi driver taking me to the airport in Accra, Ghana, was horrified that Lagos was my final destination.

"It's a very rough place," is all he would say. In short, he was right.

Lagos is an urban sprawl that makes Johannesburg look like Margate and, as the de facto capital of Nigeria, largely accounts for the country's notoriety. It is one of the five largest cities in the world and has a distinctly Third World infrastructure. The oil boom of the 1970s took a heavy toll on the country, leaving a legacy of urban distress and selected development.

Positive remnants are the complex network of flyovers and expressways dominating parts of the city.

Even now, with oil money still pouring in, there seems to be little trickle down effect, and the government reportedly skims the profits off the top and leaves most of the country to its own devices.

Skyscrapers and even new development are to be found in selected parts of the city, the rest of which is dominated by a mass of low-level apartment buildings, low-cost flat blocks, shacks and small houses — jammed together to accommodate the city's 8-million-plus people.

The roads can only be described as a

Cashing a cheque in one of the world's largest cities is not easy, as Bus

nightmare. There is a handful of functioning traffic lights, no road markings, huge potholes and drivers who live by their wits. Split-second timing, sheer nerve and a fully functioning hooter are required to master the system of five traffic lanes on roads built for two, battered cars held together with rope and masking tape in some cases, intersections with no apparent rules, and death-defying speeds.

But it is the system of Lagos, and it is not designed for outsiders.

Streethlights work only in some areas, power cuts, sometimes for days and in the poorer areas even months, are a regular feature of life, efficient running water is mostly a luxury, telephones take years to have installed and, of course, money is always a problem.

In fact, money is a national obsession. To survive in Lagos, you have to learn to hustle — and everything is negotiable.

The people refer to it as a "cash and carry" kind of place.

People move huge amounts of cash around the city in suitcases, car boots and suchlike and it is estimated that only about 10% of the city's money is in the profusion of banks that exist.

Cheques and credit cards are deemed too risky because of the massive scale of fraud that predominates.

In fact, even cash is problematic as fake notes are increasingly infiltrating the system. I learnt the cash-and-carry theory the hard way.

Foolishly, I arrived with travellers' cheques. It took seven hours in all, eight taxi rides in death-defying traffic and \$30 commission to cash \$200. It was a search that began with the banks which either do not cash travellers' cheques or take several hours to organise such things.

Bureaux de changes only change cash. Thus, I ended up in the mean and crowded streets of downtown Lagos — where most of the big banks are situated — being led down alleyways and up flights of stairs in dingy buildings to make my acquaintance with the city's infamous money changers.

The extortionate commission was because, they explained, it was such a small amount of money.

Money rates are entirely negotiable and the bank rate is only used as a guide, even at the bank. The smaller the notes, the worse the rate.

Trying to change rands produced many a

Multinationals increase Nigerian profile

A YEAR after the government eased controls on foreign investment, the ownership of Nigeria's non-oil sector is taking shape.

Multinationals discreetly raising their stakes above the old 40% limit to take control of their Nigerian operations account for most of the estimated \$5m of foreign investment in the first half of this year.

This is a modest total for a country of 100-million people, but if the military regime hoped that lifting controls on foreign equity and exchange rates would open a floodgate for investors, the move came too late. The days of quick returns for all but a privileged few are over and years of economic misrule have plunged consumer spending to a new low.

Nigeria's political uncertainty, bad infrastructure and security and low skill levels deter all but the most committed from investing in sub-Saharan Africa's second largest market.

Established companies such as Unilever, Paterson Zochonis, Guinness and Nestlé are in Nigeria for the long haul. With

the capital to replace old plant and the management to cut costs, these groups increasingly dominate their sectors.

Last year's legislation offers the multinationals the chance to take full control of their Nigerian boards.

Prices of blue-chip stocks have risen sharply in the past year, if they can be bought at all.

Unilever was first out of the blocks last November. The Anglo-Dutch group merged assets divested two years ago from UAC, its original flagship in Nigeria, with Lever Brothers Nigeria to raise its combined stake in the country's biggest food and detergent conglomerate to more than 50%.

This month's sale of its minority stake in Nigeria's leading brewery to senior partner Heineken completes the reshuffle of Unilever's portfolio, which retains the lucrative Caterpillar dealership, a joint venture with UAC.

Swiss rival Nestlé followed suit last month. Nestlé Foods Nigeria, 40% held by the parent, took over a 70% Swiss-owned

sister company to give the multinational 52% of the combined company.

Paterson Zochonis, a UK-based detergent and consumer group which derives much of its earnings from Nigeria, is on the same path. Buying shares on the market took the parent company's holding in PZ Nigeria to 45%.

But, on November 20, shareholders in PZ Nigeria will vote on a proposed merger with PZ's white goods subsidiary Thermocool to give the Manchester-based group control of the combined business.

By early next year UK drinks group Guinness is expected to take a majority share in its operations in Nigeria, its third largest market for stout, by converting loan stock into equity.

Other established multinationals will increase their Nigerian holdings, but newcomers, except in oil and possibly mining, are unlikely. Nigeria was rated the least attractive country for investment out of 40 assessed by British businesses in a recent Control Risks survey — Financial Times.

AFRICAN BUSINESS

Disposal could put ailing oil sector back on track

Nigeria all set to sell off state's oil interests

RICHARD MABLY

Lagos — Nigeria looks set to embark on the multibillion-dollar sale of its majority share in the country's six oil-producing joint ventures, Brian Anderson, the managing director of Shell in Nigeria, said yesterday

Anderson said the sale, worth at least \$11 billion, would put Nigeria's debt-ridden oil sector back on track and provide a huge injection of cash for the country's fragile economy

"I think it's inevitable. There's a need for a fundamental change in the financing structure (of the oil industry) which has been recognised by the government," Anderson said

Anthony Ani, Nigeria's minister of finance, first proposed the phased five-year sale at Nigeria's economic summit in Abuja at the end of September and presented an outline to the International Monetary Fund in Washington three weeks ago

Nigeria, through Nigerian National Petroleum, owns an average 57 percent share in six joint ventures with Royal Dutch/Shell, Mobil, Chevron, Elf Aquitaine, Agip and Texaco

Shell Development Production of Nigeria, accounting for nearly half of the country's 2 million barrels a day of crude out-

put, is easily the biggest producer, earning a profit of about \$220 million a year

The sale is likely to provoke huge interest among international oil companies keen to lay their hands on proven reserves ripe for development at low cost

Anderson said Shell, which held a majority share in its operations before nationalisation in the 1970s, would consider buying extra equity, depending on the terms

He said "I think there are plenty of people in the oil business who would like to invest in Nigeria

"In spite of the problems there aren't that many countries where there's oil equity for sale and relatively low-cost production. So I think there will be a big uptake and big potential to grow output, as soon as the process starts

"We are interested but it will depend on just how much its going to cost. We'd have a look at everything and see how it fits the portfolio"

Previous plans by Nigerian military governments for the possible privatisation of state assets have failed to materialise

But Anderson said internal discussions in Gen Sani Abacha's government had been under way for some time. He said he expect-

ed the oil asset sale to be raised in January's budget and get underway in about 18 months' time

Government arrears and wrangling over budgets and the terms of a new operating agreement have left foreign oil companies struggling to maintain production and unable to exploit new reserves

"The problem is that without investment the production capacity of the country is going to decline. There hasn't been much investment over the past few years," said Anderson

"This will take the government out of the upstream business. It is an opportunity for them to use the cash, if used wisely, to diversify the economy and improve the general infrastructure," he said

Nigeria would move to a tax and royalty system on its oil sales. That would strip the state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum of its responsibility for about 850,000 of crude exports and prevent revenue losses to the middlemen that manage contracts

"I think Abacha may genuinely be trying to end corruption," Anderson said

On the basis of a minor sale of equity in the oil company in 1991, the oil joint ventures raised \$11 billion, he said

ET (PR) 23/10/96 (226)

NEWS DIGEST (226)

CT (PR) 23/10/96

No longer 'dancing in obscene wealth', Nigerian officers go to jail

Nine Nigerian airforce officers have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from three to 50 years for embezzling 63 million nairas (about R36 million) of public funds, state radio reported yesterday. A court martial sentenced the officers from the air force finance unit on Monday, ending a trial that began in July on more than a dozen counts of corruption. Wing Commander Leo James faces 50 years in prison and Group Captain Raymond Inglocha, the former head of the finance unit will serve 29 years. The officers are accused of systematically siphoning airforce funds and were ordered to refund 167.7 million nairas to the government.

"They are a clique of hard, merciless criminals who nearly brought the Nigerian air force to its knees," said Air Commodore Victor Akiti, the court martial's president. While the nation and the air force were in gross neglect as a result of lack of funds, these officers were dancing in obscene wealth," he said in his judgment. Nigeria's military government has said it will pass a decree to bring to book hundreds of current and former officials found to have stolen from public enterprises. — Reuter Lagos

Nigeria must replant trees to help rubber bounce back

MATTHEW TOSTEVIN

Benin City — Failure to replace ageing trees on smallholder plots is steadily reducing Nigeria's rubber output, industry sources have said

The Professional Association of Natural Rubber in Africa predicts a crop for this year of 90 000 tons compared with 93 000 last year and 95 000 in 1994. Sources said next year's production could be below 87 000 tons.

Nigeria is Africa's largest natural rubber producer but it is fighting a reputation for poor quality. "The reality is that the trend is downwards and the only way to arrest it is through massive replanting and establishment of plantations," Ayoola Fasina, the director of the Rubber Research Institute of Nigeria, said.

About 60 percent of Nigerian rubber is grown by peasant farmers on smallholdings. The trees

(226) are past their 30- to 35-year productive lives and poorly cared for. As production falls, farmers' ability to secure enough capital to replant decreases still further.

"The farmers overtap the trees until they are no longer useful," said Ikay Afe, the administrative manager at Michelin, the owner of Nigeria's largest estates.

A tendency to damage trees by burning weeds instead of cutting them and by not paying for chemical inputs is eating further into production.

European Union assistance to help farmers replant was suspended in November after the hanging of author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists for murder, industry sources said.

The only exceptions to the decline are estates of Michelin and Dunlop, which have a local market for rubber at tyre factories

and can afford the six- to seven-year wait for trees to mature.

Michelin has just added a new estate of between 4 000ha and 5 000ha to its existing 10 000ha, which should give a total production of 10 000 tons a year when trees mature.

On the world market Nigerian smallholder rubber sells at a discount of up to 20 percent, with a reputation for high moisture content and contamination.

"To increase the weight of the 'cup lump' the farmers have got used to adding bits of wood or metal, and factories have played their own part by not insisting on quality," Fasina said.

The rubber association is trying to counter this. "We have already started educating the farmers and buyers, the next step is quality control managers, then by April next year we plan to bring in a quality mark," Fasina said. — Reuter

(226) ET(BR) 29/10/96

'Operation Sweep' becomes a nightmare for Nigerians

(226) source says 31/10/96

LAGOS - When the Lagos state government set up a special police unit to respond quickly to rising crime, residents heaved a sigh of relief.

But now, just a year after the special unit began its work, residents claim that "Operation Sweep" has turned into a nightmare not for the criminals, but for law-abiding citizens.

The special squad was inaugurated last October to fight rising crime, especially in Lagos state. Official statistics show that between 1990 and 1994, 123 police and 276 civilians were killed by armed robbers nationwide.

During the same period, 3 613 suspected armed robbers were arrested and 532 killed. Some 7 538 armed robberies were reported during the same period and more than 50 per cent of the incidents occurred in Lagos state.

To wage a war against sophisticated criminals, the special unit of 4 000 policemen and soldiers operate clandestinely. Armed with automatic weapons, they move in unmarked cars and do not wear official uniforms to avoid detection by armed robbers.

But their civilian garb has led to the growing problem of residents mistaking the special unit for armed criminals. Scared motorists have landed in ditches at the sight of armed men in civilian clothes mounting roadblocks.

"I was in a taxi one afternoon when the driver sighted four armed men in mufti (civilian clothing). He shouted 'armed robbers' and veered into a ditch, then jumped out of the car

and ran for his dear life," said Kunle Adewumi, an executive of a business centre here.

"I could have run too, but the door was jammed. I resigned myself to fate and thought I was going to be killed by armed robbers," added Adewumi. The men approached the car and identified themselves as policemen.

"One could just collapse at the sight of rifle-carrying men in casual wear flagging you down, because armed robbers have similarly dispossessed people of their cars in the past," said Adewumi.

Known for rudeness

According to some human rights activists here, the special squad is also known for rudeness and often, members of the squad do not identify themselves to the public.

"We think it is a very wrong way to apprehend robbers. Members of the squad are often so arrogant they don't even show their identity when confronted," said Tunde Olugboji of the Constitutional Rights Project, a human rights group.

"This is an attempt to harass and intimidate citizens, because nobody can distinguish them from armed robbers. The Nigerian law does not permit people to go about in mufti armed," he told IPS.

According to Olugboji, given the sophisticated methods of armed robbers in the country it is easy for the public to leap to the conclusion that the "law enforcers are the lawbreakers."

Olugboji argued that the special squad must come up with a way for people to easily identify its members.

Although the human rights activist said his organisation had only received reports of "harassment" by the force and there had been no reported deaths, Bishop Godwin Elomobor of a new generation church barely escaped death in a shootout with members of the squad.

He was shot in the thigh recently during an exchange of gun fire between himself and several members of the force whom he mistook for armed robbers.

According to reports, Bishop Elomobor was returning from his church late in the evening when members of the team tried to stop his car. He thought they were robbers, refused to stop and a chase began.

Blasting bishop

The bishop pulled out his double-barrel shotgun and started to fire at the men. He was injured when they fired back.

According to Lagos state police commissioner, Abubakar Tsav, the team had earlier received a radio message about a stolen car which was heading their way.

"Apparently the men saw his (the bishop's) car and ordered him to stop. He refused to stop and they chased him to a dead end where he jumped out and opened fire probably thinking that the men were armed robbers," Tsav said, confirming the incident - *Sapa-IPS*



General Sani Abacha

AFRICAN BUSINESS

Dredging delay slows smelter's start-up

FROM REUTERS

(226)
(BR) 31/10/96

Lagos — Nigeria's Ikot Abasi 180 000 ton aluminium smelter will start production early next year instead of next month as was planned, an Aluminium Smelter Company of Nigeria (Alscon) spokesman said on Tuesday

He said a delay in the dredging of the eastern Imo River was responsible. The dredging of the

Imo River harbour would enable bigger ships berth there to load products from the plant

It is the second time the smelter project, which was commissioned in 1990, has been delayed

The project is 70 percent owned by the Nigerian government, with the remaining 30 percent shared between the main contractor, Ferrostaal of Germany, and Reynolds Interna-

tional of the US

A subsidiary firm, EBE and Reynolds, has been formed by the two foreign technical partners to manage the project for 10 years after production begins

"The smelter plant is 80 percent constructed. The Nigerian Gas Company is now test-running supply of gas to the plant, which had once posed a major obstacle," the Alscon spokesman said

He said the Royal Dutch Shell

Group would supply 33 billion cubic feet of gas a year to the smelter's 536MW power plant on completion

Most of Nigeria's gas output, produced during the pumping of crude oil is flared

The World Bank has been critical of the project, saying it was ill-conceived and expensive

However, Nigeria said it hoped to earn much-needed hard currency from the plant

Nigeria

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Nigerian regime is getting more brutal, says Ogoni group

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ARG 9/11/96

Johannesburg - A human rights group led by Nigerian activist Ken Saro-Wiwa until his execution a year ago says Nigeria's military rulers are becoming increasingly brutal in stamping out opposition.

The Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People also accused oil company Shell of conniving with Sani Abacha's government and of being the main source of anguish for the people of Nigeria's oil-rich Ogoniland.

"The Ogoni people hold Shell primarily responsible for our anguish," the group said in a statement released in South Africa.

"It is our firm belief that in so far as Shell, exhibiting all the attributes of a quasi-state entity in Nigeria, is not held accountable by the international community for the consequences of its action, the much desired change towards the restoration of democracy, respect for human rights and environmental justice in Nigeria will remain elusive," the organisation said.

Ogoniland is troubled by efforts to achieve self-determination for the 500 000-strong community, which the group championed under the leadership of Mr Saro-Wiwa, an author.

Nigeria sparked international outrage on November 10 last year when Mr Saro-Wiwa and eight others were hanged for the murder of four pro-government Ogoni chiefs. The activists had been tried under a military decree condemned as unfair. Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth, and other states followed with token sanctions.

The group said one year of mourning for the activists had ended with little progress towards democracy. Police in Ogoniland have banned demonstrations to mark tomorrow's first anniversary of the hanging of the activists. Human rights leaders in Nigeria said there would be no mass rallies.

South Africa emerged as the champion of sanctions on Nigeria after the hangings and the release of the statement here appeared to recognise that role. - Reuter

Two
Post
Entry

BUSINESS

Nigeria named world's 'poorest oil-rich nation'

(226) BD 12/11/96

LAGOS — Nigeria was the poorest oil state in the world in spite of the \$200bn it had earned from oil since 1970, a recent World Bank report said

Over the past 25 years the estimated 120-million nationals of Africa's most populous nation have grown steadily poorer. Today, almost 51% of Nigerians live under the poverty line, according to Foluso Okunmadewa, a senior World Bank official in Nigeria

With an annual per capita income reduced from \$1 000 in 1980 to less than \$300 today, Nigeria is among the world's poorest

Other surveys conducted in recent years by the Nigerian Federal Office of Statistics show 71% of Nigerian households live in poverty and 33% in dire poverty

These trends show no sign of being reversed

According to the International Energy Agency, oil prospection and extraction will continue to thrive for many years and oil will remain the world's main source of energy for the next 15 years

This year, offshore prospecting by a partnership of Shell and Elf led to the discovery of a new Bonga field at a depth of between 2 000m and 3 000m under the seabed

In 1990 Elf found oil reserves at a depth of 60m at Amenam

The Bonga and Amenam fields are the biggest discovered in Nigeria in recent years. Production is expected to begin by 2000 and reserves are estimated at tens of thousands of barrels a day

These discoveries have revived interest in prospecting in ultra-deep offshore waters, and seismic soundings have been carried out in which the results are still at analysis stage.

More sophisticated exploration techniques and new methods of interpreting seismic data may even enable prospectors to locate new onshore reserves in the area around the Niger delta

Revenue from the petroleum industry is likely to increase even further when Nigeria begins commercial production of its large gas reserves in 1999

In the eyes of the World Bank, Nigeria is a wealthy country whose people are poor

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher said during his recent African tour that Nigerian leaders had "squandered their nation's potential and made it the poorest oil-rich country on earth"

In the past, those who have

spoken out on this issue, which is virtually taboo, have come to grief

Lagos Financial Times correspondent William Keeling wrote that several billion dollars in oil revenue disappeared without trace during the military rule of Gen Ibrahim Babangida, and was expelled from Nigeria in 1991

Opposition leader Gani Fawehinmi, the president of the radical National Conscience Movement set up in October 1994 to try to stamp out poverty in Nigeria, has been detained since January for accusing successive military governments between 1984 and 1993 of appropriating around \$120bn in oil revenue

Writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight fellow members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, who sought a larger share of the oil revenue taken from their traditional lands, were hanged in November after a controversial murder trial which caused international outrage

Saro-Wiwa's movement campaigned for the rights of the 500 000 Ogoni people in the Niger River delta, accusing the military government in Lagos of not giving them a fair share of their area's oil wealth — Sapa-AFP

Sad plight of the Ogonis

Lawetan 12/11/96

A YEAR AGO ON SUNDAY, nine prisoners were led to the gallows, their last breath expelled in song. They were nine Ogoni activists who had been jailed by a special tribunal of Nigeria's military government and were hanged despite overwhelming international pressure for their reprieve.

Poet Ken Saro-Wiwa and his co-supporters of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People had been jailed after trials that were widely described as "unfair and politically motivated".

They had campaigned for political, economic and environmental rights for the Ogonis, who are a minority in the southeast of the country.

One year later there are still Ogoni and other human rights activists who remain imprisoned without access to legal help, medical care or sadly to their families.

Many are prisoners of conscience who were jailed by a special tribunal whose convictions and sentences were confirmed by the military government. There is no provision for appeal to an independent higher court.

After a long history of military governments, Chief Moshood Abiola won the presidential elections in 1993. But he was charged and later imprisoned for treason and the then military government annulled the election results.

Later that year General Sani Abacha's military government was installed through a coup and he has remained in power while Abiola is in jail.

Human rights

The imprisoned leader's senior wife, Kudirat Abiola, was assassinated in June. It is widely believed that the government had a hand in her death.

In an effort to keep the international spotlight on human rights abuses in that country, Amnesty International and Nigerian human rights organisations have launched a six-month campaign for reform in Nigeria.

The campaign – through which they hope to elicit support from governments and other organisations – was launched in South Africa as the Amnesty team had been denied visas and could not visit Nigeria last week as planned.

"We chose South Africa because we were encouraged by public reaction to Nigeria," said Pierre Sané, Amnesty's general secretary.

A coalition of cultural, trade union, political, business and sport organisations, among others, have formed the SA Nigerian Democratic Support Group to campaign against the human rights abuses in Nigeria.

Last weekend they held demonstrations out-

Many Nigerians are looking to South Africa to help monitor the transformation promised by the military regime in their country. **Sharon Chetty** takes a look at their problems and the issues involved...



Pierre Sané ... the world must pay attention to human rights abuses in Nigeria. PIC SHARON CHETTY

side the Nigerian consulate in Johannesburg and a poetry and prose reading of Saro-Wiwa's writings was held to commemorate the anniversary of the activist's death.

Commemorations were also held in Nigeria, although activists had to be careful not to be too "provocative" for fear of incurring the wrath of the military.

Sané says they would also like to encourage more civil involvement in the campaign. "South Africa is our best hope, and we don't want that hope to die," he says.

The South African government, together with other groups, can do more to agitate for change in Nigeria, he believes.

While here, he met with members of government and organisations like the African National Congress, Congress of South African Trade Unions and churches to get their support for a 10-point plan that it is hoped, will result in genuine change in Nigeria.

"We want to encourage people here to develop links directly so that there is solidarity and action between the people of the two countries. Your government will act more decisively if it feels that is what people want," Sané added.

The programme includes the release of all

(226)

prisoners of conscience, the removal of military decrees which allows for the indefinite and solitary confinement of political prisoners, a guarantee of fair trials for political prisoners, safeguards against torture and ill-treatment and the abolition of the death penalty.

Amnesty has asked governments to vigilantly monitor the transformation that Abacha has agreed to over the next three years.

"They have played that (reform) record before, but (military leader Ibrahim) Babangida was replaced by Abacha."

Sané says that governments should also measure if the reform is positive and if the restoration of human rights is successful, and only then decide on economic and other relations with Nigeria.

"The world should not be fooled when one or two prisoners are released." Nigeria's human rights movement should also be sustained financially and morally, he added.

SA's prominent role

While Amnesty has several branches throughout Africa – its oldest branch on the continent is in Nigeria – South Africa is expected to play a more prominent role in the campaign against the military dictatorship.

States in West Africa have not taken a stand against Nigeria, Sané explains, as there is probably a fear of retaliation from that country, which could destabilise the whole region.

While in South Africa, Sané also had talks with the government over arms sales to Rwanda and the crisis in the Great Lakes region.

"It is important for the people of Nigeria to feel that outside, there are people who care," says Sané, adding that it is important that the anniversary of Saro-Wiwa's death should not be displaced by the crisis in Zaire, although that is urgent too.

Sané agrees that world attention and lobbying is no longer as intense as it had been while President Nelson Mandela was in jail and the anti-apartheid movement focused on South Africa.

But, he says human rights issues can be forced on to the world's centre stage if there is consistent rallying around issues like Nigeria.

"The world needs South Africa to get more involved the way the world is today, the experience of the freedom fighters is needed."

Politician's murder adds to Nigerian anarchy (226)

Lagos - The murder of prominent politician and businesswoman Suliat Adedeji at her home in Ibadan has again highlighted the increasingly anarchic situation in Nigeria.

Only hours after Thursday's assassination, an overnight explosion, believed to have been caused by a bomb, killed at least three people in a car near Lagos airport, according to press reports, heightening the national feeling of insecurity.

Adedeji (52), a top national official of the newly registered National Centre Party of Nigeria, was shot dead in broad daylight by four or five unidentified assassins who stormed into her home in Ibadan.

She is the third prominent woman from the ethnic Yoruba group to be killed within the past six months - Sapa-AFP

1/21/96

Nigeria's brave fraud advisory

WHAT is a poor, hard-pressed African ambassador to do? You are the representative in Washington of one of that continent's two most important countries, a vibrant, dynamic, creative nation of nearly 120-million souls — some 43-million of them active in the work force — who represent a major market for a trade-hungry, developed world.

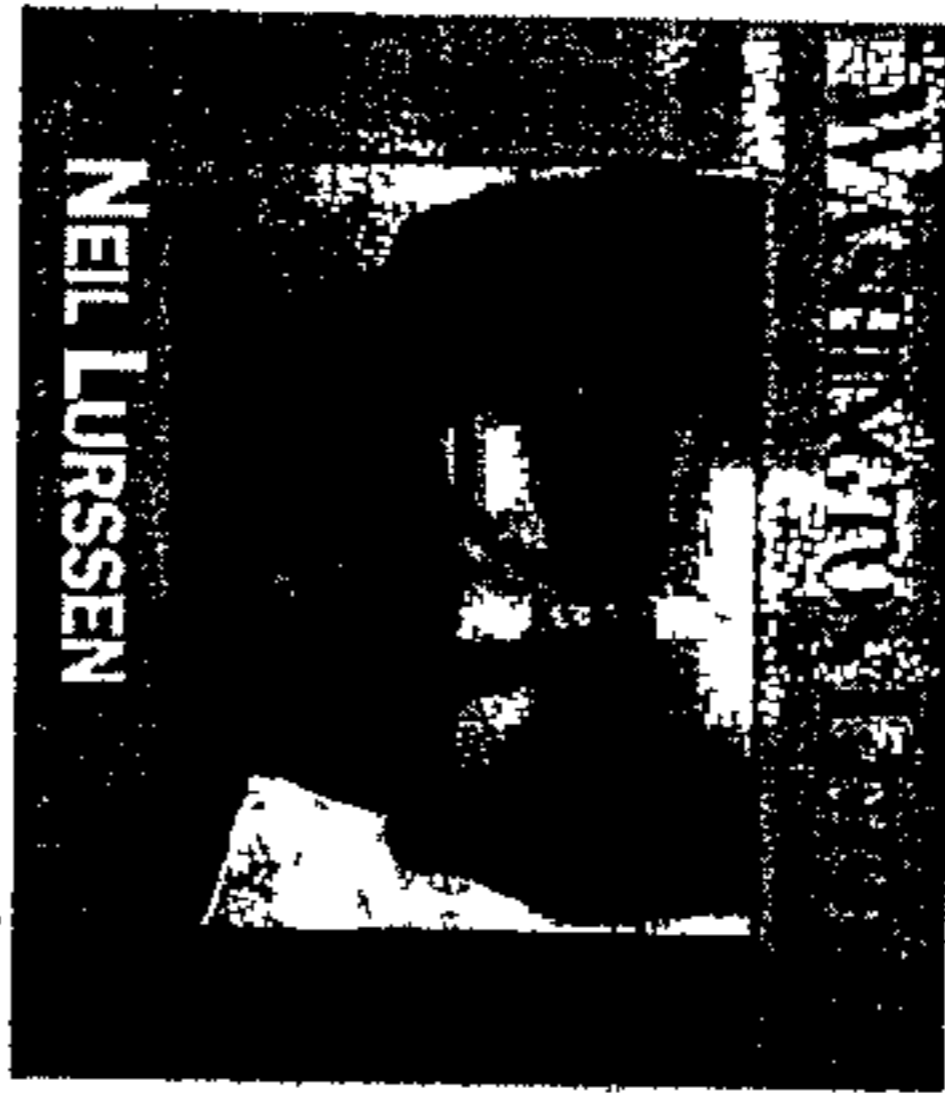
A big part of your job is to promote your country as a good place to do business, with much to buy and sell, as a country which has eased up on capital and dividend repatriation, where special tax concessions and export incentives make investment a very interesting proposition.

But here's a big problem some of your countrymen have had spectacular careers as hucksters and con artists. Their fraudulent schemes and scam operations have established for your homeland an unenviable reputation as a place to be avoided by foreign businessmen who don't want to be taken to the cleaners.

When you open a daily newspaper or turn on the TV in a Western capital, there is a good chance you will learn of yet another crooked deal perpetrated by one or several of your fellow citizens.

Unfairly or not, the nation you represent is viewed widely as a haven for scoundrels. Confronted by this problem, the embassy of Nigeria in Washington DC has done something highly unusual in the world of commercial marketing.

In a public relations world where the norm is to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative, the Nigerians are tackling their image problem head-on by actually



accentuating the negative in a oddly positive way.

They have issued a document on their official letterhead entitled *Advisory on Fraudulent and Criminal Activities* which is made available at trade seminars and international trade conferences — venues where one normally expects to find glossy brochures and glowing pamphlets which sometimes tend to depict even tepid backwaters as paradises of profit.

It takes guts and imagination to do that — and it is disarmingly effective. It gives the Nigerians an opportunity to point out that they too are damaged by the bad guys in their midst.

And it also allows them to make a valid point: American businessmen — and South Africans for that matter, as they look northward in their own continent for new opportunities — who part with their money expecting to make large profits for little or no effort, must be aware that they are participat-

ing in crooked schemes

In fact, some American businessmen are reported to have been so embarrassed after discovering they were conned out of large sums that they did not report the matter to the police — possibly out of fear, in some cases, that they broke US law.

Here, according to the Nigerian embassy's advisory, are some of the most common scams carried out by their unscrupulous countrymen.

● The Nigerian party requests pro forma invoices for the planned purchase or importation of goods from American companies with assurances that payment will be made by wire transfer, certified bank draft or letters of credit. In some cases, substantial quantities of goods or samples are requested. To the foreign company it seems like an exciting export deal.

But after the goods and samples have been shipped to Nigeria, payment is never made, or false instruments of payment are returned, typically phony documents which purport to be from the Central Bank of Nigeria.

● In one of the best-known scams, the Nigerian party says it has access to large amounts of money — usually millions of dollars — owed by previous Nigerian administrations to foreign companies. The peeps-

226 CT19/11/96

vators say they can transfer the funds abroad secretly, but they need to place the money in an existing foreign bank account.

For allowing the use of the account, the account holder will receive a substantial percentage of the transferred funds. All the scam operators need are blank letterheads.

Although the advisory does not go into the details, an important element in this scam is a demand from Nigeria that the account-holder come up with some earnest money as a token of serious interest in the deal.

There have been a number of cases where account-holders — dazzled by the prospect

They have issued a document on official letter heads entitled Advisory on Fraudulent and Criminal Activities which is made available at trade seminars and international conferences — venues where one normally expects to find glossy brochures and glowing pamphlets which sometimes tend to depict even tepid backwaters as paradises of profit. It takes guts to do that.

variant is a claim by the con artists that they can influence government contracts for the purchase of large amounts of import goods from foreign companies.

The contracts and the influence never existed.

● Foreign businessmen, trying to speed up transactions, are told by conners that they need to pay a fee — sometimes called an "economic recovery tax" — to government officials. There is no such fee or tax and the embassy warns that if foreign businessmen are asked to pay one, it is a bribe and an obvious clue that a scam operation is under way.

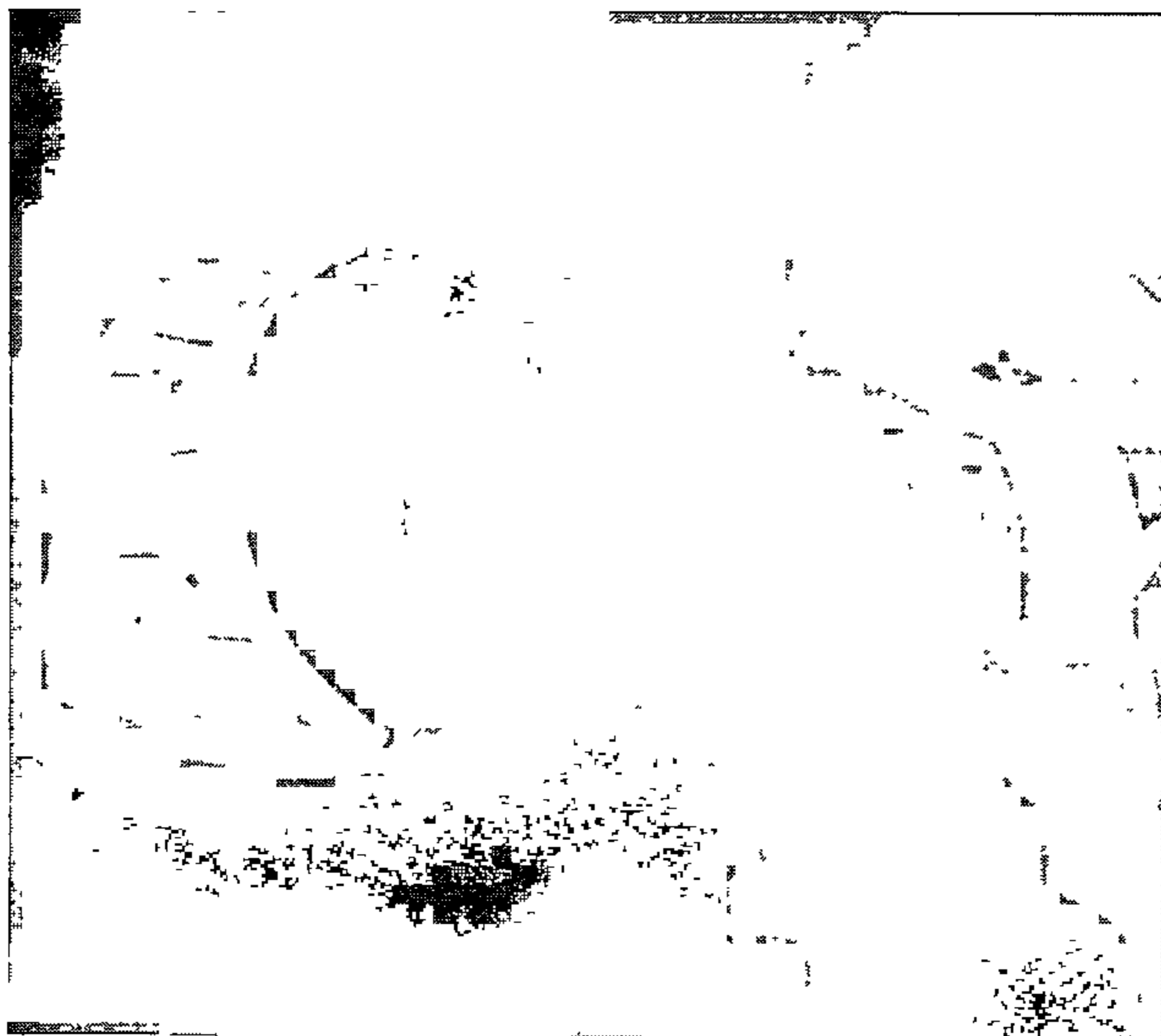
Says the advisory: "The Embassy of Nigeria wishes to emphasize that these fraudulent and criminal practices by some unscrupulous and unparliamentary Nigerians should not, repeat not, be considered a reflection of the general Nigerian business person, who is really prepared to do honest and genuine business..."

Fair enough. But how can one know when one is in the clutches of crooks? Watch out for poorly worded letters and faxes, says the embassy.

Be especially wary when you get a letter which starts "You have been referred to us by a reliable source..." It could be your introduction to the poohhouse.

Nigerian image in US plummets as party leaders' trip fails to convince

DAVE CAULKIN / AP



Imprisoned leader Nigerian politician Moshood Abiola.

The question posed to four of the five leaders of Nigeria's new political parties was a simple one: what role did they expect the Nigerian military to play in the ongoing political process?

But the four party chairmen visiting New York responded with anger and bafflement. "What do you mean?" asked Senator Magaji Abdullahi, chairman of the National Centre Party. "I don't know," responded Alhaji Isa Mohammed of the United Nigeria Congress Party tersely. "You would do better to ask (Nigerian ruler) General Sani Abacha." None answered the question.

It was that kind of a US tour for the leaders of the five new political parties, combative, and short on answers. Since the presumed winner of the 1993 elections, Moshood Abiola, has been jailed for the past two years without trial, the new party chairmen, on their current six-city tour of the United States, have faced a tough sell in arguing that the next democratic process will be honoured.

"It is a recurring question whether we have an assurance that the military will not take power again," Mohammed conceded. "Our mission here is for us to assure that we want to get it right. The military will be kept at bay. They will have no excuse to come in."

He argued that in recent months Nigeria's political parties have worked

together to ensure that the previous reasons the military has dominated Nigerian politics - from party rivalry and corruption to regional and ethnic divisions - will not apply.

Among other things, Abdullahi said, power will rotate through the six main zones of Nigeria, so that both the predominantly Muslim and Hausa north-west - which has long controlled political power - and the Christian south will be represented.

"Every group has been given the assurance that power will rotate to them," Mohammed added. Moreover, even small political parties stand to gain in the proposed national assembly, which would shun the "winner-take-all" system of the past to allow any party that wins 10% of the popular vote to be represented.

Still, the current crop of party leaders is far from diverse. The four present at the New York visit Alhaji Suleiman Ahmed of the Democratic Party of Nigeria, Alhaji Gambo Lawan of the Grassroots Democratic Movement, Mohammed, and Abdullahi, are all Muslims from the north. The fifth, Abel Ubeku of the Congress for National Consensus, is a southern Christian who has been present at other stops of the US tour.

Abdullahi explained that southerners were represented in the parties, but were not present as party chairmen

since chairmen cannot also run for the presidency - a position the south feels it has been unfairly denied. Abiola, a southerner and a Muslim, was one of two major candidates accepted by then-ruling General Ibrahim Babangida in 1993, but the elections were nullified by the military before vote totals confirming Abiola's victory could be released.

More to the point, the current chairmen's support base is still tightly linked to the military, which has ruled Nigeria for 26 of the past 30 years.

"Three of the parties took out full-page political ads in November, congratulating General Abacha on his third year in power and praising his record," noted Mike Fleshman, human rights coordinator for the New York-based Africa Fund, a rights group.

"They're all cronies," he argued. "These guys are in the pocket of Abacha."

The ads themselves, submitted by the Democratic Party, the Grassroots Democrats and the United Nigeria Congress Party, are similar. They variously praise Abacha's "meritorious and selfless service to the nation, Africa, and the world" and all, in only slightly different wording, call upon "Almighty Allah to bless (Abacha) abundantly and to grant infinite wisdom."

Nor are the parties the only ones

which sought inclusion in the current proposed democratic transition. Ten other parties failed to meet various requirements for registration, paving the way for five parties linked to, or supportive of, the military regime being the only authorised political parties.

"We are not the biggest parties," Ahmed acknowledged. But he contended that the new groups nonetheless represented "diversities in the country."

Still, the political hopefuls' US trip, like many recent efforts by Nigeria to improve the Abacha dictatorship's image, has clearly been a public relations disappointment. Roy Innis, an African American activist who supports the Abacha regime, argued that media interest in the chairmen's visit was much lower than it would be for opposition leaders from other troubled states.

Other African American lobbyists, including Maurice Dawkins, who has played a major role in an estimated \$14-million (R67.2-million) public relations campaign to improve Abacha's image, charge racism over recent calls in the US media for sanctions on Nigeria. No similar calls are made for sanctions against China, he said.

Such charges, and the current party chairmen's visit, are part of an overall campaign to target the African American community to believe that Nigeria is being treated unfairly over its poor

Star 10/11/97
rights record, Fleshman said. But that campaign has had only mixed results, he added.

Nigeria's image in the United States continues to suffer, particularly since the government executed environmental and human rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other leaders of the southern Ogoni minority in November 1995.

That act has prompted calls here to boycott the Dutch Shell Oil conglomerate, which had sparred with Saro-Wiwa over the environmental damage caused by its oil drilling.

But the party chairmen show no sympathy for Saro-Wiwa or Abiola. Mohammed described Saro-Wiwa, a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, as "a person who was pestering oil companies asking for contracts" and a murderer, and he accused Abiola of attempting to set up a parallel government.

Fleshman said that with more than 7,000 people in jail on political or untried charges and the current transition process "absolutely illegitimate", Nigeria's poor image will likely continue.

"At the end of the day, it's very hard to sell this regime," Fleshman said. "It's a classic neocolonial regime. Abacha and the military are there to serve the big oil companies." - Sapa-IPS



NWOKEDI

Nigeria 'to return to path of democracy'

Nomavenda Mathiane

NIGERIA's government had set in motion a transition programme intended to return the country to civilian democratic rule, Nigerian Human Rights Commission chairman Judge Paul Nwokedi said at an African Institute lecture in Pretoria yesterday.

Nwokedi said the law which led to writer Ken Saro Wiwa being sentenced to death had not been passed by the incumbent

regime and, contrary to newspaper reports, the Nigerian people were not trampled upon by a military government.

"There is hardly a family in Nigeria that does not have a member in the military," he said. Nwokedi was optimistic that the commission, set up last June, would not only investigate human rights abuses, but also educate the people on their rights and how to enforce them.

Nwokedi conceded that it would not be an easy job, saying

although human rights were enshrined in Nigeria's constitution, they were unenforceable.

Resources were also another stumbling block in implementing fundamental rights, such as free primary education.

He also said the major problem facing his commission was that 75% of Nigeria's population was illiterate. This meant the commission's work would not go far unless ordinary people were educated about their fundamental human rights.

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ANK LIMITED
nd NICOLAS

NORTH GRAFTON, in respect of the land and building or buildings situate at YEOVILLE Township, in the area of the JOHANNESBURG Local Authority, as shown and more fully described on the amended sectional Plan No SS72/1992.

Held by the defendant under and by virtue of Notarial Deed of Cession of Exclusive Use Areas of Common Property Number SK3358/1994

The following information is furnished regarding the improvements, though in this respect nothing is guaranteed

The dwelling consists of 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, w.c., kitchen, lounge, 1 garage
TERMS 10% (Ten Per Cent) of the purchase price in cash on the day of the sale, the

prior to the sale, at the office of the Sheriff for the Supreme Court Johannesburg North at 131 Marshall Street, Johannesburg

Erf 0171 Vrededorp, Measuring 248 (TWO HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT) Square Metres, held by the Defendants under Deed of Transfer No T50460/1991, being 22 - 6th Street, Vrededorp, Johannesburg

The following information is furnished regarding the improvements, though in this respect nothing is guaranteed

The dwelling consists of lounge, diningroom, kitchen, bathroom/w.c., bedrooms
TERMS 10% (Ten Per Cent) of the purchase price in cash on the day of the sale, the balance payable against

The following information is furnished regarding the improvements, though in this respect nothing is guaranteed

The dwelling consists of 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen, lounge

TERMS 10% (Ten Per Cent) of the purchase price in cash on the day of the sale, the balance payable against registration of Transfer, to be secured by a Bank or Building Society or other acceptable guarantee to be furnished within 14 (fourteen) days from the date of sale

The Purchaser shall, on the day of the sale, pay 5% (five per centum) auctioneer's charges on the proceeds of the sale up to the price of R30 000.00 (Thirty Thousand Rand) and thereafter 3%

BLACK conducting business under the style of "X-PRESS CAR WASH", 289 Louis Botha Avenue Orange Grove is hereby giving notice of the sale of all the assets to Harry Avnit, with effect 1st January 1997, who will carry on the said business for his own benefit and account
MULTIBUSINESS BROKERS, P.O. Box 2267, Houghton, 2041.

TOWN PLANNING

SCHEDULE 8
(Regulation 11(2))
NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR AMENDMENT OF TOWN PLANNING SCHEME IN TERMS OF SECTION

Particulars of the application will lie for inspection during normal office hours at the office of the Director City Planning, Room 760, 7th Floor, Metropolitan Centre, Braamfontein, Johannesburg, for a period of 28 days from 10 January 1997

Objections to or representations in respect of the application must be lodged with or made in writing to the Director City Planning at the above address or at P.O. Box 30733, Braamfontein, 2017 within a period of 28 days from 10 January 1997

Address of owner c/o PlanAfrica Inc
Sherborne Square
5 Sherborne Road
Parktown
2183

Nigeria scores badly as a respecter of human rights

BY ABID ASLAM
Washington

ers' rights, and violence and discrimination against women"

Neighbouring Ghana "continues its transition from a single party, authoritarian system to a constitutional democracy", the report says. The government used "obscure" laws in an attempt to control the media even as it permitted new independent radio stations to open, adding to the country's "small, but independent press" and "vigorous and outspoken" opposition.

Likewise Ethiopia, which continued to strive for a federal system of government, and where a "weak and overburdened" judiciary "showed increased signs of independence" even as the government "intensified measures to create a national, apolitical army and move to check corruption

Eritrea, which in 1993 split from Ethiopia after a bitter, 30-year war, moved from a centrally planned economy towards a free market one. Since September, the public has been debating a draft constitution that provides for what the report terms the "democratic freedoms" of assembly, speech, and association. However, the government has placed

Nigeria is singled out among African countries for practising "authoritarian repression" in the US State Department's latest global human rights report to the US Congress. The generally soberly worded report blasts the military council of General Sani Abacha for a human rights record it says has "remained dismal" since Abacha "seized power in a palace coup in November 1993".

Throughout 1996, Abacha's government "regularly relied on arbitrary detention, arrests, and wide-scale harassment to silence its many critics", including Moshood Abiola, the presumed winner of Nigeria's annulled 1993 presidential elections, former president Olusegun Obasanjo, and his deputy, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, the report says.

It blasts the continued subversion of the judiciary and abuses by security forces, which occur in a climate of "infringements on freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, travel, and work-



Record marred ... President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique.

economic, employment, and travel restrictions on Jehovah's Witnesses because of their refusal to vote or perform national service, the report says.

Among other countries until recently ruled by military juntas, the report notes that Sierra Leone in March 1996 had its first "free and fair" elections since 1967. However, government forces "were responsible for extrajudicial killings, beatings, arbitrary ar-

rest and detention, and illegal searches" It has yet to be seen if a peace accord, signed in November with Revolutionary United Front rebels, will yield improvements in the situation.

In Libena, "political violence has been endemic" since civil war broke out in 1989, and civilians continued to bear the brunt of the killings and economic devastation

Although they publicly professed adherence to the rule of law, the leaders of the major warring factions condoned and in some instances seemingly appeared to encourage the murder and maiming of both civilians and combatants, the report states.

The fighting spilled over into Côte d'Ivoire, forcing the government to designate border districts as a "military operational zone", increasing the purview of the military in a country where - despite their frequent deployment to quell demonstrations - soldiers "traditionally have accepted the primacy of civilian authority", although some 10 officers are in prison, accused of plotting a coup.

The State Department notes progress towards "national reconciliation" in Rwanda.

However, the "largely Tutsi" Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which took power following the civil war and genocide of 1994 and dominates the government of national unity, has "continued to be responsible for numerous" abuses, including "hundreds" of killings for political motives and revenge.

Nevertheless, the RPF has

opened the country's vastly overcrowded prisons - where some 80 000 inmates languish - to international relief and human rights organisations.

In neighbouring Burundi, the State Department sees government efforts to restore security as "inadequate" and decries the army's allegiance to the Tutsi minority as well as that minority's continued control of the judiciary. This ensures a "continuing lack of accountability for killings and ethnic violence".

Zaire's security forces - which the report characterises as enjoying impunity for human-rights abuses - took to "large-scale military pillaging" until the government met most military payrolls, and again when they fled advancing rebels in north and south Kivu and Haut-Zaïre.

President Mobutu Sese Seko remains in control after "31 years of authoritarian rule", the report says, but "his poor health and prolonged absence from the country signalled a significant decline in his authority".

In Mozambique, the country's

in Africa

(226)

human rights record "continued to be marred by an abusive pattern of behaviour by the security forces and an ineffective judicial system which was only nominally independent from the Frelimo-controlled executive led by President Joaquim Chissano, who was elected in the country's first multi-party poll in October 1994.

It comes closest to praise in discussing South Africa, which has continued to dismantle discriminatory laws and institutions, establish a strong and independent judiciary, and investigate apartheid-era human rights abuses through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Political and police violence remain a serious problem, however, as does violence against women. Perhaps most significantly - given the report's main purpose of steering congressional foreign aid and trade decisions - the report opines that, although the SA Government is "working hard" to promote local enterprise and draw foreign investment, the "socio-economic legacy of apartheid is expected to remain a problem for many years" - Sapa-IPS.

Nigerians arrested in drug raid on city hotel

Stout 142497 (226)

By MIKE MASIPA
Crime Reporter

Police confiscated more than 500g of cocaine powder, 11 cocaine rocks, 40 packets of dagga and a host of stolen items in a swoop on a block of flats in Berea, Johannesburg, yesterday. The drug haul alone is worth an estimated R280 000.

While no drug-related arrests were made during the three-hour search, two Nigerian nationals were arrested for being in the country illegally.

Hillbrow police Superintendent Danie Louw said the building - The Statesman in Tudhope Avenue - was a well-known site for drug activity.

Many of the rooms that police targeted were known to be inhabited by Nigerian nationals.

When police arrived at the building, many of the tenants were leaving and had to be ordered back inside.

A policeman said it was a well-rehearsed reaction for suspects to leave their rooms in disarray during a raid. As a result, most of the rooms in which drugs and stolen property were found were not occupied.

Dealers usually used empty rooms to store their drugs and avoid arrest.

Among the stolen goods recovered were a car radio, two cellular phones and two video cameras.

Abacha likely to stand again for president – and why not, he asks

By WILFRED MARTIN
Abidjan

When the Nigerian elections roll around in 20 months time, all indications are that General Sani Abacha will be among those vying for the post of president

The 53-year-old military ruler has made it quite clear that his contesting the polls to become Nigeria's fourth elected president is not a far-fetched idea

Abacha told the US Washington Times that "It is not new in Africa, neither is it new in the (West Africa) subregion, where military people have stepped into politics"

The Nigerian leader's desire to tighten his reins on the political kingdom have been bolstered by the re-election last December of Jerry Rawlings, another military man turned civilian, as president of Ghana

Nigeria's leader can also look to Mathieu Kerekou of Benin Republic, Chadian leader Idriss Deby and Mamassara Barre of Niger, all regular visitors at Aso Rock, the seat of the Nigerian government in Abuja, for support in his bid to stay in power

Maryam Abacha, the country's First Lady, has also indicated that her husband might not retreat to the barracks. In an extensive interview

Star 19/12/97
carried in the Nigerian Guardian last month, she said. "A lot of generals in the past have made a difference for their countries, and if it is time for Nigerians to do such a thing, then it is up to them"

"I do not see anything wrong in that," she said in reference to her husband standing for president, adding that "if he says he wants to retire and if it is the will of God, let it be"

Although the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (Necon) has not released any guidelines for the presidential elections, if past guidelines are followed, Abacha will have to resign from his commission in the Nigerian army. He has been in the military since 1962

He will also have to relinquish his position as head of state if he wants to contest the elections. But some analysts note that the promulgation of a decree could help Abacha retain his position while moving towards the civilian presidency

In the past, the electoral commission, which shepherds the elections along, banned serving military officers from standing for office unless they retired well before nomination.

Political analysts in Nigeria, so far, have not been willing to comment on Abacha making a bid for

(226)
president

"It would be politically and economically naive for me to comment on what to my mind remains a speculation," said one politician in the northern city of Kaduna

"Even if he decides to run, I won't comment. If I do and speak the truth, I will gain more enemies. All I know is that morals are out the window. What is in vogue is the quest for power at all costs," the politician said

David Dogoh, director of publicity for the Congress for National Consensus (CNC), one of the five registered Nigerian political parties, said Abacha should publicly state his intentions to safeguard the integrity of the transition programme

Nigeria was suspended in November 1995 from the Commonwealth and threatened with expulsion if the government failed to restore democracy within a period of two years. The governments of South Africa, the United States and European Union member nations recalled their diplomatic representatives in protest

A London-based analyst, however, said the move towards elections and Abacha's eventual stand for office would take place without much upheaval in Africa's most populous nation

"To expect civil uprising is wishful thinking, nothing will happen," he said – Sapa-IPS

US share of output drops to 10-year low

Nigerian oil now goes to France, Asia

12/19
226 (BR) 26/2/97
New York — A significant shift in Nigerian oil exports has been quietly under way in the past few months as the US share of the west African country's output dropped to 10-year lows last December, according to diplomats and government officials in several Western countries

US imports of Nigerian crude had declined continuously from about 650 000 barrels a day in the first nine months of 1996 to 488 000 barrels in October, 453 000 barrels in November and 298 000 barrels a day in December, a source at the US energy department said

The latest figure, which has yet to be officially released by the department, was "a number that we haven't seen in 10 to 12 years", the source said

Meanwhile, other countries' share of Nigerian crude exports had risen just as dramatically, said a Western diplomat with close knowledge of Nigeria, referring in particular to France, Malaysia and mainland China

A French government official confirmed that France's imports of Nigerian crude had risen substantially in the course of last year

As measured in French

francs, France's imports of Nigerian crude jumped to Ff6,022 billion (about R4,7 billion) for the first 11 months of last year, up 80 percent from Ff3,357 billion in the corresponding period of 1995, said Christian Fatras, an official with France's foreign trade ministry

No statistics were immediately available from Nigeria itself. But a Nigerian newspaper said last week that the US share of Nigerian oil exports, measured in barrels, had dropped to 33,84 percent last year from 40,82 percent in 1995, while Canada's share fell to 1 percent last year from 3 percent

Exports to Asian countries rose substantially, while those to Britain edged up to a 1,42 percent share from 0,56 percent in 1995, said the newspaper, *This Day*, quoting anonymous official sources

It was not clear whether the shift in Nigerian oil exports reflected a change in policy orchestrated by Nigeria itself or changes in patterns of demand from consuming countries

Ralph Aderole, the economics minister at the Nigerian embassy in Washington, said that he was unaware of the changes

— AP-Dow Jones

Investors can now side-step equipment import clearances

Nigeria launches oil and gas free-export zone at Onne

CT(BR) 11/3/97 (226)

FROM REUTER

Hopes for steel industry collapse as complex closes

Lagos — Nigeria's military government has launched an oil and gas export free zone in the southeastern oil-producing port of Onne-Ikpokiri, officials said on Monday

They said transport minister Major-General Ibrahim Gumel declared the zone open at the weekend and called on all oil firms to invest in the area, which was also designed to service west and central Africa

The launch of the zone will substantially reduce the cost of oil business in Nigeria and increase the commercial and investment portfolio of the industry's upstream sector, the

Lagos — Nigeria's crisis-ridden steel complex in the mid-western town of Aladja has ceased production, the semi-official Daily Times newspaper said yesterday

It said facilities at the multi-million naira Delta Steel Complex were rusting away and workers' salaries were 10 months in arrears.

semi-official Daily Times newspaper quoted Gumel as saying

The government signed a decree in November to establish the zone, which it said was aimed at creating a climate con-

The complex, commissioned in January 1982 and designed to produce one million tons of liquid steel a year, was one of two steel complexes expected to launch Nigeria into the league of steel-producing nations.

The other complex is being constructed in Ajaokuta, a central Nigerian town. The mili-

ducive to investment in the oil and gas sector, Nigeria's economic backbone

Gumel said granting a free port status to Onne, which would be linked by rail to Port-

tary government announced in its fiscal budget in January that it was still committed to the Ajaokuta complex, for which it provided 6.6 billion naira (about \$367 million).

The paper said the steel complex produced only 14 000 tons of liquid steel over four years before it stopped working in May. — Reuter

Harcourt sometime in the future, would enable oil and gas companies to import equipment for their operations without going through the normal clearing procedures

Nobel winner is charged with treason

(226)
Star 13/13/97

Nigerian regime hopes to extradite
writer, 11 others and 'eliminate' them

THE INDEPENDENT
London

The Nobel prizewinning writer Wole Soyinka was yesterday charged with treason by Nigeria's military government over a spate of recent bomb blasts in the country. Since December a series of blasts on army buses has killed three soldiers, and wounded dozens more.

Soyinka, along with 11 other dissidents, faces the death penalty if extradited and then convicted.

The winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize for literature was one of many opposition figures who fled Nigeria two years ago to Europe and the United States, where they have campaigned against the military government of General Sani Abacha. The military annulled the Nigerian general election of 1993, thus preventing its presumed winner, the wealthy businessman Moshood Abiola, being installed as president.

Abiola was jailed in 1994, when he declared himself president, and Soyinka and other opposition figures have since then campaigned to have the annulled poll recognised.

General Abacha, who seized power in November 1993 in the chaos that followed the annulled election, is implementing a transition plan he says will allow him to hand power to a democratically elected president in October 1998.

But his critics say he intends to retain power, and point to his bloody human rights record including executing the dissident playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other opponents in 1995.

Soyinka, who condemned the country's rulers in a 1996 book *The Open Sore of a Continent*, said in California it was clear Abacha wanted to "eliminate" him. "He is heading towards sentencing us all to death in absentia. This is what he's gunning for."

UK warns Nigeria over treason cases

Exiled Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka among 15 suspects

(226)
 suspects
 AUG 15/3/97

London - Britain has expressed concern over Nigeria's decision to charge exiled Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka and 14 other suspects with treason, an offence that carries the death penalty in Nigeria.

The 15, some of whom are in exile, have been charged with being behind a series of bomb blasts that have rocked a number of cities in Nigeria over the past few months.

"It is essential that those charged are brought before a civilian court which respects their basic rights," said a British Foreign and Commonwealth Office spokesman.

The official said London had made it clear "to the Nigerian authorities at the highest level that any further trials by the same flawed judicial process which led to the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his associates would be condemned by the international community".

Ken Saro-Wiwa, a minority rights leader, and several other accused were executed in 1995, sparking an international

outrage and heightening the political crisis in this West African nation.

Ola, the son of Mr Soyinka, described the treason charges against the 15 suspects as "ridiculous". To restrain the Abacha regime from further excesses, Mr Soyinka (nr) called on the British government to impose sanctions on Nigeria. "Such an embargo would isolate Abacha's regime and force it to succumb to the forces of multiparty democracy," he said.

That is, however, unlikely to happen. This is because Britain is working through the Commonwealth that suspended the membership of Nigeria in 1995, following the execution of Mr Saro-Wiwa.

Meeting in New Zealand in November 1995, the Commonwealth Heads of Government formed an eight-member Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) to resolve the conflict in Nigeria.

Its mandate is to deal with serious and persistent violations of the Commonwealth's fundamental political principles, such as respect for democracy and human

rights, as contained in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991.

The CMAG is chaired by Stans Mudenge, foreign minister of Zimbabwe. Its members comprise Britain, New Zealand, Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia and South Africa.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Emeka Anyaoku said in a recent report that the group met no fewer than five times last year. In its latest encounter, which occurred in November, the group met Sani Abacha as well as the country's Human Rights Commission, leaders of political parties and traditional leaders.

"In order to be able to make recommendations to Commonwealth Heads of Government when they meet in Edinburgh, Scotland, in October 1997 for their biennial summit, CMAG will continue to follow closely Nigeria's efforts to achieve democracy and greater respect for human rights in the country," said Chief Anyaoku.

The Commonwealth, during its 1995 summit, gave Nigeria a two-year ultima-

tum to reintroduce multiparty democracy. Since then, General Abacha's government has vetoed a number of political parties, so far registering only five, proving to Mr Soyinka (nr) that General Abacha's so-called multiparty democracy is nothing but a sham.

"People are being forced to accept that democracy is possible in a setting of nationwide repression. The junta has hoodwinked the population into believing they have a real choice. It has driven out our ideologists, and our few committed public servants."

"It has populated a sham democratic structure with an ever proliferating band of opportunists," he said.

Mr Soyinka said the junta should not succeed because its legacy would be a desperately corrupted political culture.

Nigeria began slipping into chaos following the controversial decision by former military ruler Ibrahim Babangida to annul the results of the June 1993 elections, which was widely believed to have been

won by Mashood Abiola.

Chief Abiola, a businessman, has since been detained for treason. Other detainees in Nigeria prisons include former head of state Olusegun Obasanjo, Musa Yar'adua and Chris Anyanwu, according to human rights groups here.

Richard Carver of the London-based human rights group Article 19 says he believes that linking Mr Soyinka (snr) and the 14 others to a series of bomb blasts in Nigeria is intended to suppress the growing internal dissent in the West African nation.

Mr Carver, whose organisation monitors censorship worldwide, said the appointment of a rapporteur to monitor abuses in Nigeria would strengthen the hand of the United Nations Human Rights Commission on the issue when it meets in Geneva this month.

The UNHRC cancelled a visit to Nigeria early this year after authorities there "imposed" conditions on its activities in Nigeria - Sapa-IPS

Leading Nigerians on war-plotting charges

Star 15/3/97

(226)

Lagos - Nigeria has started criminal proceedings against some of its most respected and internationally known citizens for allegedly conspiring to wage war against the government

In a surprise move this week - coming hot on the heels of an Organisation of African Unity (OAU) mission to review human rights in the country - a magistrate's court in Ikeja, a northern industrial suburb of Lagos, began criminal proceedings against 15 Nigerians, four of whom were not present when the charges were read

Among the 15 are exiled Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, Olu Falae, former finance minister in the administration of Ibrahim Babangida, and Fredrick Fasehun, chairman of the Campaign for Democracy (CD)

According to the first count read at court, the 15 - between May 1995 and February 10, this year - "conspired to conduct war against the federal military government of Nigeria and thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 37(2) of the criminal code"

And the second charge, which listed the accuseds' names, read "You between May 1995 and February 1997 at Lagos, in the Lagos magisterial district, did levy war against the federal military government by causing explosions in various parts of Nigeria in order to intimidate

and overawe the Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and, thereby, committed an offence punishable under the criminal code"

A spate of bombings rocked the commercial capital earlier this year, but no one claimed responsibility for the blasts, which were aimed primarily at military and security targets

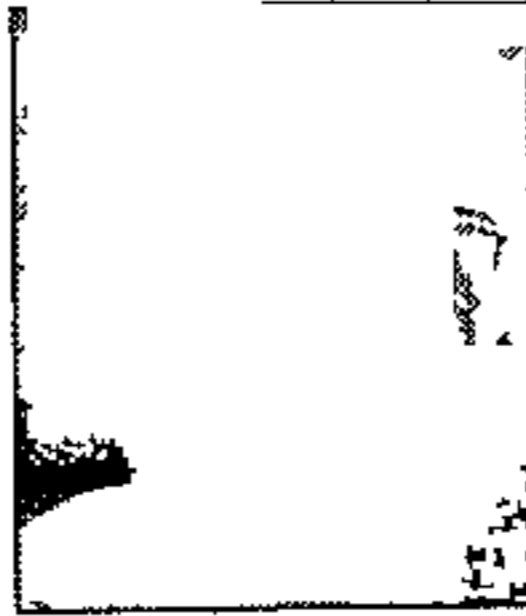
Not since 1962-63, when statesman Obafemi Awolowo was tried in a civil court for treasonable felony, has Nigeria witnessed the trial of notable Nigerians for an alleged offence which carries the death penalty

Human rights lawyers and political observers have described the charges as a sham staged by the government to justify the continued detention of Fasehun and others

Soyinka, who is in the United States, Dr Arogundade Akingba, retired Lt-Gen Alani Akinnade and Chief Anthony Enahoro were all listed

among the 15 as "still at large" Speaking in California on Wednesday, Soyinka denied the charges

Human rights lawyers and political observers in Lagos said the government had once again shown that it was determined to crack down on advocates of human rights and democracy in Africa's most populous nation - Sapa-IPS



ACCUSED. Soyinka denied all charges

Turmoil in Nigeria

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Speaking from California on Wednesday Soyinka, in exile since November 1994, denied the charges read in court

Lawyers and political observers here pointed out that the government has once again shown that it is determined to crack down on the advocates of human rights and democracy in Africa's most populous nation

"Treason is not a dinner party. It is a serious offence," said Femi Falana, a human rights lawyer recently released from detention

Another lawyer and human rights activist,

Treason charges brought against 15 Nigerian activists last week may be a preview of the military junta's plans to crack down on dissent, writes **Remi Oyo...**

(226) Semetan 17/3/97



Exiled writer Wole Soyinka ... Nigeria has started criminal proceedings against him and 14 others for allegedly conspiring against the government.

PIC AP

Gani Fawehinmi, said the government had again trumped up charges against innocent people "It is a serious matter, for the accused persons are innocent. The charge is a smokescreen to deceive the OAU team," Fawehinmi, who is also standing trial in another case, alleged

"This offence never existed. It only existed in the imagination of those who brought them here. These people, Falae and Fasehun, are the heart and soul of this country"

The OAU team arrived in Nigeria on March 7 to investigate human rights abuses. According to Fawehinmi and other political observers, the government has hastily brought the charges against the 15 to circumvent assertions that many of those in detention have not been charged

But a senior government official told *Sapa-IPS* that the government's timing had nothing to do with the visiting OAU team or with that of Americans, who were invited to observe Saturday's local government elections

"The police have been investigating this case for a long time. Now that the police deemed their job complete, the case is ready for the courts," said the official, who requested anonymity

Some analysts said that the government's

action last week may be a preview of actions to come, which may include the extradition of those among the 15 who are in exile "I see this as a prelude to asking or filing papers for extradition from countries in which some of the exiles are situated," one political scientist said

A legal analyst said the government is also preparing the legal groundwork to arrest Soyinka and the others in exile whenever they return "Persons who are not in court cannot be charged for an offence. The mention of Soyinka and others in exile may however mean that they can be picked up for trial any time they enter Nigeria," the analyst said

● Soyinka said on Thursday that he will continue to speak out against the Nigerian government, and denied any role in the bombings. He said Nigerian leader Sani Abacha's own dissident military was responsible

"I think they have lost their marbles, as they say," he said of the military government "But of course the whole thing is part of a very grand design. It's a distraction away from the sham of the electoral process"

Lived in New York

Most recently he has lived in New York. His family has a home in London "Let me say that nothing about my life, in any aspect, including the creative, is going to change," he told *Sapa-AP*

He said he planned "to go on denouncing Abacha as a murderer, as a psychopath and as a very pathological liar who would not hesitate to kill, to imprison, to torture, to kidnap"

Soyinka, who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1986, fled Nigeria after learning that authorities planned to arrest him for criticising military rule

"I don't just fear persecution," he said "Before I left Nigeria, I had sufficient intelligence reports to alert me to the fact that the junta had very serious plans against me"

Had he stayed in Nigeria, he probably would have faced a similar fate as writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other dissidents from the Ogoni tribe who were hanged in November 1995

Soyinka said his involvement with opposition radio has angered the government

"It has been giving Abacha nightmares because for the first time we've been able to puncture the balloons of lies and the propaganda which he's been feeding the entire nation" — *Sapa-IPS and Sapa-AP*

Reports of violence in Nigerian election trickle in

(226)

Mar 18/3/97

Lagos - Reports that two people died in election violence trickled in yesterday as vote counting continued in Nigeria's first multi-party ballot in four years

General Sani Abacha's military regime has hailed Saturday's large turnout and generally peaceful voting as signs that Nigerians have accepted his plan for a gradual return to democracy

But reports of election violence are slowly reaching Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, from remote parts of the country

Voters were choosing councilors to run municipal governments across the country

Newspapers reported yesterday that two people were killed in the south-eastern state of Rivers after members of one party tried

to prevent a man voting

Sunday newspapers reported that students calling for the release of jailed opposition leader Moshood Abiola stormed a polling station on the campus of Ubaferi Awolowo University in Ile Ife, north of Lagos

In Onitsha, about 400km east of Lagos, police fired teargas to disperse 2 000 protesters, the

Guardian reported on Sunday
■ The United Congress Party of Lieutenant-General Jeremiah Useni, the second most senior officer in the Nigerian military and a close friend of Abacha, won control of the council in Abuja - the capital - and in 176 other municipalities, according to results compiled yesterday morning - Sapa-AP

Wole Soyinka has been charged with treason by the Nigerian government. From his US exile, the Nobel laureate pours scorn on the accusations

WHEN I wrote in my latest book, *The Open Sore of the Continent*, that "the judicial murder of the Ogoni people was the first Nigerian experimentation with ethnic cleansing, authorised and sustained by the Nigerian despot General Sani Abacha", some critics in foreign newspapers described this as the language of an activist given to dramatising his opponents' action.

Prior to this grotesque display of savagery by Abacha, he had acceded to the plot of the chiefdom of his Ton-Ton Macoutes, Ismaila Gwarzo, to fabricate a *coup d'état*. Those who succeed as, or are suspected of acting as, couriers of gèlèdès of the secret kangaroo court proceedings of those alleged to be involved in the coup, are rounded up, tried in minutes and sentenced to stretches varying from seven years to life imprisonment.

The standard charge is "concealment to treason". The chairman of the Campaign for Democracy is already among the victims of this madness, and the two ex-military rulers of Nigeria were also jailed for "levying war against the Federal Republic of Nigeria".

Countless others have been held without being charged for the crime of "association" with the so-called coup plotters. Yet none of this appears to be a sufficient signal to the world.

Now that Abacha has prepared a list of 14 people, myself included, for a charge of "levying war against the Federal Republic of Nigeria by conspiring with others to explode bombs" and "causing explosion in several parts of Nigeria", perhaps

some will see why Ogoniland is only the model for the actualisation of a totalitarian onslaught on politically sophisticated sections of the Nigerian polity which have dared expose and confront the power obsession of a minuscule but obdurate hegemony.

The only way Abacha knows how to deal with political opposition is not to negotiate, discuss or debate, but to liquidate its leaders. And if he cannot contrive this physically through his executioners (as with the more than 200 demonstrators mowed down by his soldiers in 1993), then he'll seek to repeat the phantom *coup d'état* or the tragic Ken Saro-Wiwa experience.

This time, he is biting off more than he can chew. However much Abacha may harass or intimidate the democratic opposition, our position remains that Abacha is not the legitimate president of Nigeria any more than an armed robber is the legitimate owner of the property he has stolen.

It is very difficult to be surprised by this predictable despot and his gang. If I had been in Nigeria when the coup was engineered, I'd have been the first on the list of those to be arraigned. Although I am not an Ogoni, I would probably have featured in the list of those sacrificed for speaking out against genocide in Ogoniland.

So this whole orchestration has been set in motion since I became Abacha's most prominent nemesis. I was supposed to have been in Benin Republic on January 28, attending a meeting of labour leaders and students, where "we planned to disrupt the local government election". At the time in question, I was in



Wole Soyinka: 'The only way Abacha knows how to deal with political opposition is to liquidate its leaders'

PHOTOGRAPH MARGARET WALLER

Davos in Switzerland at the World Economic Summit and among my witnesses are Nelson Mandela, Yasser Arafat, Kofi Annan and Binyamin Netanyahu. As though this was not enough, Abacha granted an interview to *The Washington Times* newspaper in February, where he repeated the allegation that I am a terrorist responsible for all the bomb blasts in Nigeria.

The Washington Times is now facing a libel suit for the indiscretion of publishing this blatant lie. I and other members of the democratic movement are already condemned to long jail sentences for another "treasonable offence". This combination of diversion, bloody-mindedness and lies will

president, foreign governments continue to say let's wait a little longer. Really, he has promised us that this time, once this latest exercise is over, he will make his pronouncement.

However, just in case the compliance of his hypnotised watchers and consumers of Nigerian oil begins to wear thin, Abacha has stumbled on the perfect plot: concoct treason charges against Soyinka, Enahoro and others, and while that case drags on in the court in which he is judge, jury and executioner, declare your presidential ambition.

Yet the world watches in cold complexity as this conspiracy to eliminate all real and imaginary opponents to Abacha's dictatorship is concretised.

Those governments that believe that Nigeria's Godot is just around the corner in the labyrinths of Asorock Fortress are no friends to the Nigerian people. They have forgotten their own history or, for reasons best known to them, have chosen to patronise us, to treat us as second-class subjects of the historical process.

Perhaps, though, their intent may be to deliver the message that we do not hear, or that we are too complacent in the certitude of justice to understand which is that our destiny rests in no other hands but ours. If that is so, we welcome the distressing signals and their implicit challenge. Our commitment remains to the enthronement of genuine democracy, as expressed on June 12 1993, and to the permanent removal of the military from our lives. This, we know, is no small task but we are prepared for a marathon.

Wole Soyinka won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986

22 (CONTEXT)

If world won't help,

MAIL & GUARDIAN
March 20 to 26 1997

we'll fight alone

(226) MTC 20-26/3/97

Nigerian Shell workers held captive

OT 25/3/97

(226)

LONDON: Oil giant Shell said 127 of its workers in Nigeria were being held captive yesterday by protesters seeking to make their point in a local political dispute.

Six of the workers were injured on Saturday when activists raided six flow stations in the Niger Delta.

The injured workers had received first aid and were in a stable condition, but Shell was unable to provide details on where its workers, all of whom are Nigerians,

were being held.

Shell had to shut down the flow stations — but the company said it could adjust other production in Nigeria to avoid immediate effects on its exports. The dispute did not involve Shell, but rather concerned local political issues such as a dispute about the location of a government office, Shell spokesman Mr James Herbert said in London.

Shell, the top foreign oil operator in Nigeria, was merely a high-

profile target for the activists, he said. He was not able to offer details about the dispute or which ethnic groups might be involved, but he said it was far away from Ogoniland, where the company has faced protests from locals angered by the way Shell has done business there.

The activists who attacked the Shell facilities asked Shell to pass a list of their demands to state and federal government officials, and Shell complied — Sapa-AP

127 Shell oil workers held captive

Semenan 25/3/97 (226)
THE oil giant Shell said 127 of its workers in Nigeria were being held captive yesterday by protesters seeking to make their point in a local political dispute

Six of the workers were injured on Saturday when activists raided six flow stations, where oil is gathered from several wells before being put into pipelines in the western part of the Niger delta

The injured workers had received first aid and were in a stable condition but Shell was unable to provide details of where any of its captive workers were being held or under what conditions

All of the captives were Nigerians, Shell said

Shell had to shut down the flow stations, which handle about 100 000 barrels of oil a day

However the company said it could adjust other production in Nigeria so the problem won't have any immediate effect on its exports from the West African nation

Political disputes

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Herbert was unable to offer details about the political disputes or which ethnic groups might be involved, but he said it was far away from Ogoniland, where the company has faced protests from locals angered by the way Shell has done business there

The activists who attacked the Shell facilities over the weekend asked Shell to hand over a list of their demands to state and federal government officials Shell has complied

"On Sunday, we passed on the demands, emphasising our approach of non-violence and dialogue," Herbert said - *Sapa-AP*

IN BRIEF

**Three die in Nigerian riots,
88 Shell employees held**

BD 27/3/97 (276)

LAGOS — Three people were reported killed Tuesday in Nigerian riots in which one of Royal Dutch-Shell oil worker headquarters was targeted.

The tribal protests in the midwestern Nigerian oil town of Warri are over the relocation of a local government headquarters. In Warri, a spokesman for Shell said 88 company staff were still detained by tribesmen who have occupied its flow stations since last weekend.

Local newspapers said three members of the Ijaw tribe were killed in protests on Tuesday in which the home of former international minister Edwin Clark was burnt down.

The Ogoni tribe, which produces Nigeria's important riverine oil production states, is unhappy over the relocation of the headquarters of the newly created Warri South West local government area to the rival Ogidighen town from Ogbé-Ijoh.

Similar relocations in other parts of the West African nation have also caused tribal protests. The crisis does not directly involve Shell, but the company is caught up in it because of its high profile in Nigeria and huge operations in the Warri area.

WOL (226)

More Nigerian Shell plants shut

Lagos - Shell Oil has closed five petrol stations in Balyesa state, bringing to 11 the number it has halted in Nigeria after a weekend hostage-taking, a spokesman said yesterday

It shut down the Balyesa facilities, and evacuated all personnel, last Saturday after an ultimatum from local inhabitants, said the spokesman for the Anglo-Dutch petroleum group

The five sites had a total capacity of 110 000 barrels of oil a day Shell has previously acknowledged halting production at six

pumping stations with a capacity of 100 000 barrels a day in Delta state, where 127 of its employees - all Nigerians - were taken hostage, also last Saturday

The last 53 of the hostages were released on Wednesday, after a deal was cut between Shell and representatives of the Ijaw tribe

The Ijaw staged the hostage-taking to protest at a decision by the Nigerian government to locate municipal offices in territory belonging to a rival community

Nigeria's national oil output is 900 000 barrels a day - Sapa-AFP

Star 29/3/97

Nigerian oil flow recovering

FROM REUTERS

Lagos — The Nigerian unit of Royal Dutch Shell Group said yesterday its crude oil output was 50 000 barrels a day below normal production of 210 000 barrels a day last week after being disrupted by unrest

"Oil production is slowly getting back to normal, and we are currently just over 50 000 barrels a day below normal production level," said a company spokesman

The spokesman said in the eastern division all the production disrupted in the Nembe area had been restored, while in the western division all but two flow stations had resumed operations

"In the western division, Batan and Jones Creek flow stations resumed production yesterday We intend to restart Odidi and Egwa oil fields today The shortfall of 50 000 barrels a day is coming from Egwa and Odidi," he said.

Joint Nigeria/US upstream oil venture

(221)

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ECONOMY Central bank officials say there's too much money in circulation as the government tries to stick to its 15% inflation target

High liquidity stokes fears of rising inflation

JAMES JURKEY

Lagos — Fear that rising liquidity in the Nigerian monetary system will increase inflation is giving the authorities jitters.

The first sign of trouble surfaced in a report just released by the federal office of statistics showing a 1.1 percent increase in year-on-year inflation to 26.7 percent in January this year from 25.6 percent in December.

The government has set a target for annual consumer price inflation of 15 percent this year, compared with 28 percent last year. Tight control on public spending by the military government has reduced inflation from a recent peak above 80 percent.

"The federal office of statistics report is worrying," said a

senior central bank official on Thursday. "The high liquidity in the system is the main reason why it has been decided that the transfer of the accounts of parastatals to commercial banks will have to wait for a while."

Parastatals are government companies and, under a new dispensation unveiled in this year's fiscal budget in January, they were supposed to move their bank accounts to commercial banks to free the central bank from retail banking.

When it was announced the measure was widely hailed as part of the government's policy of gradual deregulation to strengthen the private sector. Now it is being seen as having an unhealthy effect on the monetary system.

"The government is probably right to delay it because already there is too much money in circulation, and this is not very good for the economy," said Ogie Idago, a banker.

The central bank has not supplied any figures of just how much money there is in circulation, but economists say a recent injection of 30 billion naira (R1,54 billion) from the Petroleum Trust Fund, set up to disburse money accruing from a fourfold increase in pump prices in 1994, had sharply increased liquidity.

The problem stems from a deliberate policy to reflate the economy to achieve a growth target of 5.5 percent in gross domestic product this year compared with only 3.25 percent last year.



A budget surplus of 37 billion naira from 1996 saved largely from squeezing the system dry last year, is being ploughed

back into the system just as government is also repaying billions of naira in state domestic debts.

30 percent while demand has risen for treasury bills, used to mop up money in circulation. Central bank officials said the sale of treasury bills will be stepped up in the next few weeks.

"The aim is to drain the market of idle funds as much as possible to keep to the inflation target," said one official. The target is to bring inflation down to around 15 percent by year-end.

However, not everyone agrees that an increase in inflation will necessarily derail the economic programme.

"A certain amount of inflation would often accompany any economy reflation programme," argued the independent Guardian newspaper in its editorial comment on Thursday last week.

TOO MUCH MONEY

Nigeria's policy of reflation the economy is backfiring and pushing up inflation levels.

PHOTO: J. BADAN-VOUNG

Many fear this will erode the economic gains of the last two years which stabilised the naira exchange rate for a long time until last month's 5.88 percent devaluation.

That devaluation to 85 naira to the US dollar from 80 was itself blamed by the central bank on too much money in circulation which led to huge demand for foreign exchange at the weakly auction.

Since the devaluation, demand at the foreign exchange auction has fallen by more than

"The most important consideration, therefore, is not the fear of a possible reawakening of inflation, rather it is to make sure that growth is strong enough to effectively vitiate the more deleterious effects of rising prices," it added.

Nigeria, however, remains mired in a political crisis from 1993 when the army annulled a presidential poll aimed at restoring democracy.

General Sani Abacha's government claims to be implementing a programme to hand over to a democratically elected president, which took a step forward with local council elections last month. But fears persist that Abacha intends to turn himself into a civilian president next year — Reuter.

in Nigeria

Rule of law said to be near collapse in Nigeria

(22b) Star 10/4/97

Geneva - UN special rapporteurs warned in a report yesterday that the rule of law in Nigeria was on the brink of collapse and accused the military regime of flagrant human rights violations, including torture and summary execution.

In an address to the ongoing UN Human Rights Commission, the rapporteurs charged the Nigerian regime with "lawlessness", and called for the abolition of the death sentence and the re-establishment of freedoms and fundamental rights which have been annulled by government decrees.

"It appears that under the military government of Nigeria today, the rule of law is on the verge of collapse, if it has not already collapsed," said Bacre N'diaye, special rapporteur on extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions, and Param Cumaraswamy, special rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers.

"Power is now vested solely in the hands of the military government," their report continued. "The situation is further aggravated by governmental lawlessness in the face of refusal by the military government and its agencies to obey court orders."

The rapporteurs called on the UN Human Rights Commission to name a special rapporteur to investigate human rights violations in Nigeria before the session closes next Friday.

Last year, Nigeria managed to convince the commission to refrain from appointing a special rapporteur on condition the two rapporteurs on summary execution and on the independence of the judiciary were given the right to travel to the country.

However, the two had to renounce their mission after the military government refused access to certain prisoners, including opposition leader Chief Moshood Abiola.

Abiola, who is widely believed to have won 1993 elections, is detained on treason charges for proclaiming himself president after the ballot was declared void by the military.

The rapporteurs also called for the pardon and release of the "so-called coup plotters" behind the abortive coup attempt in March 1995, including former president Olusegun Obasanjo, whom they said had been sentenced without a fair trial.

About 70 000 people are at present detained in Nigeria, after being sentenced or arrested - some for as long as 12 years - without trial.

In 1995, more than 200 people were reportedly executed arbitrarily, mostly by security forces, and executions continued last year, the rapporteurs said - Sapa-AFP.

LAGOS — A new Nigerian decree gave military ruler Gen Sam Abacha absolute power over local governments recently elected under a much criticised plan to restore democracy, newspapers reported yesterday. They said the decree, imposed on local councils elected last month, was issued by the military

Abacha moves in on Nigeria's new elected local governments

BD 11/4/97
council on Wednesday. The semi-official Daily Times said under the decree the head of state could remove any local council head if he "is satisfied that the affairs of the council are not being

managed in the best interest of the community or in any way to strengthen the unity of the people of Nigeria". The decree said no civil court could challenge the validity of the election or

the decision of a special election tribunal.

Nigeria's generals held up the peaceful conduct of the local elections as a sign of popular support for their planned restoration of civilian rule by October 1998, despite criticism by pro-democracy campaigners.

The March ballot was the first multiparty election in Nigeria since a former military government annulled 1993 elections that would have ended 10 years of army rule and allowed Abacha to take over. — Reuter.

Oil romance with Nigeria blooms

(226)

GILBERT DA COSTA ET (BR) 11/4/97

Abuja, Nigeria — The Nigerian oil industry is highly risky but very rewarding. With its enormous oil resources and a political establishment long in decay, more than a dozen international, mostly Western, companies are enmeshed in an oily romance with the West African nation, despite her policies.

The number of foreign companies with a stake in the oil industry has swelled in the past few years and is still growing. Nigeria's proven reserves, which exceed 20 billion barrels of oil and 120 trillion cubic feet of gas, are too good to be ignored.

Oil reserves are increasing every year and experts acknowledge that Nigeria could meet its stated national goal of 25 billion barrels of reserves and 2.5 million barrels a day of production by the end of the century. Production is now at 2.04 million barrels.

Gas reserves, in spite of minimum exploration efforts by multinational companies, are increasing proportionally with oil discoveries. At least 16 open acreages were the subject of bids in the final quarter of last year in a fresh surge of interest.

The major foreign companies involved in the Nigerian oil industry are the Anglo-Dutch Shell, Italy's Agip, France's Elf, Mobil, British Petroleum and the US's Chevron and Texaco, all anxious to increase their market share. Other US companies like Phillips and Ashland have been active in the production of Nigerian oil for more than 25 years.

Diet of animal skins is threatening to kill off Nigeria's leather industry

80 15/4/97 (226)

Starving Nigerians are eating an important source of forex, writes Goddy Ikeh

NIGERIA'S leather industry, once lucrative, is under threat — because the country's people are dining on its primary resource.

A minister has estimated that R1bn in foreign exchange is being lost each year as a result of people eating animal skins instead of marketing them for tanning.

Poverty-stricken citizens who cannot afford meat are increasingly consuming animal hides in the mistaken belief that they are a cheap source of protein. Medical experts say the skins have little or no nutritional value.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation says Africa loses about \$850m a year due to lack of proper systems for the collection of animal hides and skins.

Spore, a publication on agricultural development in Africa and the Caribbean and Pacific countries, says marketable skins are simply not being collected throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, Guinea collects only about 20% of its skins for sale and processing.

The problem in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country with about 100-million people, is slightly different. Most hides and skin produced within the country are cooked and consumed as a local delicacy named "ponmo".

Ponmo is taken from more than 1.3-million cows slaughtered each year. Nigeria accounts for about 70% of these animals, and imports from neighbouring Niger and Mali

make up the shortfall.

No particular attention was paid to this statistic in the heady days of abundant petrodollars in the oil-producing country. But since the onset of the current economic depression, beef has been priced beyond the reach of the average Nigerian family. A kilogram costs 180 naira (about \$2.50), while the same amount of ponmo sells for less than 60 — this in a country where the minimum wage is below 2 000 naira a month.

While its exact origins remain a mystery, the consumption of ponmo has gained popularity and is no longer restricted to any part of the country. The hairs on the cow skin are removed by shaving or burning, and the skin is then soaked in water for about 24 hours. After being parboiled with potash, it is ready for the soup pot.

Ponmo trade is conducted by vendors whose biggest clientele are middle-income earners.

The government fears ponmo consumption poses a major threat to the country's otherwise lucrative leather industry. Last year officials launched a campaign to dissuade people from eating animal skins. Science and Technology Minister Maj-Gen Sam Momah said that cooking hides and skin should be outlawed. Nigeria was losing about \$1bn a year in potential foreign exchange from hides and skin that could be transformed into exportable leather and leather products.

"Only a controlling legislation can save the situation," he said.

Reacting to the appeals and threats on ponmo consumption, some consumers interviewed on television threatened to embark on a "ponmo riot" and resist all attempts to ban it. They said instead of quarrelling about ponmo, government officials should do something to improve the living conditions of people.

Understandably, ponmo sellers fear a ban would destroy their means of livelihood. One, Olufunke Daisi, said she made between 150 and 300 naira a day from ponmo.

The provost of the chemical and leather technology college at Zaria in northern Nigeria, Benedict Dashe, says persuasion rather than threat should be the solution.

Dashe said tanneries in Lagos, where most cattle were slaughtered, now depended on other parts of the country to supply hides. Most of the potential material from the Lagos abattoirs was being eaten.

In the 1960s and 1970s, he said, Nigeria did a roaring trade in animal hides with Britain. Still on the economic implications of local consumption of hides, Dashe said "a pair of imported shoes for which Nigerians pay about 7 000 naira now could have been produced locally for less than half that price".

□ Ikeh is a Nigerian journalist based in Lagos

Nigeria's rights abuse spotlighted

CT 17/4/97

(22b)

LAGOS: Nigeria will come under sharper scrutiny over alleged human rights abuses after the appointment of a special UN investigator for the country, diplomats and activists said yesterday

The military government of General Sani Abacha is yet to comment on a meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva on Tuesday that appointed a special investigator to probe allegations of major rights abuses in Nigeria, including arbitrary detentions and executions

In the resolution the 53-member forum also called on the government to guarantee fundamental freedoms and release "all prisoners,

trade union leaders, human rights advocates and journalists currently detained"

"It is the worst sanction any nation can get from the UN human rights commission," said Mr Clement Nwankwo, executive director of the Constitutional Rights Project, a leading human rights lobby group in Nigeria

"We welcome the vote completely, given the fact that the government has shown no sign of change to improve its human rights record"

The vote was 28 states in favour and six against, with 19 abstentions. Nigeria is not a member at this year's commission, which has

a rotating membership

Other local human rights activists expressed similar sentiment, saying the vote had put Nigeria in the league of pariah nations such as Burma, Iran and Iraq

The UN human rights forum had been widely expected to censure Nigeria at the Geneva forum

But Western diplomats in Lagos who followed the proceedings said the overwhelming vote in favour of the European Union sponsored resolution showed Abacha's government had to act quickly to show the international community it was serious about democratic and human rights reforms

"Nigeria cannot continue to

keep quiet about allegations of human rights abuses and expect they will go away," a diplomat said

Africa's most populous nation of 100 million is shunned by the West over a 1993 annulment of a presidential election that was to have restored democracy

Many people have since been detained, including Moshood Abiola, presumed winner of the vote

Nigeria's international standing worsened further in 1995 when author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other members of his Movement for the Survival of Ogoni Peoples were hanged for the murder of four Ogoni chiefs in a trial questioned worldwide as unfair — Reuter

CT(BR) 21/4/97 (226)

Nigerian navy to protect oil production

The Nigerian navy said on Saturday that it had sent a ship to the troubled midwestern oil producing area of Warri where 50 people have been killed in communal clashes since last week. A navy spokesman said the NNS Ekpe, a fast attack boat, was to safeguard the production of crude oil, Nigeria's economic lifeline.

Warri experienced trouble since March 22 when clashes broke out over the relocation of the local council headquarters from an Ijaw town to a town belonging to the rival Itsekiri tribe. At the height of the crisis, armed Ijaw tribesmen occupied oil facilities of the Nigerian unit of Royal Dutch Shell Group, holding 127 of its Nigerian staff hostage and disrupting oil production. The hostages were released in batches following delicate negotiations and oil output has since resumed. Shell officials were not available to comment on the renewed clashes. — Reuter, Lagos

NEWS DIGEST (226)

CT(OR) 22/4/97

Renewed ethnic clashes in Warri interrupt Shell's Nigerian oil flow

Royal Dutch Shell Group's Nigerian unit said yesterday it had closed one flow station and its output was running 2 000 barrels a day (bpd) below normal because of renewed ethnic clashes in the oil-producing area of Warri.

"Warri River flow station has been shut down since the end of last week," a Shell spokesman said in Lagos. "Our production due to this community issue is about 2 000 bpd down from normal levels," he said, adding that "all other flow stations are producing normally." About 50 people have been reportedly killed in the area following clashes since April 12 between militant youths of the feuding Ijaw and Itsekiri tribes.

Warri has been in turmoil since March 22, when clashes broke out over the relocation of the local council headquarters from an Ijaw town to that of the rival Itsekiri tribe. A dusk-to-dawn curfew imposed in Warri after the March clashes was lifted last week.

At the height of the March crisis, armed Ijaw tribesmen occupied six Shell oil flow stations, shutting off a flow of 100 000 bpd there. A total of 127 of Shell's Nigerian staff held hostage by the tribesmen were released in batches following delicate negotiations, and oil output has since resumed.

The government deployed a fast attack navy ship, the NNS Ekpe, to Warri area at the weekend to ensure oil production, the country's economic backbone, was not affected. Local newspapers reported yesterday that the activities of oil companies had been disrupted, with one claiming oil production had "halted." But oil officials denied this.

"Production has not been shut down anywhere by Chevron," a spokesman for Chevron's Nigerian unit said — Reuter, Lagos

Nigeria drops curbs on equity ownership

27 (BR) 2214197 (226)
Nigeria's military government has lifted restrictions on equity ownership by individual and corporate investors in the country's banks, a central bank statement said yesterday. "The new directive now makes it legal for an individual and/or corporate body to own up to 100 percent shareholding in a bank," the bank said.

Before now, the maximum equity participation of an individual in a bank was 10 percent while that of corporate bodies was 30 percent. The statement, released in the capital Abuja, said the new law was aimed at assisting banks recapitalize to the new minimum level of 500 million naira (about \$26.4 million).

The central bank statement said lifting the ceiling would also encourage credible local and foreign investors to bring additional resources and sound technical management into the banking industry. Removal of the restrictions was also in keeping with the government's economic policy of "guided deregulation" introduced since 1995, and in furtherance of the objectives of the country's foreign investment laws, it said. — Reuter, Lagos

Troops sent into Nigerian oil towns

(226) Star 29/4/97

Lagos - Nigeria's military regime yesterday sent in troops to enforce order in the oil-rich Delta State, where ethnic clashes have killed and wounded dozens

Gangs from the rival Itsekiri and Ijaw ethnic groups attacked the towns of Koko and Ureju in Delta State on Thursday

Five people were killed, including a 75-year-old man who was beheaded, and hundreds of people fled the towns. Sixteen people were taken to hospital. At least 50 houses were razed by fire.

The Ijaws have accused oil companies of supporting the Itsekiri people in their attacks on their towns. Ethnic groups and oil companies have long battled over the land rights and environmental degradation of the oil-rich region

Shell Nigeria announced yesterday it would be late in meeting some of its contractual obligations - a result of lost output from five flow stations, which have been closed since Friday because of the continued infighting

Shell has long come under attack for its environmental record in southern Nigeria. One of its most outspoken critics was playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa, who was executed by the military regime in November 1995 along with eight other anti-oil activists - Sapa-AP

NEWS DIGEST

NIIGEPJA

(226) CI (BR) 2/5/97

Feuding tribes in Warri oilfields call on military for assistance

Feuding tribes in the Warri oil-producing area have called on the military for help. Hosultra, a tribal leader, said the military should be called on to help them fight the Itsekiris of Warri. He said the Itsekiris have been attacking and killing people in the area. He said the Itsekiris have been attacking and killing people in the area. He said the Itsekiris have been attacking and killing people in the area.

But the Council of Warri Tribes, led by the Itsekiris, said the Itsekiris are not attacking and killing people. He said the Itsekiris are not attacking and killing people. He said the Itsekiris are not attacking and killing people.

Shell said last week it could not meet its contract to supply 80,000 barrels a day of oil to Warri. He said the Itsekiris are not attacking and killing people. He said the Itsekiris are not attacking and killing people.

Shell suffers as Nigerian ethnic strife halts

DD 5/9/97

Antony Goldman

LAGOS — For the second time in a month, the Anglo-Dutch oil giant Shell was forced last week to declare force majeure on its oil exports from Nigeria as ethnic violence around the southern port of Warri continued to halt production from several flow stations.

"Dialogue is taking place with community leaders," said company spokesman Precious Omuku, "and we are very optimistic of resuming operations soon."

The situation in the region remains extremely tense, however, six weeks after fighting between rival Ijaw and Itsekiri communities erupted. Shell has been losing about 80 000 barrels a day from its onshore facilities since the weekend, just under 10% of its total Nigerian output.

Chevron, the other significant operator in the area, which by contrast has most of its installations offshore or in inaccessible swamp areas, says its production has continued as normal.

More than 100 people have been killed in a spiral of attacks and reprisals since the controversial relocation of a local government headquarters to an Itsekiri area last month.

The Ijaws, the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria, complained that the move would further deny them access to the limited resources reaching the area.

Richard Tosunwumi, a spokesman for the Itsekiri community, argued that the local government issue alone could not explain the descent into violence.

"This trouble is not of our making. We have heard about the Ogonis and now we are afraid it is coming down here," he said, referring to Ken Saro-Wiwa, the minority rights activist executed in 1995, who led a militant campaign for a fairer share of the nation's oil wealth for those communities from where production actually takes place.

While control over the land around Warri has been a matter of dispute between the two communities for generations, others agree that as with the Ogonis, the increasing alienation of the younger generation from all figures of authority, whether traditional or in government, is a critical factor behind the current wave of unrest.

"The youths are disillusioned, they have nobody to rely on," argued Emmanuel Urhobo, a lawyer in Warri. "There ought to be some way of accommodating them, bringing them into the system, instead of just watching them go wild."

The response of Nigeria's military government has been to deploy heavily armed troops and move in naval patrol boats. While a tense calm has replaced the bloodshed in Warri itself, where the two communities live alongside the Urhobos, security has been far harder to establish in the surrounding rivers and creeks, from where Shell produces 45 000 barrels a day.

There are few indications of a negotiated settlement to the conflict, or of an imminent peace. "It is a complex problem which has been building over a long period," confided a senior Shell manager in Warri, "even if they let us resume production, nobody expects the wider tensions to be solved overnight."

Two villages were hit on Monday by raiders armed with cutlasses and automatic weapons, traveling by speed boat late at night. Several people were left dead and many more homeless, with the Itsekiri town of Koko largely deserted after an Ijaw attack last week.

"This is a political problem, an ethnic problem," according to Wale Agunbiade, a spokesman for Chevron in the commercial capital Lagos. "Oil companies are getting caught up in disputes not of their

own making. There has been a series of incidents since Saro-Wiwa's execution across the oil-producing Niger Delta where communities and individuals have taken direct action against western companies either to redress perceived grievances or to attract world attention to a part of the country that is traditionally ignored by central government.

Petroleum Resources Minister Dan Etete has urged oil companies to increase their community programmes in the region, while also warning locals against taking actions which he says are against not only their interests but also those of the nation as a whole.

Nigeria depends on the 2-million barrels a day oil sector for more than 90% of its foreign exchange earnings. But in addition

to ethnic unrest around Warri, the industry has been beset by widespread industrial disputes, one of which briefly disrupted loading of more than 400 000 barrels a day by a Shell subcontractor near the other major production centre of Port Harcourt a week ago. In other incidents, expatriate workers have been held against their will.

Privately, European and American oil companies complain that government mismanagement is behind the industry's currently poor health.

And while they continue to make handsome profits, several operators are increasingly looking to the presently undeveloped and politically less problematic deep-water sector as a focus for their development plans — Financial Times

(226)
Production

NEWS DIGEST

□ NIGERIA

(226)

CF (CR) 6/5/97

Shell reopens most Nigerian flow stations after last week's closure

Royal Dutch Shell Group's Nigerian unit said yesterday that four of the five flow stations it closed last week because of militant clashes in the north-eastern Delta state had been reopened. The only still closed station is Warri River flow station, Shell spokesman said.

The closure of Warri River has reduced Shell's oil production in the area by 2,000 barrels a day, Shell declined to say how much of its production is accounted for by the other four stations. The cause of the closure of the flow stations, Abou said, was the Shell's Forcados blend of crude oil, about 90,000 barrels a day, cut in by the closures of the flow stations.

Abou said that the militant attacks had been the force majeure which would remain in force until the navy and troops have been deployed. He said that the flow of crude oil which accounts for more than 90 per cent of Nigeria's foreign exchange is still being disrupted.

ANALYSIS

Nigeria booming despite its instability

BD 6/5/97

(226)

THE Lagos polo club is proud home not only to the last patch of open ground in Africa's biggest, busiest city.

The club also has a car park so stuffed with luxury German cars as to leave no doubt that much money is being made in the country despite the burden of a tenacious reputation for sharp practices and fraudulent business deals.

That Nigeria presents huge opportunities is beyond doubt. Thirty flights a week from Europe are frequently full, ferrying a constant flow of executives chasing lucrative contracts.

Discoveries

At 2-million barrels a day, it is one of the 10 largest oil producers in the world, generating receipts for the military government last year of nearly \$11bn.

Substantial new discoveries in the deepwater sector could see output rise 50% within 10 years.

Before then, Nigeria will also be a significant exporter of gas, as three major projects come on stream.

Finance Minister Anthony Ani, an accountant by training, has succeeded in bringing inflation down

Ranked by Transparency International last year as the most corrupt place on earth, Nigeria offers a wealth of opportunities for — and enormous obstacles to — trade, writes Antony Goldman in Lagos

from more than 70% to less than 30% over the past year.

For the second successive year, there has been a budget surplus, the exchange rate is stable and foreign reserves have tripled to more than \$4bn since 1995.

The stock market has responded by making impressive gains, with capitalisation up 66% last year while price-earnings ratios averaged 12.2%.

A new electronic trading system introduced last month is expected to contribute towards an estimated 50% growth this year.

Vision 2010, a high-powered committee which links the private and state sectors and includes western multinationals, is expected to present a blueprint for Nigeria's long-term economic development to government later this year.

Bankers and industrialists, however, complain that Gen Sani Abacha, who seized power after the army annulled presidential elections in 1993, could do far more to

unlock the potential of Africa's most populous nation.

Nigeria has privatised barely a handful of more than 1 500 state-owned enterprises. In this year's budget, the head of state said only that he would establish a committee to examine the issue.

Ghana would move at its own pace, said Ani.

"As a sovereign nation we will not be pushed around by anybody."

There was more than a suspicion that conservatives within the military had vetoed plans to liberalise the economy — a move which might have denied them the power and privileges associated with patronage in a country last year ranked by European nongovernmental organisation Transparency International as the most corrupt place on earth. Examples are legion. A 1994 report indicated that \$12bn had disappeared from accounts at the central bank to which only a handful of senior officials had access. State-controlled energy and oil

companies have never submitted accounts, while telephone exchanges show a peculiar propensity for unexplained fires during auditing.

It is a problem that is by no means restricted to the upper echelons of power.

The national telecommunications company, Nitel, known locally as "No-tel", has been able to deliver just two lines per 100 000 people, among the lowest ratios in Africa.

Poor reliability is actively encouraged by technicians who for a fee will either repair your line or lend you somebody else's.

The authorities tried to combat a recent fuel shortage, the causes of which were themselves suspicious in a country that produces 2-million barrels of oil a day, by posting soldiers to petrol stations to prevent hoarding and subsequent black marketeering. Drivers simply filled their tanks, went home, siphoned off the contents into jerry cans and returned to the queues. The degree of personal initiative

and energy in terms of material self-advancement across Nigeria is remarkable.

No traffic jam, or "go-slow", is complete without what is in effect a moving supermarket around the stationary vehicles.

Young men working for pitiful commissions sell almost everything: telephones, oranges, soap powder, Celine Dion compact disks — even puppies and parrots.

What remains to be achieved is the harnessing of that individual effort with the dead hand of the state.

Corruption

After one civil war, four constitutions and six successful military coups, long-term political stability remains elusive, preventing institutional reforms regarded as essential by creditors and encouraging corruption.

"Nigeria is a place of huge potential," says a western diplomat in the commercial capital, Lagos. "It always has been and it always will be."

Goldman is a freelance writer for Business Day and the Financial Times of London.

SSAUIV

'Stability' under spotlight

CT(EE) 15/5/97 (226)

JAMES JUKWEY

Lagos — Economic stability, touted by Nigeria's military government as one of its main successes in the past two years, no longer seems a sure bet to economists. They said a nearly 10 percent depreciation in the value of the naira since January could destabilise the economy, one of sub-Saharan Africa's biggest.

"If the rate at which the naira is falling continues unchecked then we will be back to the situation before the reforms of 1995," said banker Oduma Okoronkwo.

This will again plunge manufacturers and investors into uncertainty.

The authorities dismiss the panic as "unpatriotic".

Anthony Ani, the finance minister, and Paul Ogwuma, the governor of the central bank, said on Tuesday there were no plans to further devalue the naira after its 5.88 percent drop to 85 naira to \$1 six weeks ago.

"With the current external reserve position of over \$6 billion, compared with \$1.5 billion in the same period of 1996, the government is in a better position to defend the naira at all costs," they said.

In 1995, General Sani

Abacha launched cautious reforms, legalising the autonomous foreign exchange market (AFEM) and slashing public spending, which by last year had stabilised the naira at about 80 naira to the dollar and reduced inflation to less than 30 percent from about 80 percent.

Despite its recent devaluation, the naira remains under pressure, selling at 90 naira to \$1 in several places in the country.

This has worrying implications for inflation rising again.

The latest Federal Office of Statistics report put inflation in February at 24.4 percent, down from 26.7 percent in January, but it said food prices rose while prices of manufactured items fell.

Harder hit is the weekly foreign exchange auction, where the demand for dollars has risen sharply to about \$100 million from the weekly demand of about \$60 million last year.

Analysts said at this demand the government's provision of \$2.7 billion for the AFEM will be exhausted before August, spelling doom for a key facet of Nigeria's economic policy.

"The economic successes of the regime are being daily eroded, interestingly

by factors which analysts say the administration itself contrived," the independent Thisday newspaper reported in an editorial on Friday.

"Before this development, the fine points of the General Sani Abacha regime have been a relatively stable exchange rate, plummeting inflation and a general positive stability."

The problems stem from a reflationary budget announced in January to spur economic growth.

Given the lack of foreign investments because of political instability, the government opted to increase domestic spending with the aim of achieving gross domestic product growth of 5.5 percent from 3.3 percent last year.

However, business had been expecting privatisation of loss-making and inefficient state enterprises.

Abacha promised to set up a committee to study the issue of privatisation when the budget was announced, but the committee is yet to be appointed.

"Without privatisation no new money will come into Nigeria," said a Western diplomat. "The risk of political instability is also too great." — Reuter

(22b)
BD 15/5/97
Nigeria liquefied gas project on track

BONNY — Nigeria's \$4bn liquefied natural gas project was 40% completed, said Nigeria LNG chief operating officer Steve Ollereanshaw

"The overall engineering, procurement and construction of the project is now about 40% complete which is slightly ahead of schedule," he told reporters on a tour of the project site on Bonny island in the oil-producing Rivers state this week.

The project, scheduled to come on stream in October 1999, has suffered a series of postponements but Nigeria's present military government has shown more commitment to it.

"We have the incentives to complete the project on time," Ollereanshaw said. "The Nigerian government has put in a lot of money; we are earning interest on funds in escrow accounts all of which we can draw down upon. So there is no problem about financing."

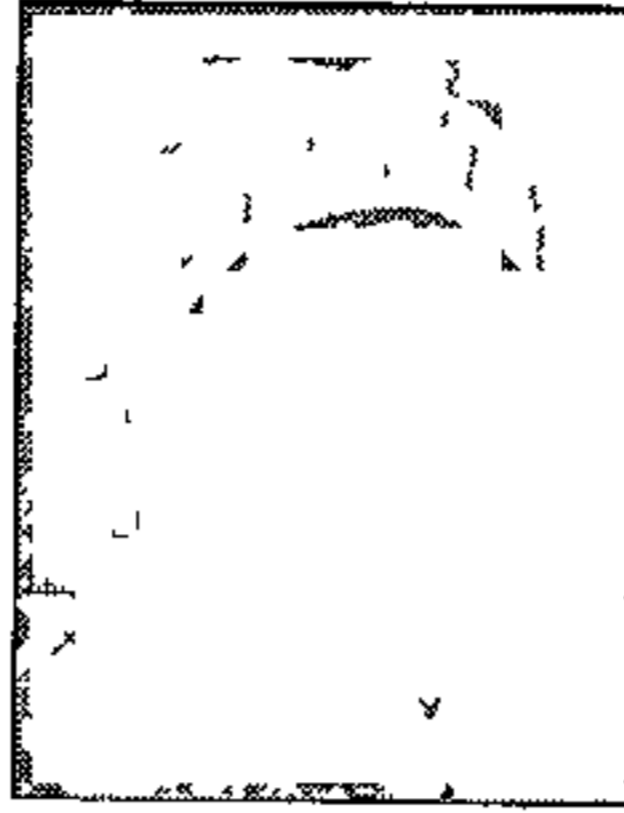
The four shareholders — state oil

firm Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Shell Sas, Elf Aquitaine and Agip SpA have placed \$2,873bn in escrow accounts.

The project is to produce 7.5-billion cubic metres of gas annually for delivery to customers in Spain, France and Turkey. The fourth and biggest buyer, Enel of Italy, terminated the contract in December and the issue is now before an arbitration panel. "The arbitration process is still on in Switzerland," said Ollereanshaw. "We have not submitted claims for damages yet. The first step is to establish where the liabilities lie and this will be determined by the first quarter of 1998."

Ollereanshaw had received proposals from Enel on its options to receive the Nigerian gas. "But we have a three-pronged approach to the Enel issue, namely pursuit of the arbitration, evaluate Enel's proposals and offering its volume to other buyers" — Reuter

Moshood
Abiola



Abacha not likely to give up easily

Star 16/5/97 (226)

Although elections have been scheduled for next year, Nigeria is beginning to see strong signs that the military elite, which annulled the last elections four years ago, intends hanging on to power indefinitely

The country's ruler General Sani Abacha has hinted that he may resign from the military to run for president himself, and Nigeria's main political parties are falling over themselves to enlist him as their candidate

Meanwhile, Moshood Abiola, the man widely believed to have won the 1993 election, is still in jail. And last month, Don Etiebet, the one politician who might have been a serious challenge to Abacha, dropped out of contention as a candidate

Etiebet, a former oil minister, resigned from his own party and joined the increasingly powerful United Nigeria Congress Party. His announcement, which came three weeks after he had been arrested, suggested that he had been pressed to change his politics. The formal reason for his detention is still unclear

In a statement explaining his resignation, Etiebet said "In the interests of stability, peace and unity in our dear fatherland and, considering the problems engulfing my party today, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for me to continue to function in politics under the umbrella of the National Centre Party of Nigeria"

Meanwhile, members of the United Nigeria Congress Party have been calling for Abacha to be their presidential candidate, even as members of the other four leading parties jockey to get his name on their tickets.

Abacha's public position is that he has not made up his mind whether to run, but that it is up to Nigerians to call on him to do so. There is no constitutional obstacle to the general resigning from the army and running as a civilian candidate

The idea of Abacha running for president is galling to many, especially in south-western Nigeria, which has long been at odds with the north where most of the military leaders come from

Abacha took over the leadership of Nigeria in 1993, ostensibly to prevent the country from falling into ethnic warfare. But because Abiola, who is from the south-west, is still in detention, the roots of the original political crisis remain unresolved

Besides the basic cultural and religious differences between the Muslim north and the Christian

Nigeria's ruling military elite

shows signs that it intends

hanging on to power indefinitely

south, Nigeria is also home to more than 250 ethnic groups, a politically volatile mix. The main groups, the Ibo in the east, the Yoruba in the south-east and the Hausa and Fulani in the north, have long vied for power

The ethnic mix is one reason the military has been able to portray itself as the institution best able to unify the country

But stresses are evident nearly everywhere. The official radio and television frequently broadcast accusations that the main umbrella opposition grouping, the National Democratic Coalition, is behind a recent spate of bomb blasts, many against military targets. In March, 15 men, including Wole Soyinka, a Nobel prizewinner for literature who lives in the United States in exile, were charged with treason, an offence that carries the death penalty. The group has denied any wrongdoing

The latest bomb blast in Lagos, last Wednesday, took place outside the walls of an important military base

Whoever is responsible, the violence has driven a deeper wedge between the northern elite and the political forces of the south-west

Trouble in the politically volatile south-east came to the attention of the world in October 1995, when Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists were convicted of murder and executed after accusing the military and Shell Oil of polluting Ogoniland and of hoarding oil profits

Nigeria pumps \$40-million (about R178-million) worth of oil a day and the most explosive question politically, particularly given the country's economic slump, is what has become of the money

The military government may be relying on the deep conservatism of the largely Muslim north to ensure stability over the next decades, but even there, tensions are starting to show. Partly because the north has been hardest hit by the economic troubles, religious strife is starting to spread, and Muslim militants have been sounding the theme of corruption to attack the government - NY Times

Nigerians queue up for fast-dwindling fuel supplies

Lagos - Long queues formed at petrol stations here as a fresh fuel shortage hit Nigeria's largest city.

"It has taken me more than five hours to fill up my car," one motorist said yesterday

It is the sixth shortage this year in Africa's biggest oil-producing country

Fuel sellers said stocks had not been replenished for several days and they were on the verge of running out

But a spokesman for the state oil company, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), said the shortage would ease during the weekend "Vessels carrying petrol from Port Harcourt and Warri are on their way to Lagos and should discharge within days," he said

Africa's most populous country often

ARG 24/5/97 (226)
suffers fuel shortages in spite of pumping about two million barrels per day of crude oil, much of it exported

Its four refineries have a combined capacity to process 445 000 barrels of crude oil daily but operate at well below that because of technical and management deficiencies

A severe shortage in April forced the government to announce that fuel would be imported to supplement local output, but industry sources said that so far there had been no imports.

"The Finance Ministry has not released money for any import of fuel," said an official of the Pipelines and Products Marketing Company, a subsidiary of NNPC - Reuter

Mugabe defends (22b) Nigeria, slams coups

Michael Hartnack

BD 5/6/97

HARARE — Life was getting tougher for would-be perpetrators of African military coups, the incoming Organisation of African Unity (OAU) chairman, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe, said yesterday.

Addressing a news conference at the end of the OAU's three-day annual meeting, the continent's new spokesman joined OAU secretary-general Sahn Ahmed Sahn in denying there was any hypocrisy in the support given for Nigerian-led military action to overthrow the Sierra Leone mutineers, when Nigeria itself was under the rule of a junta

Both stressed that Nigeria derived its status from being elected chairman of the West African Economic Community but said the OAU remained committed to encouraging the promised return to civilian rule in Nigeria in October 1998, and the promotion of rights and democracy throughout the continent.

"The OAU has not accepted all that has been happening in Nigeria," said Mugabe. "We are getting tougher and tougher each time as we move into the future and I can assure you future coup plotters will have it more difficult to get recognition."

However, the meeting voted the leader of Burkina Faso's military regime, Capt Blaise Compaore, to succeed Mugabe at next year's OAU meeting.

The Freetown fighting overshadowed an organisation struggling to define a new role for itself after the overthrow of apartheid and colonialism.

Mugabe and Sahn rounded off yesterday's closing sessions with the announcement of a unanimous resolution to condemn the Sierra Leone coup as "an enormous setback for democracy in Africa." They endorsed all measures to reverse it.

"If it becomes the last resort we are prepared to support a military solution," UN secretary-general Kofi Annan said.

See Page 10

Rebels seize airport from Nigerian army

BD 9/6/97 (226)

HASTINGS — Rebels allied to those behind the coup in Sierra Leone have taken control of Hastings airport, which Nigeria had been using to fly in troops and supplies for its nearby military base.

The loss of Hastings, 18km southeast of Freetown, leaves the Nigerians reliant on the remote international airport at Lungi, creating logistical problems for any military strike.

Rebel commander Captan Johandes Roberts told journalists yesterday that they had seized the airfield on Friday after two helicopters landed carrying ammunition, after the Nigerians had assured them they were bringing medical supplies.

"On seeing the helicopters, we rushed to the airfield and captured two Nigerian officers whom the helicopters had dropped, and several thousand rounds of ammunition, including heavy machinegun shells and AK-47 rounds," Roberts said.

Sierra Leonean military authorities in Freetown, now allied with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in the so-called People's Army, confirmed Roberts's account. There was no word from the Nigerians.

Nigeria is expected to stage another military strike against the coup leaders after last Monday's unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the coup.

Roberts said the Nigerian soldiers were being held at rebel headquarters at Benguma military training centre, about a mile from Hastings.

He said Nigerian troops should leave Freetown at once. "If Nigerian troops attack the positions of the Peoples Army we will fight them to the death."

Meanwhile, on Saturday members of Sierra Leone's dissolved parliament met in defiance of a ban on political activity to denounce the two-week-old military coup and call for the return of ousted civilian president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

Fifty members of the 80-seat parliament met and unanimously approved a resolution calling on the military rulers to restore the constitution suspended after the May 25 coup. Several members of parliament have fled the country.

It called for urgent implementation of a peace accord signed in November by Kabbah and rebels fighting since 1991, who have now allied with the coup-makers and flooded into Freetown.

The coup leaders have been meeting civilian politicians, trying to win them over, and have proposed a government of national unity. So far no one has accepted — Reuter.

Nigeria's oil-rich Delta region a time-bomb of ethnic turmoil

Warri, Nigeria - Panic and violence rule this city in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region, embroiled in ethnic clashes since March.

Prospects for a return to normalcy in the southern region appear remote as banks and other businesses have closed their offices to forestall looting and other violent attacks.

Landlords have marked their houses with inscriptions denoting their ethnic origin in the hope of protecting themselves from rampaging youths belonging to the three main communities involved in the turmoil, which was sparked by the relocation in March of the headquarters of a local government area.

The three ethnic groups are the Urhobo, Ijaw and Itsekiri. However, business people from other parts of the country are also engaged in various types of commerce in Warri.

In the city centre, inscriptions such as "Yoruba house", "Urhobo house", "Edo man property", "Itsekiri house" and "This house belongs to Ibo man" adorn buildings, denoting the ethnic origins of their owners.

One resident said. "I believe the inscriptions are supposed to protect the property, but these rampaging youths hardly look at such things, especially when they are drunk with *ogogoro* (local gin)."

"We still live in fear even though the shooting has stopped," said the woman, an ethnic Yoruba from south-western Ni-

geria who has lived in Warri for more than 10 years. "Going to the market is still a risk and the children are afraid to go to school."

The fear, said the mother of four, has increased since members of the Itsekiri community decided to stop participating in the proceedings of a judicial commission of inquiry set up to look into the crisis, which has claimed more than 100 lives and injured twice as many.

The withdrawal came after fresh violence last weekend in which 16 Ijaw youths and two Itsekiris were killed. No fewer than 24 buildings were razed during the violence. "It has become obvi-

ous that we are not safe and we cannot participate in this atmosphere of insecurity and threats to our lives and property," Isaac Jemide, counsel for the Itsekiri community, told the tribunal this week when it resumed its hearings in the nearby town of Efurun.

It's not just the Itsekiri who are dissatisfied. Fedude Zinughan, a member of the Ijaw community, said the "soldiers who are supposed to keep the peace have turned around and started killing our boys for no just cause."

Inscriptions dabbed on house walls are supposed to protect property, but rampaging youths hardly look at such things ...

The army has denied that the Ijaws were targeted by a military task force keeping the peace in the area. "In a situation like this, the military sees everybody as friends and uses persuasion and dialogue in carrying out assignment," Brigadier-General Ibrahim Kar-mashi, commander of the force, told journalists in Warri.

Kar-mashi charged that the youths had attacked soldiers around the Warri market area and wounded two of them.

He said sophisticated weapons had been seized from some of the men, who are now in the custody of the task force. "You will be surprised that as a brigadier in the

Nigerian Army I have not seen some of the sophisticated weapons before," he added.

The task force, Kar-mashi said, had redefined its operational area and put more armed men to patrol the streets to avert a recurrence of last weekend's violence.

According to Delta State military administrator David Dungs, the renewed fighting followed a dispute between Ijaws and Itsekiris over the ownership of some stalls in the Warri market. He has since ordered the destruction of the structures and stopped the allocation of stalls.

But the tension in the city, home to a major refinery and the operational headquarters of a number of multinational oil companies, is unlikely to go away soon, judging from the comments of residents.

"First the government needs to divide the city into three among the major ethnic groups, Urhobo, Ijaw and Itsekiri," said Tunde Oluwaseyi, an employee of an oil service company.

"The oil companies also need to sit with the communities in which they are located to ensure that it is not only one ethnic group that benefits from largesse such as schools and health centres."

He recalled that the Urhobos and Ijaws had complained that royalties were paid to the Olu of Warri, the traditional ruler of the Itsekiris. - Sapa-IPS

MULTI-MILLION RAND LIQUIDATION SALE
PERSIAN HOUSE INTERNATIONAL CLOSING DOWN

After 20 years of active business in Import, Wholesale & Distribution of Persian and Oriental

At: Persian House International premises.

LIQUIDATION SALE

Police on alert to quell Nigerian protests

Star 12/6/97
By Gilbert da Costa
Star Foreign Service

Abuja - The Nigerian police force, which last week announced an indefinite ban on all public rallies and demonstrations in Nigeria, says it will crush any attempt by opposition elements to embark on street protests today, the fourth anniversary of the annulled 1993 presidential vote.

The entire police force has been mobilised and placed on nationwide alert to forestall what is officially perceived as a direct threat to the security of the Nigerian state.

Units of heavily armed police have been deployed in areas such as the commercial capital Lagos and south-western Nigeria, considered the opposition stronghold and most prone to anti-government activities.

Thousands of heavily armed policemen are among those currently deployed on the streets of Lagos and other strategic locations in south-western Nigeria populated by the Yoruba ethnic group.

A police source said "the deployments are temporary measures which will be removed after the threat to peace is over".

Lagos airport is among strategic locations that have attracted enormous security protection.

Security personnel who took up position around the facility last week have subjected people entering the airport to thorough questioning and scrutiny. Those found not to have a valid reason for going to the airport have been denied entry.

However, an airport worker who identified himself as Martins Okey dismissed the increased security as unnecessary. "I've never seen any nation where security was beefed up to this extent at the airport. They are only harassing innocent people."

ABIOLA ELECTION 'VICTORY' RECALLED

Police enforce ban on protests in Nigeria (22b)

CT 13/6/97

LAGOS: Several Nigerian universities have been closed in the past week to prevent students from organising rallies to commemorate the aborted 1993 elections.

ANTI-RIOT police in armoured trucks with sirens blaring rolled through the city yesterday to enforce a ban on protests marking the anniversary of 1993 elections that were annulled by the army.

Several universities, hotbeds of political activism, have been closed in the past week to prevent students from convening anti-government rallies to commemorate the 1993 vote, which was supposed to have returned Nigeria to civilian rule.

Instead, the army refused to recognise the presumed winner, businessman and publisher Mr Moshood Abiola, and threw him in prison a year later when he marked the one-year anniversary by proclaiming himself president anyway. Abiola remains jailed awaiting trial on treason charges, which carry the death penalty.

The police commissioner in Lagos, Nigeria's biggest city and its

commercial capital, said no group — not even those supporting military ruler General Sani Abacha — had permission to hold rallies yesterday and that police would "deal ruthlessly" with anyone who tried.

"The ban on public procession is still very much in force, and the police will enforce this ban," said the commissioner, Mr Abubakar Tsav. "The safety of anyone who violated this ban can, therefore, not be guaranteed by the police."

An armoured truck was positioned about 100 metres from the front gate leading to Abiola's house in the Ikeja area of Lagos. In other parts of the city, police moved in convoys, blaring sirens and blasting horns in warnings against protests.

Similar security measures were reported in other cities, including the northern city of Minna, home of former military leader General Ibrahim Babangida. He was the general in charge when the 1993

vote was annulled, and a heavy detachment of police surrounded his hilltop mansion as protection after leaflets urging students to march on the property had been circulated.

In the days before the anniversary pro-democracy groups and human rights organisations have demanded that Abiola be freed and Abacha ousted. None called for protests, fearing a repeat of the carnage that broke out in June 1993 when people took to the streets to protest against the army's refusal to cede power.

About 100 were shot dead by police and soldiers, sparking months of riots and strikes. Abacha took advantage of the chaos by staging a coup in November 1993 that ousted Babangida and installed a stricter regime.

Abacha has refused human rights groups' demands that he free Abiola and has delayed the return to civilian rule until October 1998, when he has promised elections. Opposition groups accuse him of plotting to manipulate the vote to ensure he and his backers remain in power. — Sapa-AP

Poverty threatens oil companies

Shell says oil companies blame sabotage for 90% of their spills, writes **Anthony Goldman** in Lagos

BD 18/6/97

(226)

ABOUT an hour's drive from Port Harcourt, Nigeria's main oil city, and between the tiny villages of Ihuaba and Elele Alimini, is a pond in which the two communities once farmed fish. Now it is a fetid pool of oily water, the centre of a dispute between the inhabitants and Shell, owner of the pipeline which ruptured and leaked several thousand barrels of oil last month.

"This is our land," said Dixon Joshua, a villager. "We want Shell to compensate us for this damage, and to give our people jobs for cleaning up."

There have been 15 such spills this year, with May the worst month on record. The consequences for the environment can be profound. In the short term, agriculture and fishing are disrupted, while there may also be long-term health risks to affected communities.

For companies that produce around 700 000 barrels a day of some of the highest grade crude at what has been about the lowest production costs anywhere, the economic implications are also apparent. Not only is it costly and time-consuming to recover spilt oil, but pipelines carrying crude from onshore

production facilities to the loading terminal on the coast also must be closed for repairs. Unofficial estimates place lost output this year at around 30 000 barrels a day.

Shell has invested millions of dollars over the past 18 months in a bid to improve its capacity to respond to such situations. But the company alleges that the recent spate of ruptures is by no means accidental. "Nearly 90% of those spills are the direct result of deliberate sabotage," said Hubert Nwokolo, operations manager for Shell's eastern division. "One 30km stretch of pipeline has been hit 34 times since the beginning of 1995."

Officials believe they are suffering the consequences of years of government neglect of the region. "The economy is so bad that people will do anything to make money," Nwokolo said. "The chiefs are discredited and the youths are volatile. They think if they flood their area with oil, they can demand compensation, road access tariffs and contract labour."

At Ihuaba, work by Shell's oil spill response unit was halted by locals two weeks ago. Negotiations for fees for access to the area are continuing, but the

company is reluctant either to pay compensation or use local labour in cases of suspected sabotage. As delays continue, a problem which had been relatively easy to combat becomes ever more difficult as the crude begins to break down and seep into the land.

Shell head of community affairs Paul Morgan said, "Whatever the cause, we try to clean up and recover what has been spilt. We have the best equipment in the world, a dedicated team and an expanding budget. But it is our policy not to reward sabotage."

Agip and Elf have smaller operations but have similar problems. "We are not government, but because of our profile, people see us as government and demand jobs and services from us as if we were government," said an official. "According to the terms of our operating contract, the authorities receive 57% of revenue but do nothing for the people. They create the problem, but we have to deal with it."

Petroleum Resources Minister Dan Etete and the state military administrator have issued warnings to locals against sabotage, while urging western op-

erators to do more in the way of community development. The results of the government's own initiatives like the oil and mineral-producing areas' development commission, launched in the wake of the execution in 1995 of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the minority rights activist who campaigned for a fairer deal for communities living in oil-producing areas, have, however, proved disappointing.

Instead, at least in some part of the Niger delta, community militancy is escalating. In addition to pipeline sabotage, Shell staff, even those involved in environmental clean-up work, are increasingly subject to threats of violence. Installations are sometimes attacked in local political or ethnic disputes which protagonists acknowledge have nothing to do with the oil companies, in an effort to attract attention to a region otherwise remote from central government.

The long-term implications of such trends, which the authorities have tackled with apparently little enthusiasm, are distinctly worrying for operators who still regard the area around Port Harcourt as the jewel in Nigeria's oil-producing crown.

Corruption hinders Nigeria development

FROM AP-DOW JONES

CT(BP) 20/6/97

Abuja, Nigeria. — Corrupt contractors and officials have cost Nigeria billions of dollars earmarked for development, the country's finance minister said this week.

Anthony Ani told crowds at a lecture in the northern town of Kaduna that over \$9 billion his government had invested in steel mills and an aluminum smelter since 1994 had simply disappeared. Another \$200 million to repair oil refineries was also misused.

This had resulted in persistent fuel shortages in the country, which was the sixth richest in oil in the world, said Ani.

Roads in Ivory Coast and Benin cost 40 percent less than they would in Nigeria, he said. The reasons, according to Ani, were greed and a lack of accountability.

Ani announced two new committees would soon be set up. One would deal with the evaluation and implementation of government ministry projects. The other to monitor money disbursed to key public institutions and enterprises. — AP-Dow Jones

LAGOS — Major crude oil producer Nigeria could come to a virtual standstill this week if a fuel shortage which had plagued the nation for more than a month did not ease, industry sources said yesterday

Public transport has been crippled by the shortage and fuel depots are overrun with empty road tankers

The road tanker drivers' union on Satur-

Oil-rich Nigeria faces (226) shutdown over fuel crisis

day called on the government to take urgent steps to end the fuel scarcity

Fewer than 200 trucks were being loaded with fuel daily compared with the normal 2 000

There has so far been no report of disturbances over the fuel situation

60 23/6/97
but industry sources said the situation was getting desperate

"The resilience of industry and commerce as well as the people is getting to snapping point," commented Gboyega Akintunde, an oil marketing executive in Lagos

There is no sign that

the military government has any formula for ending the scarcity

The independent Guardian said Oil Minister Dan Etete had met officials of the state oil company and the oil unions to discuss measures to tackle the fuel crisis

But measures so far announced were only to monitor closely the movement of fuel and supervise sales. — Reuter.

NEWS DIGEST

CT 24/6/97 (A2)

(226)

JIN 101

Thousands stranded as fuel shortage continues in Africa's top oil producer

Hundreds of thousands of people are stranded in Nigeria as a fuel shortage continues to worsen. The shortage has led to a breakdown in public transport and a general state of chaos in the capital, Lagos. The government has urged citizens to conserve fuel and has asked for international assistance.

The shortage of fuel has led to a general state of chaos in the capital, Lagos. The government has urged citizens to conserve fuel and has asked for international assistance.

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The shortage of fuel has led to a general state of chaos in the capital, Lagos. The government has urged citizens to conserve fuel and has asked for international assistance.

Oil droughts are not uncommon, but this one has lasted longer than normal and shows no signs of easing

Nigerians blame laziness and graft for fuel shortage

JAMES JUKWEY

Lagos — Piqued by the irony that Africa's leading oil producer cannot provide enough fuel for itself, industry experts are attributing a huge fuel scarcity in Nigeria to years of national malaise.

Fuel shortage is not unusual in Nigeria, which pumps 2 million barrels a day of crude oil. But the present shortage has lasted longer than normal and has shown no sign of easing.

"This phenomenon did not just start today. The seeds have been there all the time and were waiting to germinate," said Remi Akinsanya, an oil group official.

"They range from underfunding of the oil industry to mismanagement and our lackadaisical attitude to work."

Military ruler General Sani Abacha ordered fuel imports on Monday in a bid to normalise

supplies within 48 hours.

There have been intermittent fuel shortages since January. They usually abate after two to three weeks, but this crunch started in mid-May.

It has crippled transport and forced many businesses to scale back or shut down completely.

"The situation has really exposed Nigeria as a nation that cannot manage its resources for the optimum benefit of its citizens," wrote Tayudeen Bello, the editor of the semi-official Business Times newspaper in his Perscope column on Monday.

No definite explanation for the scarcity has been offered by the authorities. But Anthony Am, the finance minister, an accountant who has waged an anticorruption war within the government, opened a can of worms last week when he blamed the oil ministry for it.



ei (Gar) 25/6/97

(226)

OIL-FREE ZONE Nigeria is the sixth largest oil producer in the world, but the country suffers from a persistent fuel shortage. The finance ministry has blamed the oil ministry for the scarcity.

"In spite of the huge amount allocated for the repairs of the refineries, we have found these have not been repaired, the result of which is persistent shortage of fuel in Nigeria, the

world's sixth largest producer of crude oil," he said. He said in 1995 \$440 million and last year \$295 million were allocated to Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) for

projects such as refinery repairs. Dan Etete, the oil minister, disputed this, calling Ani's remarks "a deliberate falsehood with intent to incite the masses."

His aides said Ani's refusal to give money to the oil ministry and NNPC was the cause of the problem.

"Buck-passing is a familiar Nigerian tactic for ineptitude," Roland Terdi, a pro-democracy activist, said.

The slanging match has provided ammunition for opposition newspapers to hit out at the government for the crisis.

"It is shameful and embarrassing that lack of accountability or indeed acts of impropriety have destroyed the supply and distribution network of fuel in the country, causing unspeakable hardship for our people," said the National Concord journal. Nigeria has four refineries

with a combined capacity to process 445 000 barrels of crude oil daily, but which operate at a fraction of their capacity because of deteriorating facilities.

Reasons ranging from official corruption to inept management have been cited for inability to get the system to function properly.

The crisis is bound to advance the argument that only privatising the oil sector, Nigeria's economic lifeline, can reduce graft and make the economy work.

Any privatisation will be followed by sharp increases in pump prices to a level probably nearer to those of the black market — five to 10 times the official prices.

Experts warn the fuel shortage will make it more difficult for Nigeria to realise its forecast of gross domestic product growth of 5.5 percent for this year, from 3.2 percent last year — Reuters

Nigeria's generals still holding Abiola

(226)

CT 25/6/97

LAGOS: Nigeria's detained presidential contender Mr Moshood Abiola marked three years in detention yesterday with no sign that his release could come soon

He was arrested in 1994 after proclaiming himself president in defiance of military ruler General Sani Abacha

"Abiola was not discussed," a government official said after talks by military brass in the capital Abuja yesterday. The discussions focused on a fuel shortage that has gripped the country

Abiola's detention anniversary, like that of the annulled June 12, 1993, presidential vote he is widely believed to have won, passed with only moderate media mention

But political commentators believe Abiola will become an issue next year when the country is scheduled to go to the polls to elect a president, the climax of Abacha's three-year programme for transition to democracy.

"The crunch time will come when General Abacha has to hand over, because Abiola's supporters will demand to know what happens to his own mandate," said Mr Bola Olugbade, a former governorship contender in Abiola's stronghold in the south-west

The Yoruba-speaking south-west is Abiola's home region, where many people still clamour for what they call "actualisation" of the 1993 vote

Several former political associates openly campaign for Abacha to shed his uniform and contest the presidential election. But the opposition says the transition will fail unless Abiola is freed and his election validated

"The fate of Nigeria is today bound hands and feet with whatever happens to Abiola," said the Campaign for Democracy pressure

group in a statement to mark the detention anniversary

Abiola was charged with treason but the trial has stalled on technicalities since August 1994 when the judge withdrew. This was also the last time Abiola was seen in public

Although riots and strikes which greeted Abiola's arrest have long since died down, Nigeria remains in crisis over the vote annulment

Fuel scarcity has hit the oil-rich West African nation, its economy is mired in recession, unemployment is high and the programme for transition to civilian rule remains suspect

"What we are witnessing today in this country can all be traced to June 12," says Mr Peter Adebisi of the National Democratic Coalition (Nadeco), the umbrella opposition group formed in 1994 to help Abiola claim his "mandate"

"Nadeco once again calls for the release of Chief Abiola and all political detainees, and the formation of a government of national unity headed by Abiola, to effect the necessary change in our society that will set this country on the path of greatness," he said.

The government insists Abiola committed a serious offence against the state when he proclaimed himself president and that the judicial process must take its course. It also says the poll he contends that he won was inconclusive

For a long time there was no word about Abiola, who is being held in Abuja. Then in May, after rumours began circulating that he was dead, his personal physician, Dr Ore Falomo, was allowed to see him.

Falomo said after their 90-minute meeting that Abiola was in good health — Reuter

Nigeria's oil shortage fuels political tensions

CT(BR) 30/6/97 (226)

SUMAYYA SAMSOODIEN

Lagos — A severe fuel shortage in one of the world's major oil-producing nations is crippling economic activity in many parts of the country and raising political and social tensions

In Lagos, Nigeria's main industrial city, streets are blocked by long lines of cars outside petrol stations, some waiting for several days for a few litres of fuel. About 4.5 litres of petrol, which normally costs about 50c, now sell for \$7.

Rows of buses and taxis also line the streets, their drivers are unable to find fuel to operate. The price of a ride in one of the few public transport vehicles still operating has doubled, to about 80c

Many people are unable to travel to work, and food prices are also going up because of the increased cost of transport. In a country that has suffered a serious economic decline in recent years, this is causing immediate and widespread hardship

The crisis has affected all the country's main cities and towns, including those in the southeastern oil region. The worst-hit city is Lagos, where the fuel shortage is now in its fifth month. Because of the growing chaos, soldiers

have been deployed to many petrol stations around the city

The upheaval is the worst since the political crisis of 1994, when the country almost came to a standstill because of strikes protesting at the annulment of the 1993 elections and the imprisonment of the man most people believe won the presidency, Mashood Abiola

People want to know why, as residents of the world's sixth-biggest oil producer, they are suffering from a lack of fuel

"The epileptic supply of petroleum products cannot be justified under any ruse of untenable explanations," said Tunde Oladunjoye of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights. "It is simply a case of gross irresponsibility on the part of the military junta, its economic advisers and

'It is a case of irresponsibility on the part of the military junta and its advisers'

collaborators"

A newspaper owned by Abiola said students would start holding nationwide demonstrations soon

The government has not given a clear reason for the fuel shortage, although it has now pledged to order the immediate importing of more fuel, and to start work on repairing decrepit refineries — New York Times News Service

Nigeria falls outside Labour's African vision

CT (BR) 2/7/97 (22b)

REUTER

Nairobi — The new Labour government in Britain is pushing an upbeat message on Africa, but Nigeria's military regime can expect tougher treatment from the former colonial power.

After 18 years of Conservative rule, the country which colonised half of Africa is having a fresh look at its relations with a continent split between ethnic conflict and zones of economic and political progress.

After less than two months in power, Labour's Africa policies are not yet in sharp focus — but a stronger emphasis on the link between human rights, good governance and prosperity seems to be one of them.

A test will come in Nigeria, Africa's most populous state and a centre for British investment in oil and trade.

The blunt words coming out of London suggest that military ruler General Sani Abacha is in for a rough ride.

"Nigeria is a very interesting example of the way in which economic progress and human rights are complementary," Robin Cook, Britain's new foreign secretary, said late last month.

"What holds it back is a corrupt regime and very poor standards of democratic government," he said, opposing Nigeria's readmission to the Commonwealth.

Unlike the Conservatives, Labour has signalled its readiness to support sanctions against Nigeria to add pressure for democracy. If the threat materialises, Nigeria's isolation will increase sharply but so will the risk to Britain's economic stake in the country.

In a weekend interview, Cook's deputy for Africa, Tony Lloyd, repeated the strong message to Nigeria and told military putschists in Sierra Leone, Britain's first African colony, that "the game is up".

"We don't really regard the issues of economic progress and civil progress as being divisible," he said.

Lloyd visited South Africa, Kenya and Uganda last week in the first trip to Africa by a new Labour minister.

"Too often Africa has been dismissed by Europeans and North Americans as being a hopeless case. The images are negative ones of violence, of military regimes, of poverty," he said.

With chronic conflict or the threat of anarchy in more than a dozen African countries, pessimists have plenty to buttress their case. But Lloyd said there were "good and hopeful signs" in many other countries.

"What modern Britain wants with a Labour government is a mature relationship with the new emerging Africa," he said. Labour takes office as France, Britain's great rival in the 19th-century "scramble for Africa", watches its post-colonial influence in the continent waning at dramatic speed.

Thrown out of Rwanda and Zaire, France is now under threat in the whole of central Africa, and some officials blame an "Anglo-Saxon" plot hatched by the US and Britain.

But Lloyd said the new left-leaning governments in London and Paris were already talking about a joint approach to promote stability and economic progress in Africa. South Africa and Uganda are widely seen as success stories, but the third country on Lloyd's tour, Kenya, is a problem for any British government.

Britain is Kenya's largest foreign investor and still has close military links with its only former colony outside southern Africa which attracted permanent British settlers.

"There is a huge demand for change (but) what Kenya's got to avoid, particularly in the run-up to the imminent general elections, is a resort to violence instead of political debate," Lloyd said.

RLD

Nigerian communities in oil fields threaten to evict Shell

LAGOS — Four communities in Nigeria's ethnically fragmented south have given Royal Dutch Shell until July 8 to leave their oil-producing area or be forced out, local newspapers reported yesterday.

The newspapers said a letter from the Ijaw communities near Sokebelou in Delta state accused Shell of failing to provide local people with benefits from the 75 000 bpd of crude oil pumped into flow stations in the area.

"Shell must go if she does not change her shameless stand of disregard for the goose that lays the

BD 4/7/97 (226)
golden egg," the letter said

The communities involved won a battle against Shell in local courts over compensation for environmental damage. Shell is appealing against the ruling. A Shell spokesman in Lagos said he was aware of the reports but unwilling to comment.

Ethnic clashes in March between the Ijaw and Itsekiri tribes at nearby Warri forced Shell to close several oil wells earlier this year. Shell pumps around half of Nigeria's roughly 2-million bpd crude oil production — Reuter.

Sabotage damage will take years to repair

Shell in talks to return to its Ogoni fields

ET(MR) 7/7/97 (22b)

GODDY IKEH

Lagos — Royal Dutch Shell said it may return to its sabotaged oil facilities in Nigeria's Ogoniland following talks with local groups at the weekend

Representatives from the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (Mosop), formerly led by executed human rights activist and writer Ken Saro-Wiwa whose death focused international attention on Nigeria's military regime, also took part in the talks.

Shell's oil production in Ogoniland was 25 000 barrels a day before it was compelled to pull out of the area because of sabotage and attacks on its installations there.

Mosop, one of Shell's most outspoken critics, claims the Ogoni people have had their land and environment destroyed by oil exploitation, but have received nothing in return.

Victor Dania, a Shell spokesman, said a process of reconciliation was under way and should be completed by the end of the year

He said Shell would clean up oil spills and carry out community development programmes which would involve providing jobs for youths

He estimated it would take Shell between two and three years to repair damaged installations and develop new reserves in the area. The installations were damaged by sabotage and in

attacks on them when acrimony over Ogoniland was at its height

Dania said the rift between the oil company and the Ogoni people was deeper than any other division between Shell and any other party

■ Shell will complete its drilling operations for the Soku gas plant in Nigeria on August 15, Aimufia Ehis, the drilling supervisor, said at the weekend. The rig, code-named Searex XII, began drilling at the site on May 16 following a similar operation at Akaso in south-eastern Nigeria

Ehis said the drilling was "progressing ahead of schedule". He attributed the success of the project to the adoption of "hi-tech drilling techniques". Fidelis Okonkwo, Shell's senior community liaison officer, said three major interest groups were claiming to be the landlords of the drill

site, although no one lives within 10km of the installation

The gas plant is designed to treat gas from Soku and the Ekulama and Nembe Creek oil fields in the state of Bayelsa in south-eastern Nigeria

To reduce the effect of the drilling on the environment, 20 new gas wells and eight oil wells are being drilled horizontally in two clusters at Soku

The company is also constructing a pipeline network and a pump station to facilitate the transmission of gas to its Finima facility — Independent Foreign Service

Claims are made that the Ogoni have had their environment destroyed but have got nothing back

Nigeria accused of hypocrisy

BD 9/7/97

(226)

BIDJAN — Long ruled by military dictators and no friend to democracy at home, Nigeria has managed to become "Big Brother" to struggling democracies in West Africa.

Nigeria's human rights record has drawn condemnation from world leaders and the United Nations (UN) and it led to the country's suspension from the Commonwealth.

Still, its peacekeeping troops helped end Liberia's civil war and prepare for elections scheduled later this month. Nigerian forces are also trying to reinstate the democratically elected president of Sierra Leone, who was recently ousted in a coup.

Nigeria's military ruler, Gen. Sani Abacha, who himself seized power in a military coup in 1993, says Nigeria has been endowed with bountiful natural resources and therefore is duty-bound to foster freedom and stability in the region.

"All of us condemned the coup in Sierra Leone and gave an unequivocal support to the democratically elected President Ahmed Kabbah," Abacha said. "My primary concern now

is to ensure that peace and stability reigns in the West African subregion."

At home, Abacha has jailed hundreds of opponents — including the presumed winner of the 1993 presidential election — and reneged on his vow to hand the country over to civilian rule last year.

To some it seems hypocritical for Nigeria to be the self-appointed defender of democracy in the region.

"There is no point rushing to Sierra Leone to fight for democracy when there is no democracy in Nigeria," said Chinman Uham, head of the Nigerian Democratic Alternative.

The UN and Organisation of African Unity called for military intervention to bring back Sierra Leone's elected president, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, after he was ousted on May 25. Nigeria found itself spearheading the efforts when troops targeted its peacekeepers there during a looting rampage after the coup.

Nigerian May-Gen Victor Malu, commander of the peacekeeping force sent to Sierra Leone by the Economic Community

of West African States, said on July 1 that Koroma had two weeks to surrender or his men would be "flushed out." Malu also threatened an economic blockade for the already destitute country.

Nigerian newspapers and human rights groups have used Abacha's actions in Sierra Leone to demand he keep his word on implementing democracy at home.

"We urge the military regime of Gen Abacha to also speedily restore democracy here — for charity begins at home," said the independent Post-Express.

Ayo Adebajo, spokesman for the Civil Liberties Organisation, said "It is hypocritical for it to seek to be restoring democracy in another country while it is undermining the same at home."

The international community has little choice but to acknowledge Nigeria for its \$4bn effort to end the civil war in Liberia and to help monitor the disarmament of 60 000 militia-men and the July 19 presidential election in Liberia.

Unless the US government succeeds in getting an interna-

tionally financed African peacekeeping force going, the only West African country with both the military muscle and a willingness to use it is Nigeria.

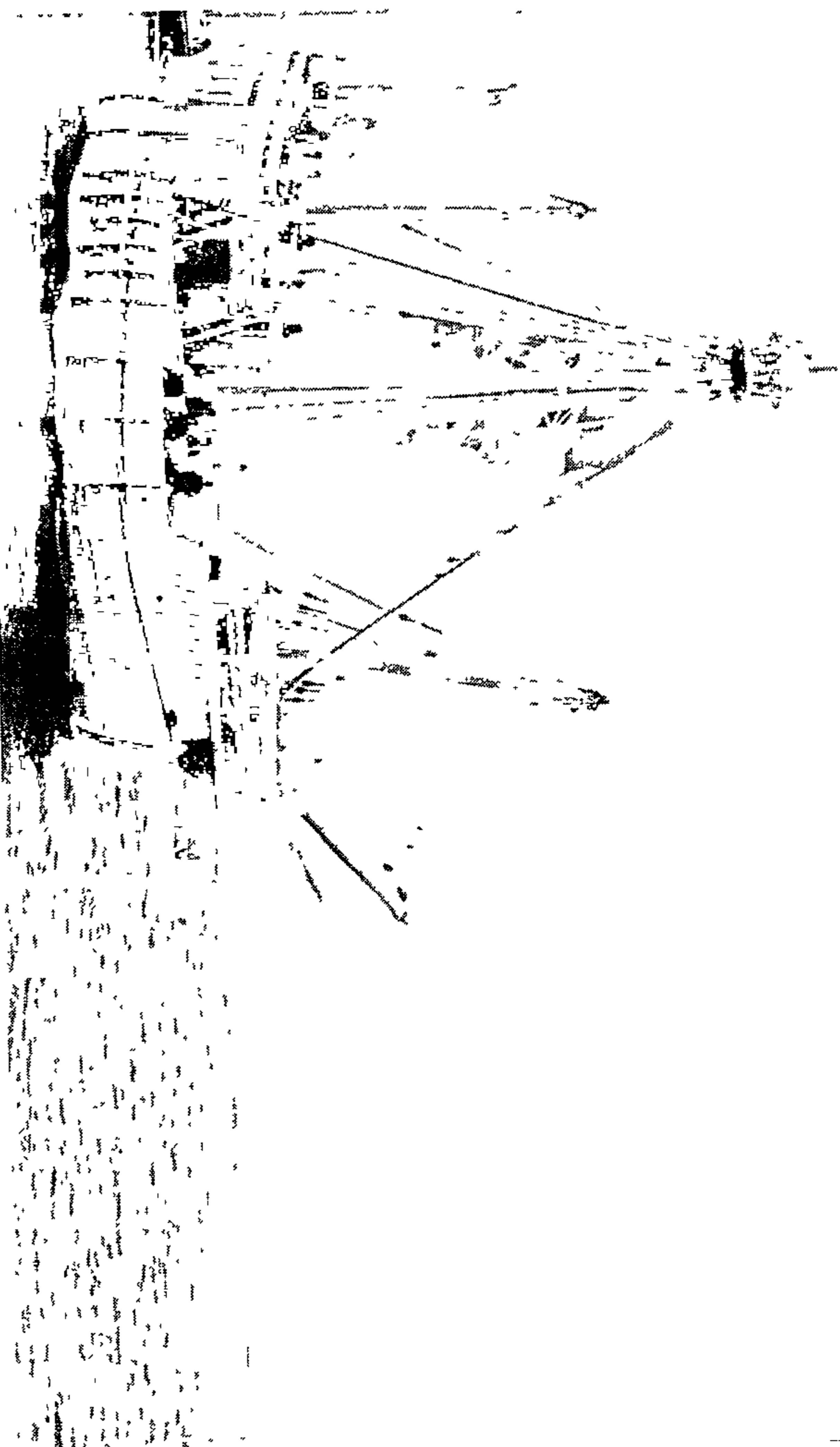
It has the largest armed forces in the region after Angola, and its soldiers are the core of the Economic Community of West African States peacekeeping force.

Former US president Jimmy Carter visited Abacha in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, in late June and left convinced Nigeria would be in civilian hands before October 1 1998.

"He assured me that the decision made in Nigeria to have free and democratic elections to elect civilian leaders for this country will be fulfilled as scheduled," Carter said.

Many are sceptical the elections will take place. Last year Abacha stalled on elections by announcing he would remain in power two more years to ensure an orderly transition.

Elections for state assemblies men have already been delayed and the vote for state governors put off until August 1 1998, the same day as the promised presidential election — Sapa-AP



The replica of John Cabot's ship, Matthew, passes by a giant iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean off Newfoundland, Canada. The ship is bound for Placentia, Newfoundland, after a week of Cabot voyage 500th anniversary celebrations in the province's capital, St John's. Italian explorer Cabot, or Giovanni Caboto, was granted a patent by Henry VII of England and explored the coast in 1497.

Picture A

AFRICAN BUSINESS

Visitors are often confronted by money-extorting government officials, says minister

Corruption jeopardising tourism in Nigeria

GILBERT DA COSTA

Abuja — Official corruption is having a debilitating effect on the Nigerian tourism industry, Jubrilta Aynla, the minister of commerce and tourism, said at the weekend in an address on the promotion of tourism in Nigeria.

Aynla said tourism was "one of the most important economic activities on earth today", and poor infrastructure and an unimpressive operating environment had jeopardised the future of this sector in the west African nation

"The visitor is often confronted by money-extorting government officials. Government must bring sanity to these areas in order to demonstrate a sense of security to visitors."

"The often chaotic situation at our two international airports, coupled with epileptic air conditioning system at, for instance, the arrival hall in Murtala Mohammed International Airport, Lagos, makes a first-time visitor to Nigeria think he has missed his way by coming to Nigeria," Aynla said.

"Worse of all, the cumbersome immigration and customs formalities and other security checks further delay their stay in such an uncomfortable atmosphere."

The situation at land and sea entry points is even more critical, in the reckoning of the tourism minister. According to Aynla, Nigeria needs to provide a stable polity to attract more tourist inflows, saying promotional efforts are "nothing compared to what our visitors personally perceive when they are here."

CT(BR)9/7/97

(226)

Unreliable and unsafe domestic transportation systems and inadequate hotel facilities and services as well as poor communication systems and facilities were also cited as having a negative impact on tourism.

The number of tourists visiting Nigeria has declined from 311 000 in 1986 to 185 000 in 1995, with corresponding receipts also declining from \$147 million in 1986 to \$32 million in 1995. Nigeria, says Aynla, "with a population of over 100 million people and a land mass of

923 763km², is considered the most populous black nation on earth. It offers a combination of natural and cultural attractions to satisfy all tastes, making Nigeria potentially rich in tourist attractions."

But official corruption and a poor operating environment and infrastructure are not the only vices crippling Nigeria. Pilfering at the country's seaports accounted for losses amounting to 97.4 million naira (about R5.26 million) last year.

In February last year, the Nigerian authorities instituted

so-called reforms at the ports to try and minimise malpractices. Pilferage, fake entries, false declaration of goods and forged documents are some of the "traditional" malpractices.

According to RO Giwa, a marine officer of the Law Union and Rock Insurance of Nigeria, "it is not uncommon to discover that a container, inspected by the agent and sealed on checking at the ports, it is discovered that half of the contents of the consignment has been removed". Independent Foreign Service

Cries of disbelief as Nigeria defends democracy

By BETH DUFF-BROWN
Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Stan 10/17/97

(226)

Nigeria, long ruled by military dictators and no friend to democracy at home, has still managed, to the consternation of its critics, to become the "Big Brother" to the struggling democracies in West Africa.

Nigeria's own grim human-rights record has drawn condemnation from world leaders and the United Nations, and it led to the country's suspension from the Commonwealth.

Nevertheless, its peacekeeping troops helped end Liberia's civil war and prepare for elections scheduled for later this month. And Nigerian forces are also trying to reinstate the democratically elected president of Sierra Leone recently ousted in a coup.

Nigeria's military ruler, General Sani Abacha, who himself seized power in a military coup in 1993, says Nigeria has been endowed with a bountiful

natural resources and therefore is duty-bound to do all it can to foster freedom and stability in the region.

"All of us condemned the coup in Sierra Leone and gave an unequivocal support to the democratically elected President Ahmed Kabbah," Abacha said. "My primary concern is to ensure that peace and stability reigns in the West African sub-region."

But at home, Abacha has jailed hundreds of opponents including the presumed winner of the 1993 presidential election — and reneged on his public vow to hand the country over to civilian rule last year.

To some it seems hypocritical for Nigeria to declare itself the self-appointed defender of democracy in the region.

"There is simply no point rushing into Sierra Leone to fight for democracy when there is no democracy at all in Nigeria," said Chuman Uban, head of the Nigerian Democratic Alternative.

A Nigerian assault on the capital in June killed at least 50 people, but so far the military pressure has failed to dislodge mutinous troops loyal to the coup leader, Major Johnny Paul Koroma.

Nigerian Major-General Victor Malu, commander of the peacekeeping force sent to Sierra Leone by the Economic Community of West African States, said on July 1 that Koroma had two weeks to surrender or his men would be "flushed out". Malu also threatened an economic blockade for the already destitute country.

Nigerian newspapers and human-rights groups have used Abacha's actions in Sierra Leone to demand he keep his word on implementing democracy. "Charity begins at home," said the independent Post Express.

Ayo Adebayo, spokesman for the Civil Liberties Organisation, said: "It is hypocritical

for it to seek to be at the forefront of restoring democracy in another country while it is undetermining the same at home."

However, the international community has little choice but to acknowledge Nigeria for its effort to end the civil war in Liberia and to help monitor the disarmament of 60 000 militiamen and the July 19 presidential election in Liberia.

Unless the United States government succeeds in getting an internationally financed African peacekeeping force going, the only West African country with both the military muscle and a willingness to use it is Nigeria.

Former President Jimmy Carter visited Abacha in the Nigerian political capital, Abuja, in late June and left convinced Nigeria would be in civilian hands before October 1 1998.

"He assured me that free elections to elect civilian leaders would be fulfilled as scheduled," Carter said. — Sapa-AP

Nigeria warns Commonwealth

(226)
BY TYRONE SEALE

AND TOYE OLOBI

Star 11/7/97
London - Nigeria has warned the Commonwealth and the international community of grave consequences should the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group adopt measures against Nigeria.

A South African delegation, led by Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo, is attending the meeting of Commonwealth ministers in London to review developments in Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

The group is made up of ministers from Britain, Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Nigeria's foreign affairs minister, Tom Ikimi, in a letter to Commonwealth secretary-general Emeka Anyaoku, lashed out at the action group, accusing the European Union of meddling in the internal affairs of Nigeria.

He said: "Aside from the imposition of sanctions and adoption of anti-Nigerian resolutions within the UN, this unrelenting hostile attitude of the EU towards Nigeria cannot serve the best interests of economic and political relations."

The Commonwealth suspended Nigeria's membership in 1995. It has been pressing for its adherence to the principles of the Harare Declaration and has twice had talks with Nigeria's government. - Star Foreign Service.

No place for Abacha's phoney democracy

M+C 114-1717197 (226)

The Commonwealth can be tougher on Nigeria's military government, writes **Martin Woollacott**

THE grim comedy of Nigerian politics has lurched onward with the announcement that elections due soon are to be put off until next year. The reason for the postponement last week of the second set of polls in a series culminating in a presidential vote next year and a return to full civilian rule is unclear. But it is of a piece with other switches and subterfuges that have characterised General Sani Abacha's programme for the restoration of democracy.

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group was due to meet in London this week to discuss what recommendations on Nigeria it should put forward to the heads of state when they meet in Edinburgh in October. This is the first meeting of the group, set up in Auckland when Nigeria was suspended from the organisation after the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his fellow defendants.

Nigeria is shaping up to become a critical test, perhaps the critical test,

for the new British government's ethical foreign policy. Nigeria's British connections are still substantial. A partly British corporation, Shell, is involved in the industry which sustains the regime. Britain is host to the Commonwealth summit later this year, which means it will be expected to take a lead in this as in other matters.

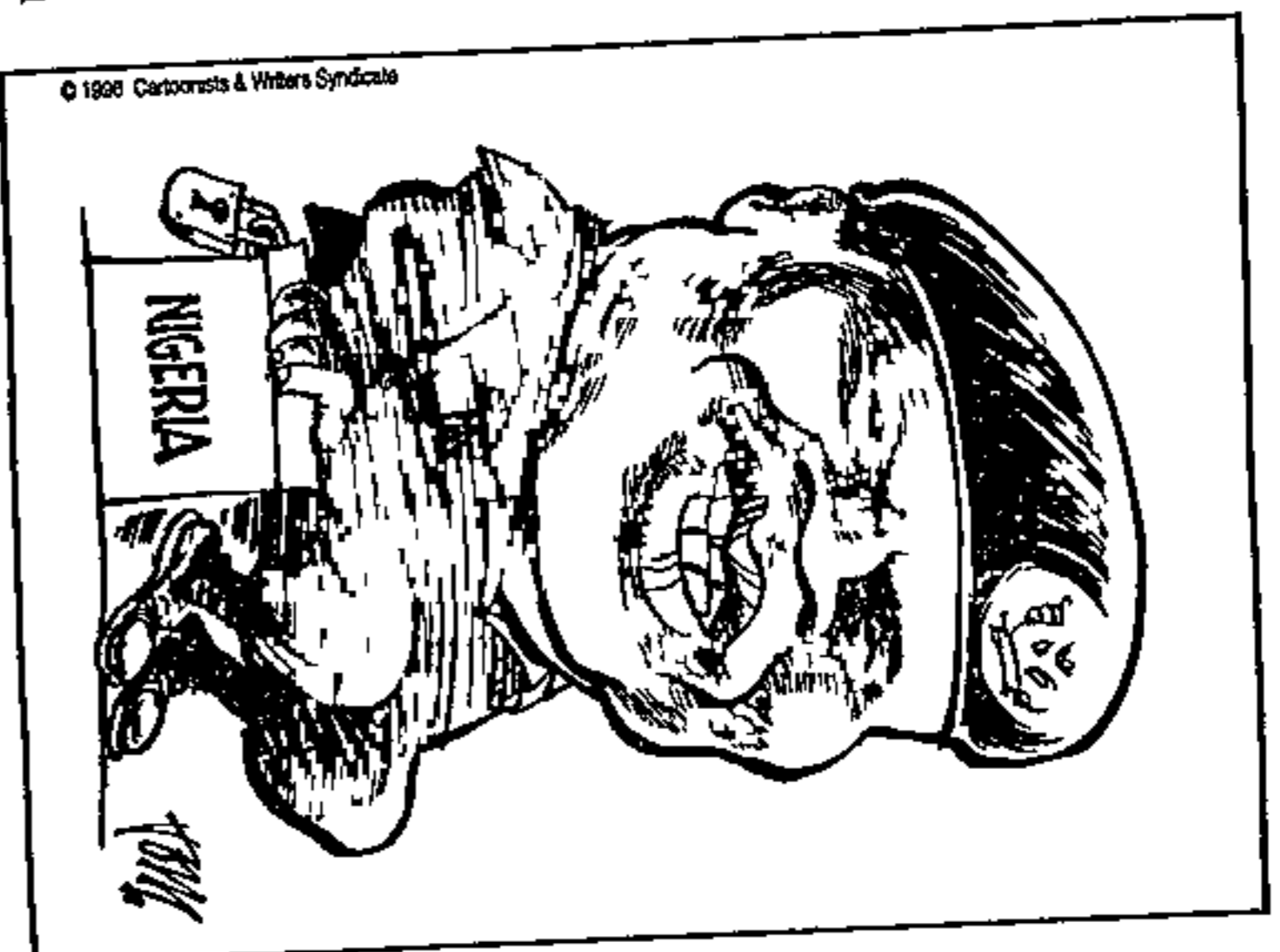
Nigeria is under military rule and ought to be extricated from it. But the problem is larger than that, since a number of Nigerians of stature fear that a few more years of army government or of rule by a fraudulent "civilian" government controlled by a military clique will undo the nation itself.

Men like the Nigerian Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka believe that the idea of Nigeria, which once attracted the loyalty and the idealism of most of its citizens, has become so eroded by the years in which the generals have exploited and divided the people that "we may actually be witnessing a nation on the verge of extinction".

The individuals and the groups that carry a country politically have been bribed, intimidated and co-opted on the one hand, and killed, imprisoned and exiled on the other. There must be a limit to the endurance of this human fabric. Soyinka's fear that a country can wear out its nationhood, that it can

be made "good for nothing", underlines the fact that Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth are not dealing here with just an episode, or even with a settled pattern of bad behaviour, but with a developing tragedy. Britain's Foreign Secretary Robin Cook has already declared that Nigeria has not taken the steps toward a restoration of democracy that would warrant the lifting of its suspension from the Commonwealth.

A few months ago there was a possibility that the regime's various cosmetic moves might just produce a Commonwealth constituency for restoring its membership. But there is now no chance of the suspension being lifted, so Cook is not being particularly forward in so proclaiming. The real question is whether, as Nigerian opposition groups demand, Nigeria should be expelled, or credibly threatened with expulsion, at the Edinburgh meeting. The facts since Auckland, where Commonwealth states committed themselves to expulsion if there was "no demonstrable progress" in the next two years, are damning. The regime did announce a three-year transition plan, with the army bowing out completely in October 1998. But the institutions set up as part of



the transition process, notably the National Electoral Commission, are dubious.

The commission has authorised five political parties, which issue uncannily similar pronouncements urging Abacha to stand for the presidency next year. They are stooges or, at best, co-opted elements. The regime has not talked to the real opposition and has continued to harass and detain its leaders.

Those in detention include Chief Moshood Abiola, the winner of the 1993 election which the military cancelled when their candidate, in spite of all their efforts to fix the result, unexpectedly lost. They also include more than 40 people held for an alleged coup attempt that few believe actually happened, and some opposition personalities picked up more recently.

The government has released a handful of detainees, but arrested more. Some idea of the undemocratic nature of this "return to democracy" can be gained from the fact that the

laws governing the transition to democracy set fines and prison terms for anyone who criticises the process. It is truly bizarre that Nigeria is supposedly rescuing democracy in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The regime has undoubtedly gained a little credit for its regional operations, particularly in Washington, and there are reports that the United States State Department is reviewing its Nigerian policies, with some arguing for a marginally softer line. But, in general, the regime's efforts to end its isolation have a desperate and sometimes comic character. In the oddest case of all, General Abacha recently attended the Francophone summit, weirdly claiming that French would from now on be a national language of Nigeria.

Expulsion is not a likely outcome of the Edinburgh summit, unless the regime commits some new outrage or, unless Nigeria effectively expels itself, as Pakistan and South Africa once did, by withdrawing. Expulsion would strain a Commonwealth in which there remain racial and ideological divisions and, in particular, resistance to the idea of forceful "Northern" meddling in "Southern" affairs.

But between expulsion and a mere maintenance of suspension is a broad area where various kinds of pressure and sanctions could be considered. Many of the measures agreed at previous meetings of the Action Group, like various kinds of visa, educational and financial restrictions on senior members of the regime, have yet to be put into general practice.

The Commonwealth can be and should be tougher. Above all, it must avoid being drawn into endorsing, in a year's time, a mere change of mask by what would essentially be the same regime.

Red tape slows housing delivery

Robyn Chalmers

A NUMBER of provinces had appointed task teams along with other mechanisms to deal with bottlenecks in the low-cost housing programme and address problems facing developers and banks, provincial spokesmen said yesterday

However, some provinces — notably Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Province — were still struggling to overcome capacity restraints and high levels of bureaucracy

The private sector, and developers in particular, have complained of severe capacity constraints in some provincial governments, a nonadherence to checks and balances in the subsidy system and constantly changing rules at provincial level

Housing Minister Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele said last week a range of steps were being taken to address these problems, both at national and provincial level. She remained confident the target of 1-million houses by 1999 would be met

(22) 00 15/7/97
National Urban Reconstruction and Housing Agency deputy CEO Nonhlanhla Mjoli-Mncube said problems experienced by developers, and especially those relating to payments in terms of project-linked subsidies, were now being addressed. "While there may have been slower support from local institutions in housing, we are now starting to see international companies investing in the programme," she said

Gauteng housing policy and administration director Monty Narsoo said yesterday the province had engaged directly with stakeholders to determine their problems, and set deadlines to address these issues

The project-linked subsidy system was now moving ahead well, with a turnaround time of about seven days, but there were problems with individual subsidies which were being addressed

Problems included funds lying idle in conveyancer accounts, which had been largely solved when the province placed a moratorium on this practice. "We are prepared to bite the bullet and take unpopular

action when necessary," he said.

A KwaZulu-Natal government spokesman said a task team had been working at overcoming bottlenecks in the system for months, with progress being made on boosting capacity and cutting through red tape

"KwaZulu-Natal has been hampered with problems relating to the Nkonyama Trust, which has had an effect on delivery, but we are now seeing strong support for the housing programme and are confident we can move ahead," the spokesman said.

Mpumalanga housing spokesman Leon Mbangwa said the suspension of the housing board's activities remained in force, but as the province had spent all its funds the board could not approve subsidies even if it was operational.

Mbangwa said the province fortunately had sufficient skilled people in its government to move ahead with its housing programme rapidly. It had found ways to reduce bureaucratic impediments. A commission had been set up to deal with problems on approval of individual subsidies, he said

Bishops condemn the Nigerian government

Nomavenda Mathiane

(22b) 00 15/7/97
AFRICAN bishops attending the All Africa Primates Conference in Johannesburg have condemned the Nigerian government for confiscating Archbishop Ephraim Ademowo's passport on the eve of his SA trip

As host of the conference, Southern Africa Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane said actions violating the right of assembly and association, such as witnessed last week in Kenya, would not be tolerated. This was particularly true given the changing face of Africa, where Africans were taking their destinies into their own hands. African bishops needed to inculcate Christian values of love and truth in the minds of ordinary people and their leaders, he said

The bishops were attending the "Kairos" meeting, which lasts until Thursday, to discuss issues including Africa's debts and economic crisis. With international conferences, such as the Lambert and World Council of Churches gatherings, coming up, it was important that African bishops prepare to speak with a single strong voice

About 18 bishops are expected. Also attending are Human Rights Commission chairman Barney Pitso and Bishop James Ottley, Anglican observer to the United Nations.



Archbishop of Central Africa Khotso Makhulu presiding at the All Africa Primates Conference in Rosebank, Johannesburg, yesterday

Picture TYRONEARTHUR

Shell has cause for concern in Nigeria

Shell can expect difficult times in the Niger Delta, which has long been its most profitable operational area in the world, writes **Dulue Mbachu** in Lagos

THESE are trying times for the Shell oil company in Nigeria. A combination of budgetary and community problems is changing the face of business in the Niger Delta, Nigeria's main oil-producing region, and for long Shell's most profitable operational area in the world.

About 300 contract workers servicing Shell's operations lost their jobs a week ago, the first casualties of cuts made by the Nigerian government in the operational budget of the joint venture with Shell, Elf, Agip and the state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

"We budgeted \$2bn for 1997, but we have to make do with \$1.2bn, and many things will have to go because of that," says Victor Dania, spokesman for Shell Nigeria.

Budget cuts

In addition to being the operator of the joint venture which controls half of Nigeria's daily oil output of about two million barrels of crude, Shell holds a 30% stake, followed by Elf with 15%, Agip with 5% and NNPC holding 55%.

Contributions to the operational budget are made according to the ratio of equity holding. But in recent years the Nigerian government has either been late in making its contributions or made downright cuts in the budget, as was the case for this year.

Last August, Oil Minister Dan Etete gave an inkling of the government's misgivings when he accused the executives of oil firms of not giving a proper account of votes for the operational budgets and of "marginalising" Nigerian interests in the oil sector.

To underscore its suspicion of western oil companies at a time of frosty relations with western powers over the military government's human rights records, the Nigerian au-

thorities have also invited the Chinese to participate in the oil industry.

Shell has been forced by the cash constraints to cut down on oil exploration activities and review the contracts of oil services companies working on its concessions, terminating some of them. "However you paint it, it is a gloomy picture," says Dania, who is head of community affairs, environment and safety in the eastern division in Nigeria. "The first to go is oil exploration, and it is the least painful in the short run, but the most painful in the long run. If we don't find oil now, we can't produce in the near future."

Besides, the contractors being disengaged now are those that had been long established. They had "mobilised resources at relatively cheap cost. If they leave now, it will be more expensive to mobilise them in future," explained an official.

To add to Shell's worries, communities in the oil producing areas have become even more restive since the November 1995 execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight Ogoni minority rights activists (who had been campaigning against Shell's environmental records) over murder charges by the military government of Gen Sani Abacha.

In the first quarter of this year alone, the export of 1.14-million barrels of oil was deferred by Shell due to community disturbances and sabotage. There were also 35 incidents of oil spills during the same period — most of which the company blames on sabotage — spilling a total of about 9 010 barrels of crude oil.

Among the more prominent of such incidents occurring during the period was the shutdown in March of four flow stations pumping over 90 000 barrels of crude daily by youths of the Ijaw ethnic group in the western Niger Delta, aggrieved at the relocation by the government of a local council head-

quarters from their town.

About 127 Shell staff working on the flow stations were held hostage for four days before being released.

At about the same time, fighting between two communities in the eastern Nigeria Delta over a similar local government dispute resulted in the closure for about 10 days of the Nembe Creek flow station, from which the company pumps a quarter of about 500 000 barrels a day it produces in the eastern delta.

"The bottom line of the community disturbances in the oil areas," says Oronto Douglas of Environmental Rights Action — a local green nongovernmental organisation — "is a growing perception of inequity in the distribution of oil wealth, especially towards the oil producing areas."

Shell officials acknowledge that the oil communities are becoming increasingly militant, but also point to a demographic factor to explain the trend.

"There are quite a number of idle and clever people in the oil communities, university graduates and so on, who should be in the cities but are there in the villages causing a lot of problems," says Tari Benebo, Shell's head of environment in the eastern division.

"These youths, he says, 'have taken over the leadership of the communities from the more moderate elders, and like all young people everywhere, they are very impatient'."

Last week, while some communities were ordering the company out of their area over nonpayment of compensation claims awarded them by a court of appeal, a flow station shut down by Shell in the wake of the March disturbances around the city of Warri in the western division was vandalised by unknown persons.

"We will have to conduct a proper study of the flow station to ascertain the extent of the damage," said Chidozie Okonk-

wo, manager for community affairs and environment in the western division.

Shell suffers more from these disturbances because, among all the oil companies operating in Nigeria, it is in most contact with local communities.

Its oil mining leases cover 31 103km² of the 70 000km² Niger Delta (with a population of about seven million), with more than 90% of its active fields on shore.

Although Shell has huge reserves offshore, most of them remain untapped, unlike Mobil and Chevron who have most of their operations offshore and have relatively little contact with local communities.

Shell's response to its peculiar situation has been to spend more on community relations. While the budget for other departments was cut for this year, spending on community relations is growing, with some \$26m budgeted for the year, up from about \$19m spent last year. The company is also insisting it will not call for the protection of the Nigerian security forces.

Harmony

"We will not operate under the cover of any military force," said Dania.

"Where we can't work with the agreement of the community, we shut down. There's no way the entire Niger Delta can be policed if we are not in harmony with the communities."

However, the Niger Delta remains one of Shell's four most important operational areas around the world, contributing no less than 12% of the company's annual income, and with a production cost of under \$2 a barrel (compared to more than \$8 elsewhere) is the company's most profitable.

"Whatever the cost of community relations, there is still considerable room for profitable operations," said an official.

(226)

DD 16/7/97

Nigeria's great charade

(226) M+G 18-24/9/97

With Nigeria's elections dead before the voting has even begun, Wole Soyinka warns the world against falling for the hoax of 'democracy' propagated by Sani Abacha

RARELY has so much self-deception been hidden behind doublespeak, as we have been made to marvel at, in the business of commentators on General Sani Abacha's record in power in Nigeria

We are bemused, for instance, by plaudits for something variously titled "the democratic process", "elections", "a transition programme" It is not merely the media, but governments and their policy advisers that delude themselves and their constituencies with references to these non-events in accents of solemnity

The most recent "local government elections" are as good a place to begin as any — we shall proceed straight to facts

That was an election that was dead before the first vote was registered You do not describe as a democratic process any form of election in which you disqualify in advance every single individual who had ever spoken against a government in power or is identified or denounced as such

That so-called election was not simply flawed in this or that respect — it was a self-cancelled undertaking that had no foundation in law, constitution, or proceeding

You do not call a democratic process any activity that is preceded and governed by a decree that gives a dictator and his surrogates — state governors, military administrators, etcetera — absolute powers to disqualify any candidate before, during, or after elections The word for that is a charade A mockery

A pantomime An act of public ridicule A funeral wake

Even if you were sufficiently bedazzled by a few regimented lines of would-be voters, you surely must know that something is grievously wrong when, out of a 90-million population — the government's own very latest census figures with a declared 45% under the age of 15 — that same government announces that 65-million adults have registered for an election

Any election based on such premises is — *ab initio* — a hoax One does not have to have a degree in demography to know that someone, somewhere, is having a belly laugh at the expense of the nation and — crassly enough — at the entire discerning world

As for the five political parties supposed to be in this race, is there anyone still left in the world who does not recognise that these are merely five fingers of one leprous hand? That, by the way, is now common parlance within Nigeria

What we exposed to the world, from the very beginning of this

process, has already come to pass Affecting a show of unity — motivated naturally by the loftiest patriotic sentiments, determined to avoid all the partisan acrimony of the past etcetera, etcetera — the leaders of these parties have begun to call for a consensus candidate that would eliminate the necessity of a presidential election I leave any half-wit the formidable task of guessing who that consensus candidate is going to be

The grounds were prepared by a lavishly orchestrated tour of the United States by the charmen of all five parties, where they impressed the impressionable with their statesmanlike and affable interaction

Their follow-up tour of Europe is in the pipeline, so let all impressionable hosts in these parts prepare themselves for an extravaganza of an invasion of the flagbearers of Nigeria's New Age Democracy!

In the meantime, however, here are some indisputable facts for all such gullible entities to digest one of the credible presidential candidates, Dr Olu Saraki, had a narrow brush with death after a mysterious attack on his home that resulted in fatalities for the innocent

So instructive was that experience that Saraki quickly made a public announcement that he had abandoned all presidential ambitions and was content to vie solely for a senatorial seat

Yet another candidate, Dr Etebet, former minister of petroleum and founder of one of the five registered parties, the National Centre Party of Nigeria, and obvious presidential candidate for that party, was arrested and locked up — no reasons offered the public until today

Wonder of wonders, when Etebet returned from that educative experience, he did not merely renounce all presidential ambitions, publicly, he forsook the very party that he had founded to team up with another

That other party the United Nigeria Congress Party, need one add, had led the charge in drafting Abacha as presidential candidate Even the redoubtable warlord Emeka Ojukwu recently announced that he was burying his own ambitions, since, according to him, he had no wish to go in for a game of soccer only to be informed at the last moment that the match would be played by rules of rugby

As for human rights, a precondition, I would have thought, for embarking on a genuine process towards democracy, we may summarise that department by recalling that there was a writer called Ken Saro-Wiwa

Together with eight of his companion environmentalists, he was hanged by a process that revolted even the most hardened consciences of the world Condemnation was swift, and near universal

The International Commission of Jurists, Amnesty International, the Commonwealth of Nations' Human Rights Committee, the United Nations Special Rapporteurs, etcetera, etcetera — every investigating body pronounced those

executions as nothing but a barbaric act of judicial murder

We shall reserve for comment in another place the ongoing unscrupulous campaign by Abacha's henchmen to tarnish his memory by parading witnesses to his alleged guilt on the international circuit, long after his death

Well then, the Ogoni Nine are dead, but here comes the question what of those who are still alive, those who have been awarded seven, 10, 15 years and even life imprisonments under near identical procedures — in some cases even more cynical — to that very process of judicial lynching that has been so uncompromisingly condemned?

What of Chris Anyawu, Shehu Sanni, Boko Ransome-Kuti, Olusegun Obasanjo, Gwadabe, Bello-Fadile, Charles Obi, Shehu Yar'Adua, and untold others, some of whom have been horrendously tortured but all still held in prison?

And what of the president-elect of Nigeria himself, Moshood Abiola, who has been denied any form of trial at all under any system? What of his companions, similarly deprived of even a sham of a trial since the ascendancy of Nigeria's current monstrosity — Frank Kokon, the leader of the Petroleum Workers Union, George Mbah or Kunle Ajibade, both journalists? They all share the one common crime — dissent, and expression of dissent

We must continue to remind the world that among the hostages of this dictator are also the children of wanted dissidents, some of them between the ages of four and 14 years The age of innocence is no immunity under Abacha's rampage of impunity

Despite knowledge of the foregoing, there are still sensibilities that affect shock when we compare the state of oppression with the handy instance of apartheid South Africa — but why is this so difficult to grasp?

Both cases are instances of minority rule, sustained by a mechanism of state terror — murder, arson, kidnapping, hostage-taking Sharpeville and Soweto have been replicated and their atrocities surpassed in more than a few Nigerian cities

The world has yet to catch up with the scale of the recent slaughter of school children in Edo state, about three months ago mown down for protesting a 1 000% increase in their school fees But who recalls the fact that, since taking power, Abacha has merely continued the tradition that he established when, as Babangida's Number Two, he personally led a detachment of soldiers and ordered them to open fire on peaceful protesters, with heavy fatalities?

Habeas corpus is a dead-letter phrase, instead, just as in South Africa, the operative instrument of security is the 90-day-detention decree, infinitely renewable, a decree that makes, in its operations, even the 90-day-detention law of apartheid South Africa benevolent by comparison, even sparing in its applications Need we go on with further comparisons?

But, most crucial of all, there is the question what did happen to the authenticated elections of June 1993? That incubus squats over the future of Nigeria South Africa also had her elections Unlike the Nigerian, they were violent They were acknowledged by both winners and losers to be imperfect, yet they have laid a foundation for the future of a new South Africa

The elections of June 12 1993 will not disappear Any proposed solution outside of that framework is a futile act of compromise — the past will not release the Nigerian nation

Wole Soyinka, the playwright and outspoken critic of Nigeria's military rulers, is currently in exile



Meetings may resolve threat of production cuts

Nigeria's oil partners fear budget crunch

CT (NR) 23/7/97 (226)

FROM REUTER

Lagos — Nigeria's oil joint venture partners hoped a crucial meeting today with senior government officials would resolve a budget crisis they say could cut 1997 production by up to 5 percent and have damaging long-term effects, industry officials said yesterday.

"The whole industry will be going," a senior executive with one of the joint venture partners said.

"We are hoping for a budget increase of at least 40 percent which will stop us having to curtail our activities," he said.

Paul Caldwell, Mobil's Nigerian unit managing director, was quoted by the Guardian newspaper as saying expectations were high that the meeting would resolve the budget issue.

The partners, who also include Royal Dutch/Shell, Chevron, Elf Aquitaine, Texaco and Agip, complain they have been forced to cut back new projects, maintenance and exploration after an across-the-board cut to \$2.05 billion from a proposed \$3.32 billion budget.

"At some point things start to give, and they are doing that now," said one company official.

"Production could be 5 percent down by the end of this year if the funding problem is not resolved."

Echoes of the sentiment came from other companies.

"When there is a breakdown, for instance, maintenance is not as swift as it could be, or if there is a disturbance of some kind we may not be able to respond," said another official.

Offshore rigs have been moved to more productive areas, and Shell, the biggest producer, has laid off hundreds from its workforce of private contractors.

Even so, some government officials privately say they believe greed on the part of foreign companies lies behind their demands.

They point to the fact that production

has been stable or rising in recent years despite similar budget cuts.

But the companies warn that squeezing the industry can only go so far.

They say even if they are given higher budgets next year, it may take them the rest of the year to get back to 1996 levels before talking of an increase.

"We will cut investment right now and production will look good," said Caldwell.

"Next year and the following year you will really see declining impact in the nation's production."

Nigeria is utterly reliant on revenues from crude oil exports of about 2 million barrels a day, the vast majority pumped by the joint ventures, in which state-run Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation has an average 57 percent stake.

The ruling generals, who have tried to tighten government purse strings since coming to power in 1993, have not explained the reasoning behind cutting investment in Nigeria's most important revenue earner, other than to say cash is short.

So far they have also shunned privatization of the industry, regarded as strategic and in which vested interests are strong, to give it a freer hand with its own money.

Industry analysts say a government output target of 2.5 million barrels a day by the year 2000 looks increasingly unrealistic.

In the long term, oil producers put more hope in production-sharing contracts for deep offshore blocks, which will allow as much investment as needed while Nigeria takes its cut.

The meeting is due to take place in the capital Abuja with oil minister Dan Etete and officials from the planning and finance ministries.

Industry officials said others attending the important meeting would include officials from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and the National Economic Intelligence Committee.

(226)
**Abuja to get
own bourse**

BD 24/7/97

LAGOS — Nigeria plans a second stock exchange for its new capital, Abuja, to be independent of the one in the commercial capital Lagos

Newspapers said Finance Minister Anthony Ani had approved the establishment of another stock exchange, as recommended by a panel investigating Nigeria's capital markets

"As part of the capital market reforms a decision has been taken to break the monopoly of the Nigerian Stock Exchange," Ani said

The stock exchange has market capitalisation of more than 367-billion naira (\$4.4bn) and branches in most large Nigerian cities. Trade is slow and daily turnover is usually below one tenth of 1% of market capitalisation — Reuter

Plans for rival exchange stir Lagos traders

(226)
EJU OKOLO

CTBP 25/7/97
Lagos—Operators on the Lagos floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) expressed mixed feelings on Wednesday towards government plans for a second stock exchange in the federal capital Abuja, in central Nigeria

Anthony Ani, the finance minister, who announced the plans on Tuesday, said the aim was to break the monopoly of the existing market based in the commercial hub of Lagos, in the southwest

Many traders said the move was not unexpected, judging by Ani's previous pronouncements, but questioned the wisdom behind it

But Umar Faruk, a major investor in Nigerian equities, said a second exchange would help expand capital market activities throughout the country

He said the existing market was also not able to regulate its operations, making calls for a rival exchange realistic

The existing stock market was set up by private investors as the Lagos Stock Exchange in 1961 and later renamed the NSE. It has branches in Ibadan, Onitsha, Port Harcourt, Kaduna and Kano, but the bulk of trading is done on the Lagos floor. Last year, its officials said an Abuja branch was in the pipeline.

They said the exchange, with its market capitalisation of more than 367 billion naira (R20.25 billion), could play a key role in attracting more foreign and domestic capital, but the government has blamed it for not doing enough to attract more funds

However, exchange operators counter that not much could be done unless the state pursues a privatisation programme that would give it more depth. — Reuter

Plans for new Nigerian stock market under fire

BD 25/7/97 (226)

Hilary Anderson

LAGOS — The Nigerian government has come under fire from businessmen in the main industrial city Lagos for its plans to set up a new stock market in Abuja as part of a review of the country's capital market

Many businessmen see the move as an attempt to nationalise the capital market rather than liberalise it

Abuja is the seat of government in Nigeria, and the plans to establish a stock market there are part of the wider effort to move key economic activities away from Lagos to the capital

However, a senior finance ministry official said the move was an attempt to break the monopoly of the Lagos Stock Exchange and to improve the image of capital market operators

The proposed new Abuja stock market, to be called the Stock Exchange of Nigeria, is to have the status of setting standards against which other exchanges in the country are to compete

The move to Abuja has political

overtones because the north, where Abuja is located, is seen as the bastion of the ruling military, whereas the south is seen as the stronghold of those opposed to the current elite

Traders say it is a sad development because it is an attempt to nationalise an exchange that was doing quite well "We all know what nationalisation of the market will represent," said a trader, referring to the reputation of corruption within Nigeria's corporations

Nigeria was categorised last year by the international monitoring group Transparency International as the most corrupt country in the world.

The proposal to set up the Abuja stock market is based on the conclusion that the Lagos market has performed dismally This view is countered by spokesmen for the Lagos stock market who say it has made important advances in the past two years

In 1995 the Lagos Stock Exchange recorded foreign investment worth just more than \$2m Last year it recorded foreign investment of more than \$33m

Nigerian business urges privatisation

LAGOS — Nigeria's manufacturers sent an appeal to military ruler Gen Abacha yesterday bemoaning the state of national utilities and calling for faster privatisation as a long-term solution.

The Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria said the progressive collapse of state-run services had forced up costs and was making it ever more difficult to make money.

"Unless action is taken now, the key objective of the 1997 budget to achieve sustainable growth and development with a target annual

(226)
growth of 5.5% will not be realised," the message to Abacha said.

Nigeria has languished in recession since political and economic turmoil erupted in the wake of annulled 1993 elections.

Relative financial stability has been restored by Abacha but the business climate has grown ever harsher with the failure of petrol supplies, electricity and communications — all dependent on state-run utilities. Nigeria's ruling generals have resisted pressure from business and foreign lenders to privatise. — Reuter.

BD 29/7/97

Nigeria battles to break spiralling external debt

Dulue Mbachu

BD 30 / 7 / 97

(226)

LAGOS — Nigeria is seeking a new approach to the management of its external debt in a bid to break a four-year stalemate in negotiations with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Nigeria estimates its external debt to be \$28bn, but World Bank figures indicate it stands at around \$35bn, more than 65% of which is owed to the Paris Club of creditor nations

For four years now Nigeria has avoided taking new loans while negotiating a medium-term economic plan with the World Bank and IMF, the implementation of which is a condition for debt relief from the Paris Club.

But negotiations have stalled on a number of issues, including the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, especially in energy and telecommunications; the government's operation of a dual foreign exchange rate system (22 naira a dollar for special government transactions and 84 naira a dollar for others), and the petrol price, which the bank and the IMF say is below international rates at 11 naira per litre

Despite efforts in 1996, which saw the reduction of Nigeria's total debt stock by \$4.5bn, Finance Minister Anthony Ani said "debt overhang remains overwhelming".

Ani said "In the negotiations with the Paris Club for debt relief we are not looking for debt forgiveness — we are prepared to pay our debts. But we want a breathing space to be able to put our house in order and pay our debts as we can afford to"

The Nigerian authorities had proposed a freeze on interest charges for 15 to 20 years — time enough, it said, to use funds normally spent on servicing debt (about \$2bn a year) to revive industries and rebuild infrastructure, thereby raising the country's capacity to pay by increasing output

Divergence of opinion between Nigeria and the institutions has remained so strong that World Bank and IMF officials failed to turn up in Nigeria in May for the annual joint general review of the economy. When they did come in June it was to carry out a review of the financial sector only

World Bank and IMF officials in Nigeria say discrepancies in the debt figures have been caused by delayed interests and penalties, unpaid principal amounts and the interest charged on these unpaid principal amounts, totalling more than \$6bn

Nigeria fell into the debt trap when, with huge oil export receipts of more than \$35bn a year during the 1970s oil boom, it embarked on several large expenditure projects. These included steel mills, petrochemical and fertiliser plants, and big infrastructure projects such as the construction of the new federal capital of Abuja

When oil receipts fell drastically in the early 1980s, the government resorted to foreign borrowing, mostly short and medium-term loans, to finance the projects

A succession of debt reschedulings subsequently saw the external debt ballooning from \$4.3bn in 1980 to \$36.1bn a decade later. Today the burden remains more or less the same

ANALYSIS

Plea for Nigerian oil refineries to be privatised

Hilary Andersson

(226) BD 31/7/97

LAGOS — Business in Nigeria has asked the country's military leader Gen Sani Abacha to privatise the country's refineries as a solution to the six-month-old fuel crisis.

There can be no proactive private sector which can participate effectively in the economy without strong and efficient infrastructure support services, said a letter to Abacha released on Monday by the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria.

The key objective of the Nigerian government's budget this year was to achieve sustainable growth and development with a target annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 5.5%, but the fuel crisis has crippled economic activity in many parts of the country since January.

Astronomical fuel prices mean employees cannot get to work and the distribution of products has become costly. Consequently people are suffering while warehouses are brimming with a backlog of unsold goods.

The association complained that poor management of Nigeria's public companies is to blame for the crisis, also for the country's badly maintained roads and erratic supplies of power. The resulting situation has become very difficult for businesses, the letter read.

The oil industry is the most important sector of Nigeria's economy, as the bulk of the government's revenues are earned from oil exports. Yet Nigeria relies on imports for about half of its domestic fuel consumption needs.

Only three of Nigeria's four refineries are operational, and all are poorly maintained. Kaduna refinery, which is supposed to supply most of the north with fuel, was due for a complete overhaul this month but work has not started because the funds allocated for the project have not yet been released. Kaduna refinery has not had its turn-

around maintenance, due every two years, since 1992, and is operating at capacity.

The fuel shortage is so acute in the north that there is not enough fuel even to fill the pipeline leading from the refinery, and fuel is being transported by road.

Fuel imports to Nigeria were cut back at the start of the year as part of the government's effort to become self-sufficient, but the refineries were unable to cope with the pressure, leading to the shortage. Last month the government ordered the importation of fuel to prevent the frustration of from boiling over into violence.

It was tragic that a nation which produced crude oil and had four refineries had to import petroleum products, the association said.

The association has proposed a phased privatisation of the refineries by starting with one refinery to test the effect of privatisation. In addition, it has called for the boards of refineries to be re-established for more efficient management.

Two weeks ago Nigeria's petroleum resources minister, Dan Etete, called for the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation to be restructured along the lines of a commercial entity so that adequate funds could be raised for routine maintenance of the refineries.

Etete said \$1bn was needed to rehabilitate the country's four refineries but that the petroleum corporation should remain in government hands.

In this year's budget Abacha said the government was committed to the principle of privatisation, but he disappointed international bodies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as domestic business interests, by failing to announce a concrete privatisation programme.

In this year's budget Abacha said the government was committed to the principle of privatisation, but he disappointed international bodies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as domestic business interests, by failing to announce a concrete privatisation programme.

national community are calling for privatisation partly as a means of increasing transparency in the country's public corporations.

The problems of accountability were highlighted when a public row broke out recently between the oil and the finance ministers over where the money allocated for the repair of the refineries had gone.

Summit must seal

Nigeria's fate

MTG 1-7/8/97

(226)

As South Africa demands an apology for the Nigerian foreign minister's statement that Mandela is the black head of a white country, **Guinness Ohazuruike** urges action against the military dictatorship in Lagos

THE hydra-headed problem of Nigeria will again arise when Commonwealth heads of states meet at their annual summit in Edinburgh in October. The Commonwealth suspended Nigeria from membership two years ago and its Ministerial Action Group is now due to submit recommendations on what to do. To a watchful public there is nothing to suggest that Nigeria's military cabal has done anything positive to pacify the hard feelings and outrage generated at the last summit by its atrocities.

To make matters worse, the much-touted, but discredited democratisation programme hastily put in place by President Sani Abacha suffered yet another gross abuse when the dictator recently announced that the remaining set of elections — no, selections — have been indefinitely postponed to next year for no clear reasons. Reasons are hardly ever given for acrobatic displays of absolute power.

Those who invested any atom of belief or suspended disbelief in Abacha's "Military-Assisted-Democracy" or "Mutual-Assured-Destruction" must now hide in shame for as much as they are willing to give "MAD" the benefit of the doubt, so much is Abacha determined to disappoint them.

The doubting-Thomases are once more vindicated. Abacha is determined to succeed himself, or to make room for another set of miscreants in national costume.

This makes the coming Commonwealth summit a critical test for all

wealth leaders to show understanding or perhaps relax the suspension. No doubt some civilians have been bribed, co-opted, harassed and humiliated to support the charade organised by the military to ridicule democracy.

If the summit loses courage, it might become party to grand plans to abort people's aspirations, because how credible or independent are the five permitted political parties, when each, in a language similar to the other, urge Abacha to succeed himself?

Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka has aptly described the parties as "five fingers of a leprous hand".

If Abacha succeeds himself or succeeds in installing his civilian cronies, it will make nonsense of all democratic principles and certainly commence a round of anarchy and bloodbath never seen before in Africa, with a resultant refugee problem, a human flood, across the continent.

Nigeria is degenerating into another shame of Africa. It behoves the Commonwealth and the entire world to halt this drift and rescue the vast nation from the atrocities of a few.

Among the leading participants at the Commonwealth summit, President Nelson Mandela should see himself as the ambassador of all Nigerians, representing their hopes and aspirations aware of the grave

consequences of his failing to promote their cause.

Mandela cannot recuse himself from the exalted position of Africa's number one hero. But his struggles cannot be said to have finished or succeeded if Africans in Nigeria remain in bondage.

Past reminder: An embargo on Nigerian oil should be a consideration at the summit

Nigerians look to him for freedom and smiles and the Commonwealth summit is the best forum to launch the needed diplomatic onslaught against the military dictatorship.

Guinness Ohazuruike is a Nigerian seeking refuge in South Africa



Inflation figures hint at success for Nigeria

The drop in inflation signals success by the military government, but falls short of overall growth requirements, writes Hilary Andersson

BD 6/8/97

LAGOS — Year-on-year inflation in Nigeria has fallen to single digit figures for the first time in six years, signalling the partial success of Nigeria's military government in stabilising the economy over the past three years

The figures, published by the Federal Office of Statistics, showed that inflation dropped to 9.9% year on year in May from 14.2% a month earlier and 31% the year before

The average of the 12 months, a figure which is used by the government to set its economic targets, stood at 19.3%, down from 21% the previous month

While international bodies, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, believe the real figures may be 10 to 15% higher, international bankers say the governments statistics are credible

"Our macroeconomy is close to stabilising," said one banker in the industrial capital Lagos last week

"Inflation and interest rates are coming down, the money supply is under control and the exchange rate is stable," he said

"The problem is that this is our only achievement for the past few years, and what we really want to see is measures that will lead to growth," he continued.

Few business operators are excited about the drop in inflation, and they point to the continuing recession in the country, which some see as a result of the government's tight fiscal policy

The government has not yet approved a capital expenditure budget for 1997, or released funds allocated to various sectors in the budget

Vicious cycle

(226)

International oil companies complain they are being forced to cut back operations because of a 40% allocation to the oil sector in the last budget.

The drop in inflation has had little impact on the many Nigerian who are on fixed salaries, and who are suffering because of the government has tightened the purse strings significantly as part of its macroeconomic policy

Bankers say the spiral of economic depression will not stop until it becomes cheaper to operate businesses, and this will require spending on infrastructure countrywide

"Right now the economy is trapped in the vicious cycle which all starts with the high costs of running a business," said a Lagos banker

"High costs combined with the low spending power of the population forces companies to have low margins, which means low investment which of course means low output, and so the cycle continues," he said

Spending power in Nigeria has been significantly effected by a fuel crisis which has virtually crippled Lagos, as well as the northern town of Kano and the capital Abuja, by forcing prices of all transport and therefore most basic goods up

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are pushing Nigeria to launch a major privatisation programme, sceptical, like many businessmen, that simply pumping funds into the development of country's infrastructure will help kick-start the economy.

Nigeria's public companies stand accused of massive corruption. The lack of transparency in public corporations was recently highlighted when the Finance Minister Chief Anthony Am accused Oil Minister Chief Dan Etete of squandering money which had been allocated for the repair of the country's oil refineries.

Nigeria's military government disappointed western countries and the domestic business community when it failed to announce either a comprehensive privatisation programme or the dropping of its controversial dual exchange rate system, as expected, in this year's annual budget

Nigerian opposition asks EU for oil industry

Hilary Andersson

LAGOS — Nigeria's main umbrella opposition group, the National Democratic Coalition, has called on the European Union (EU) to impose full sanctions on Nigeria's oil industry.

"You can see that the current military government is a law unto itself, and to change this drastic action is needed," said coalition chairman Abraham Adesanya.

This is the first time details of the recommendations have been made public. The coalition has recommended international sanctions on Nigerian oil and on companies servicing oil producers.

"We also want the assets of government officials frozen," said Adesanya.

"People say sanctions will hurt the ordinary Nigerian but I don't believe that's true." There is deep scepticism in the international community about the military's sincerity in its promise to hand over to a democratically elected government after elections set for next year.

The EU imposed a range of sanctions on Nigeria in 1993 when Gen Sani Abacha came to power following the annulment of democratic presidential elections.

After the execution of minority rights activist Ken Saro Wiwa in 1995, the EU imposed an arms embargo and restric-

tions on bilateral aid and technical co-operation. The Commonwealth and the US imposed similar sets of sanctions.

Organisations representing foreign business interests in Nigeria oppose further sanctions, believing Abacha's government has brought some sanity to the economy. After a dubious start in 1994 when he fixed exchange and interest rates, Abacha made a dramatic U-turn, legalising the autonomous foreign exchange markets where the Nigerian currency, the naira, is now freely traded.

Since then inflation has been brought under control, and some sanity has been restored to the financial sector thanks to a

military task force on financial malpractices which has landed large numbers of well-to-do bankers in jail.

Significant economic growth remains elusive, however, and international financial institutions, including the World Bank, were disappointed that government failed to introduce a privatisation programme in this year's budget.

Political forces are more concerned about the government's human rights record, which has not improved.

The EU produced a tough statement on Nigeria at its meeting last month to review the country's progress towards democracy. The organisation proposed

tightening control over existing sanctions on visas, but left open the question of imposing further sanctions.

Diplomats and political commentators believe it is unlikely that any one western country would be prepared to sacrifice its own interests and impose oil sanctions on Nigeria, a key oil exporting nation.

However, European attitudes to the Nigerian government have hardened since Labour came to power in the UK.

□ Meanwhile, Sapa reports that the military government has released \$145m to the state petroleum corporation to begin repairing ailing refineries. Their problems have led to fuel shortages.

(226)

BD 7/8/97

sanctions

Nigerian central bank warns anyone who'll listen to beware of fraudsters

Star 8/8/97 (226)

REUTERS

Lagos - Nigeria's central bank and police warned this week that despite their efforts Nigerians remained prominent in international fraud and told foreign businesses to watch out for offers too good to be true

"This cancer-like scam known as advance-fee fraud in spite of various measures taken by the government has continued to grow at an alarming rate," the central bank's foreign operations director, Mahe Rasheed, told a news conference here

He said that a multi-million advertising campaign was being prepared, to be placed in foreign media to urge greedy, and unwary, businesses to be careful who they deal with.

"There has been no case of an innocent (foreign) victim who participated in the scam. The various 'business proposals' manifest fraudulent intention which should ordinarily put any respectable corporation or individual to inquiry," Rasheed said

Known locally as "419", after the section of the penal code

which deals with it, advance fee fraud has become a speciality of Nigerian criminals

The deal involves the fraudster approaching a foreign company by fax, claiming to be a senior official of the central bank or state oil company, who has acquired a large sum of money which he needs to forward to a foreign bank account

Anyone who responds is trapped into demands for ever-increasing "mobilisation fees", bribes and taxes. Some even visit Nigeria and are taken to fake offices where more demands for money are made. Millions of dollars are involved.

In one case an American businessman lost more than R24-million, and the central bank says it returns at least R4.7-million a year to foreigners who inadvertently send cash to the real central bank account instead of to the fraudsters.

Rasheed said the bank had also returned gifts of silk ties and shirts which had been sent as bribes to senior officials

"The victims/villains sometimes explain away their involve-

ment or rationalise their mistakes, but have so far failed to explain their participation in questionable transactions"

Africa's most populous nation has developed an unenviable reputation in the outside world, not only for fraud but also as a staging point in the international drugs trade

Its military rulers have been criticised by Western countries for alleged human rights abuses and lack of democracy

Police Commissioner Fareeda Waziri told the news conference the police force had picked up more than 100 people accused of involvement in fraud and had confiscated cars, electrical goods and even carpets from their houses as possible compensation

But Nigeria's courts, she explained, all notoriously slow and entangled in endless procedural wrangling, had ensured there had been no convictions.

"It's a case of come today or come tomorrow, one excuse or the other. The judiciary is there but there has to be a realisation that if we are fighting together there is no place for disharmony"

Foreign investors fight shy of Nigeria

ET (M) 11/8/97 (226)

ELU OKOLO

Grant for refinery upkeep suspended

Lagos — Doubt created by Nigeria's military rulers over a stalled privatisation programme is discouraging foreigners from investing in Nigerian shares, the stock exchange said on Friday.

In its half-yearly report, the exchange said between January and June this year new foreign investment was \$8,6 million, against \$28,2 million in the last half of last year and \$4,8 million in the first half of last year.

"Government indecision on the issue of privatisation is making potential foreign investors look elsewhere for much of their investment," the report said.

General Sani Abacha, the military ruler, dashed the hopes of local business and foreign lenders alike when his 1997 budget said privatisation could only take place after further research.

The exchange has consistently said it favours government divestment from telecommunications and power generation.

The manufacturers' association recently called for a start to privatisation of oil refineries, whose failure paralyses the economy for weeks on end and has forced Nigeria, which exports crude oil, to import fuel.

Abacha and Anthony Ani, the finance minister, last year built up hopes the state would pull out of inefficient utilities and even begin to sell its holding in the huge oil sector.

But business analysts say the military and regional interests which dominate Nigerian politics are too entwined with the state-run bodies to make it possible to sell them off without stepping on powerful toes.

Nevertheless, the exchange said despite the disappointment in interest from foreign investors, market activity was expected to increase this year.

"The indications are that the uptrend in overall market activity will continue through the second half of the year," the report said.

Average daily turnover increased to 47,5 million naira

Lagos — Nigeria's finance ministry has suspended a 12 billion naira (about \$100 million) grant for the upkeep of the country's refineries, a senior official said on Friday. The grant would have been used to repair and maintain the refineries.

The Independent Vanguard quoted a senior official at the ministry as saying: "We have advised the accountant general that the finance ministry has cancelled the release."

The minister on Wednesday said the ministry had received money from the finance ministry which would be used for the maintenance of the refineries.

The official also informed the sudden action of the finance minister. The Vanguard reported.

The official also said the finance minister publicly criticised the other last month over the release of funds to the oil industry.

Lack of state funds to maintain Nigeria's refineries, which have a combined capacity of 47,000 barrels a day, has forced the nation to import fuel. — Reuter

(R2,7 million) in the first half of the year from 17,9 million naira a year earlier.

But at less than 0,014 percent of total market capitalisation it is still tiny compared to other stock markets, even on Africa's undeveloped bourses.

On Friday, the all share index had risen 14,0 percent since the start of the year against 14,6 percent for the same period last year.

Shares have been under pressure since the end of April, when a string of poor company results combined with gloomy predictions for sub-Saharan Africa's largest economy triggered a tide of selling which has yet to abate. — Reuter

Abacha's corruption crackdown begins to

bd 12/8/97

(22b)

FOREIGN investors play a significant role in perpetuating corruption in the developing world, says Peter Eigen, chairman of the Berlin-based international monitoring group Transparency International.

Eigen made this comment at the launch of the organisation's 1997 Corruption Percentage Index report, which ranks the world's most corrupt countries.

Although developing countries fared worse than western nations in the Transparency International report, published on July 31, the corruption was not restricted to nationals of the developing countries, said Eigen.

"We must bear in mind that many of these business people are part of the problem," he said, pointing out that for German businesses there was the added incentive that bribes could be written

off against the tax bills.

In Nigeria, corruption is so widespread many foreign businessmen see paying bribes as the only viable way to operate. They comment that kickbacks on contracts, known locally as "PR payments", are virtually unavoidable.

On smaller contracts, the average kickback is 25%, on bigger contracts it is between 10% and 15%, said one businessman based in the Nigerian capital Abuja.

And on top of the real corruption, there is plenty going on that cannot be measured, he said. A lot is being traded on favours, a practice well in line with the Nigerian tradition.

Nigeria was ranked the most corrupt nation on earth for the second year in a row by Trans-

parency International, while Denmark, Finland and Sweden won the top ranking as the least corrupt.

The Corruption Percentage Index measures the extent to which perceived corruption in a country deters foreign investment. The survey is based on the perceptions of political analysts, businessmen, and the general public.

In Nigeria, bribes are necessary for the simplest operations, such as reconnecting a telephone line or even getting a telephone bill. As just one of its many money-making scams, the government-owned telephone company Nitel often disconnects lines before supplying the customer with a bill, claiming that the customer's payments are in arrears.

Nepotism rules the business world, and fake documents of almost any kind can be easily bought on many street corners in the main commercial city Lagos, or in the city known to be the centre of corruption in Nigeria — Benin city. In both places, a blank receipt can be purchased, with the company imprint and invoice number of your choice.

In spite of Transparency International's latest report, though, a range of opinion across the foreign business community in Nigeria holds that the culture of corruption has decreased significantly since military leader Gen Sani Abacha came to power in 1993.

Abacha has set up a number of military task forces to try to restore sanity to the financial sector,

particularly the banks.

Last year the banking sector was rocked by the attentions of a task force called The Failed Banks Tribunal which was established to end financial malpractices in the banks. Scores of prominent bankers, who had traditionally been seen as above the law, were convicted of fraud by the tribunal and thrown into the criminals' sections of the country's prisons — sometimes still clad in their business suits.

A crackdown on corruption in the country's ports has also hit a number of European businesses, including the transport forwarding companies Panalpina, a Swiss company, and Coastal Services

"Money just isn't thrown around any more like it used to

be," said a Lagos-based banker. A clear message was being sent from the top that corruption was no longer acceptable, he said.

Abacha's style is different from that of his predecessor, Gen Ibrahim Babangida, who was far more accepting of the culture of corruption.

However, foreign diplomats in Nigeria say this does not mean the top ranks of the current regime are any less corrupt.

A recent row between the oil and the finance ministers over where millions of dollars allocated for the repair of the country's refineries have ended up bears testimony to this. Political observers explain Abacha's approach by saying he may be planning to stand as a civilian candidate in presidential elections which are scheduled for August next year — Financial Times

Spotlight on Nigeria

(226) Souetan 20/8/97

LONDON – South Africa's stand on the ongoing difficulties facing the democratic movement in Nigeria is sure to be tested when Commonwealth secretary general Chief Emeka Anyaouku meets President Nelson Mandela this week.

Anyaouku will be in South Africa from tomorrow until Saturday. Afterwards he will see president Sam Nujoma in Namibia and stay there until Monday.

Anyaouku is also due to meet key policymakers from both countries to discuss preparations for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland from October 24 to 27.

This visit follows Anyaouku's series of bilateral meetings in Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia.

The Commonwealth Secretariat said from London that the discussions in South Africa and Namibia will cover issues due to come up for discussion in Edinburgh.

These include Commonwealth trade, investment and development, the theme of this year's meeting, new membership of the Commonwealth, and recent political and economic developments in the region and beyond.

Regular consultations

The visit to Southern Africa is part of Anyaouku's regular consultations with government leaders prior to Commonwealth summits, and it is sure to include one of the most pressing questions on the Edinburgh agenda: Nigeria.

Nigeria was suspended in 1995 when, as Commonwealth heads of government met in Auckland, New Zealand, the military regime executed nine pro-democracy activists, including writer-environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa.

Since then, the Commonwealth has given the Nigerian government not just two years, as prescribed in Commonwealth rules, but three to effect a return to democracy.

Democratic elections have been promised for October next year, but last month Nigerian and international human rights and pro-democracy groups warned members of the eight-nation Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) that, at the present rate, these elections were unlikely to succeed.

South Africa's Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo is a CMAG member.

During CMAG's two days of hearings in London, the ministers suspended Sierra Leone on the basis of the military regime's refusal to restore democratic rule.

It also ruled that the Gambia, where democracy was threatened, should be given technical support to reinforce the limited transition in progress there.

CMAG chairman Stan Mudenge said that in

Chief Anyaouku arrives in SA this week to solicit President Mandela's position on the Nigerian regime ahead of the Commonwealth summit, writes **Tyrone Seale...**



President Nelson Mandela

Nigeria's case, expulsion had not been ruled out, but that a decision would only be known next month when the CMAG reports its Edinburgh recommendation.

Mudenge said Nigeria's military rulers had undertaken to hold democratic elections, and that the ball was now in their court.

In their evidence, the Nigerian pro-democracy groups said African states had a special role to play in bringing about Nigeria's return to democracy.

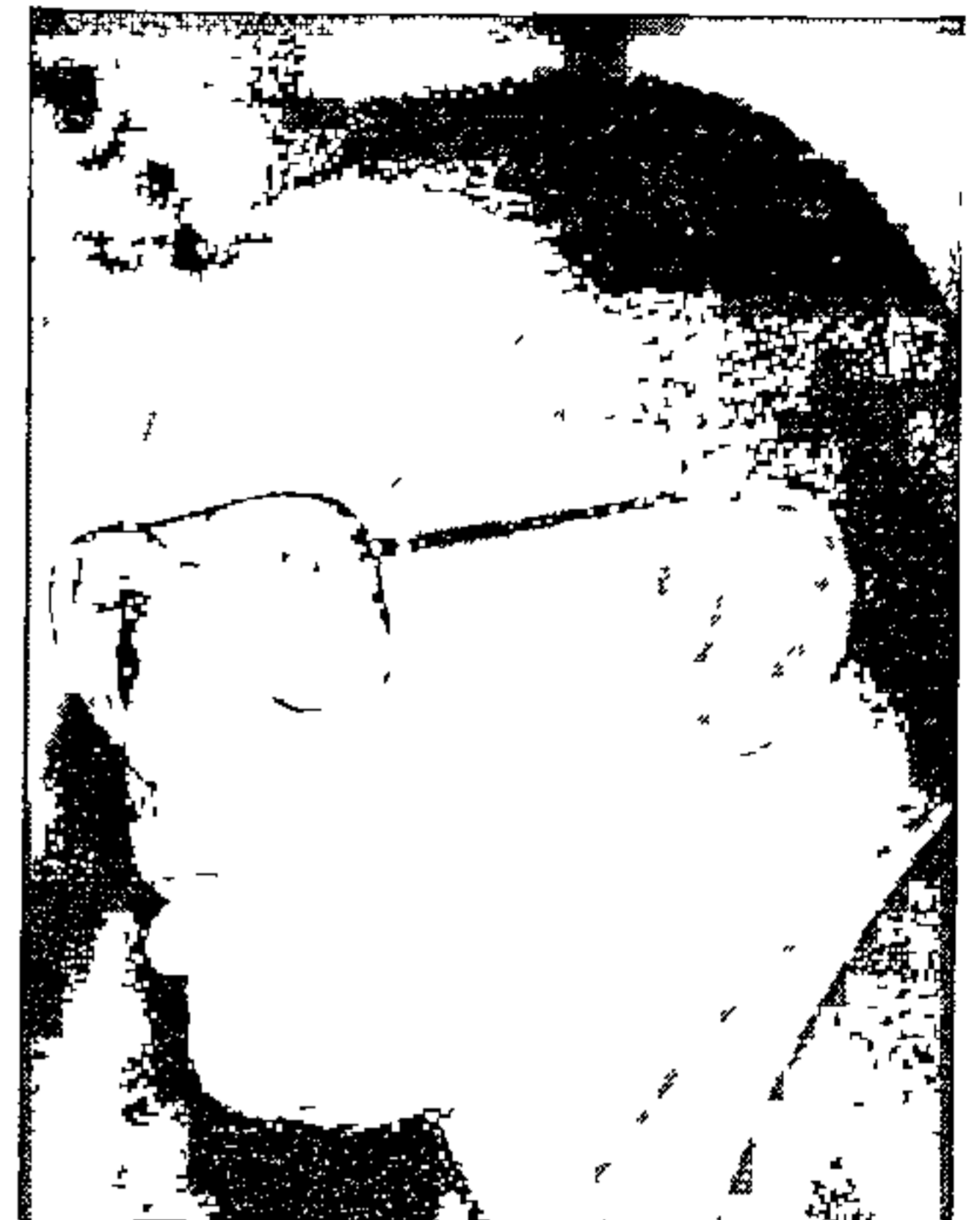
Mudenge disagreed, saying that no such role had been defined for the African members of his group, which also includes Canada and Britain.

Tony Lloyd, the British cabinet minister tasked with an Africa portfolio, indicated at the time of the CMAG talks that he was inclined to believe pro-democracy activists' claims that the Nigerian regime's preparations for elections were a scam.

He intimated that Britain would be willing to vote for Nigeria's expulsion when the heads of government met in Edinburgh. Nzo said he would abide by the CMAG finding.

He also said he had difficulty assessing whether the groups interviewed by the Commonwealth visitors could be taken to represent mass opinion in Nigeria.

During his visit to South Africa and Namibia, Anyaouku is sure to explore how these countries expect to vote in October.



Chief Emeka Anyaouku

Critics of Commonwealth action in Africa over the past two years argue that when it comes to less populated states with weaker economies, the 53-nation association is swift to act, while it puts off tough decision-making when it involves a populous economic giant like Nigeria.

In his talks this week, Anyaouku will want to put paid to such scepticism. In a different vein, he will also want to investigate ways to honour Mandela at the Edinburgh summit, which will be the latter's second, and probably his last, as head of state.

Biennial summit

The biennial summit will be held in Britain for the first time in 20 years, its sense of celebration enhanced by the golden wedding anniversary of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

The summit will end three days before Prince Charles begins a five-day visit to South Africa at Mandela's invitation. — *Independent Foreign Service*

● More than 10,000 people attended the launch last weekend of a new movement for the protection of the oil-rich communities of Nigeria's southern Niger-Delta region.

The Chicoco Movement claims to defend the rights of ethnic minorities in the region, according to a document handed out at the launch. — *Sapa-AFP*

Shell's pipelines sabotaged in delta

CT (BE) 20/8/97 (226)

FROM REUTER

Lagos — Shell, the biggest oil-producing company in Nigeria, said yesterday saboteurs had hacked into its pipeline in the troubled Niger Delta and spilled 2 000 barrels of crude oil

"They cut open a protective cage around a pipeline manifold at Isampou, in the Ekeremo local government area, and opened a dram valve to release the oil," Shell said

"We are now trying to organise a cleanup but currently communities are preventing our emergency teams getting to the site," said Joshua Udofia, the general manager of Shell's western division

The company said oil production was not affected

Shell is frequently the target of attack by restive communities angry that they have not benefited from the oil produced in their backyard.

The company is at present cleaning up an oil spill in the remote village of Aleibri where about 1 000 youths rallied on Saturday demanding a better deal from oil companies. The spill in Aleibri occurred on March 18, and Shell says it was also caused by sabotage

The Shell said the Isampou spill was reported on August 12, and a joint investigation team of the police, the communities' representatives, the oil authorities and Shell agreed the cause was sabotage. Udofia said sabotage was being used as a way of getting money from oil companies

So far this year more than 36 500 barrels of oil have been spilled from Shell's facilities in 41

Nigeria turns to Total to run Kaduna plant

Lagos — The Nigerian government had contracted French oil company Total to run the activities of the Kaduna Refinery and Petrochemicals Company in the north central state, state radio reported yesterday

The contract, valued at between \$100 million and \$220 million, included the cost of the turnaround maintenance of the facility

A spokesman for the company said the contract had been signed last July. He said the company had asked the Nigerian government to offer technical assistance in the form of a contract but no contract had been signed

The company's Nigerian operations were hit by a series of shutdowns in the oil industry, the failure of which had led to a crisis in the country

The inability of the company to meet its designed capacity of 100 000 barrels a day, due to shortcomings in the distribution network, had led to a crisis of fuel supply which had paralysed Africa's biggest and oldest refinery at a time when

separate incidents of sabotage. These accounted for 81 percent of the oil spilled from its sites, the company said

Shell pumps around half of Nigeria's crude oil production of over two million barrels a day in a joint venture with state-run Nigerian National Petroleum

50 Nigerians die in clashes over siting of local govt

(226)

CT 20/8/97

LAGOS. Clashes between two feuding communities in Osun, a province in south-western Nigeria, have left up to 50 people dead

A curfew was imposed in Ife and Modakeke on Sunday, but some people were burnt alive in unrest in the two towns on Monday.

The fighting erupted after the local government decided last Thursday to move its headquarters from Modakeke to Oke-Ogbo, an Ife-controlled town

The headquarters had been moved to Modakeke in March from Enuwa, where they had been accommodated in the former palace of the traditional Ife king.

After Thursday's decision, about

5 000 youths from Modakeke took to the streets of Ife. They chanted war songs and insulted the Ife monarch.

The march sparked clashes, but after the arrival of riot police from neighbouring Ibadan and Osogbo, subsided by Sunday afternoon.

Residents said the latest attacks had taken place in the outskirts of the two towns and nearby villages where riot police had not been deployed.

Many more people fled their homes yesterday. Shops were closed and food prices had more than trebled in the two towns.

Police searched the few vehicles that appeared on the streets. — Sapa-AFP

Clashes in Nigeria leave up to 50 dead

(226) 60 2018 197
LAGOS — Clashes between two feuding communities in southwestern Nigeria's Osun state had left up to 50 dead, residents and news reports said.

Despite the curfew imposed in Ife and Modakeke on Sunday, some people were burnt alive during unrest on Monday in the two towns, witnesses said.

The fighting erupted after a decision last Thursday by the local government to relocate its headquarters from Modakeke to Oke-Ogbo, an Ife-controlled town. The headquarters had been relocated to Modakeke in March from Enuwa, where it had been housed in the former palace of the traditional Ife king.

After the reversal about 5,000 youths from Modakeke took to the streets of Ife chanting war songs and insulting the Ife monarch, Oba Okunade Sijuade. The march sparked clashes that peaked overnight on Saturday but subsided by Sunday afternoon with the arrival of riot police, sources said.

An uneasy calm reigned in both towns yesterday, with shops remaining closed and police searching the few vehicles plying the streets. However, many people continued to flee their homes. — Sapa-AFP.

AFRICAN BUSINESS

Industrialists use every available forum to solicit investments

Nigerian firms join state in urgent push for foreign funds

ET(BR) 21/8/97 (226)

TOYE OLORI

Lagos — Nigerian industrialists have joined government in its campaign to bring more foreign investments into their country

Apart from trade and investment missions abroad during which government policies and improved security in the country are explained to their foreign counterparts, the industrialists now use every available forum to solicit foreign investment inflow

The latest in the group of those seeking foreign participation in the revitalisation of the nation's economy is the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria which urged foreign investors to take advantage of the diverse investment opportunities in Nigeria to invest in it

"There are immense opportunities in the nation's agriculture, health, education, technology, solid mineral and communication sectors where foreigners can exploit for the mutual benefit of Nigeria and their countries," said Chief Rufus Giwa, the president of the association

In Lagos, Giwa urged foreign investors to exploit the opportunities that abounded in the Export Processing Zone at the southeastern port of Calabar, with the provision of other complementary projects at the zone

"Consumers demand high quality but cheaper goods which only the injection of foreign capital can adequately provide," he said

The zone, which officials said was 90 percent ready, is suffering from Nigeria's political crisis which has led to the postponement of its official commissioning since 1995

From the 80 factories expected to be located in the zone on the 172ha area, only six are on the ground. Four of these are joint ventures between Nigerian and Asian firms

As a means of attracting business to the zone, the government had offered incentives to investors which include exemption

from all taxes, levies and custom duties, repatriation of foreign capital investment in the zone at any time and allowing 100 percent foreign ownership of enterprises in the zone

But the political and human rights problems of Nigeria which led to limited sanctions by the European Union, the Commonwealth and the US, have led investors from the West to shy away from the zone established in 1992

Political and human rights problems aside, foreign investors complain of an un-

favourable investment climate, insecurity and inconsistent government policies

Last week, some Nigerian firms lost an estimated \$50 million in foreign capital investment as a result of "harsh operating environment, infrastructure and policy inconsistency"

The investment inflow by

some American portfolio investors which was expected to be channelled through the Nigerian stock exchange could have involved 35 quoted companies

Dan Montano, a representative and leader of foreign investors, announced here that the decision not to push ahead with the investment was because the operating environment in Nigeria was not conducive

Montano, who arrived in Nigeria last week to finalise business proposals with the exchange and some local investors, described Nigeria as "a high-risk country with high returns"

He added that inability to privatise government parastatals as well as continued regulation of the economy made it risky to invest in

"Though Nigeria has potential for growth, foreign capital that would have naturally come to the country is being diverted to countries with less restrictive entry visas, such as Hong Kong, China, South Korea and the Ukraine, he said — Independent Foreign Service

**Last week
some Nigerian
firms lost about
\$50 million in
foreign capital
investment**

Ogoni leader visits SA

Business Day Reporter

PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela was "most unlikely" to give an audience to the president of the Nigerian Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (Mosop), who is in SA to campaign for Nigeria's expulsion from the Commonwealth at next month's summit in Edinburgh, official sources said at the weekend.

SA was taking a more cautious line on the regime of Nigerian strongman Sani Abacha and was unlikely to back the expulsion call, they said.

Mosop leader Ledum Mitee has reportedly called for Mandela to take a stronger stance on Nigeria, saying that other Commonwealth countries had responded positively to his campaign and were waiting for Mandela to take a position.

Government sources said the world had "snubbed" Mandela when he had called for Nigeria's expulsion after the 1995 execution of Ogoni activist Ken Saro Wiwa, and that he did not wish to be placed in this position again.

Relations between the countries were improving and there was more scope for promoting reform in Nigeria through diplomacy instead of "condemnation and passing resolutions". There were more pressing problems in Africa, including Congo, Sudan and Sierra Leone, the sources said.

BD 25/8/97

(226)

Soldiers 'killed thousands of Nigerians'

Nonavenda Mathlane

MORE than 3 000 Nigerians had been killed by soldiers in Ogoniland in Nigeria since the Commonwealth Organisation suspended the Nigerian membership in 1995, visiting Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People president Ledum Mitee said yesterday. Mitee is on a four-day visit to SA to lobby for the expulsion of Nigeria from the Commonwealth. Mitee said the situation in Nigeria had deteriorated, particularly in Ogoniland where villagers feared seeking medical attention at hospitals for fear of abduction by soldiers who were now permanently deployed in the area. He said more than 30 000 Nigerians had been displaced while some had sought asylum in neighbouring countries. Mitee, who is exiled from Nigeria and lives in London, said he had held talks with Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad, top-ranking African National Congress members and a number of influential South Africans. He said South Africans had a moral obligation to call for the expulsion of Nigeria from the Commonwealth, and the call should be accompanied by other punitive measures such as sanctions against Nigeria. Supporting Mitee's call, SA Nigerian Support Group spokesman Rashied Gallant said SA must vote for the expulsion of Nigeria from the Commonwealth because it was clear Nigerian military ruler Gen Sani Abacha was not prepared to usher in democracy in that country. He said his movement was concerned about African leaders who seemed silent about atrocities committed on the continent.

Call for enforced law on compensation

Jacob Dlamini

CAPE TOWN — There was a need for effectively enforced legislation to provide for the compensation of workers injured in the course of their employment, Congress of SA Trade Unions spokesman Kenneth Creamer said yesterday. In a submission to Parliament's labour committee during hearings on the Occupational Injuries and Diseases Amendment Bill, Creamer said compensation laws should be in line with the principle of redressing historical imbalances. Workers faced health and safety problems which needed the serious attention of Parliament. Present law on compensation suffered from three weaknesses: lack of a remedy for historically excluded black workers; discrimination against low-wage earners and the failure to cover domestic workers. He called for a special amendment to allow workers who suffered permanent disability in excess of 30% before 1977 to be given compensation. Creamer also called for the bill to be amended to allow for scaling up benefits for low-paid workers and for coverage to be extended to domestics. There were fundamental policy shifts which needed to be made to give the bulk of workers access to compensation.



Movement for the survival of the Ogoni People president Ledum Mitee at yesterday's press conference. Mitee is on a four-day visit to SA to lobby for the expulsion of the Nigerian government from the Commonwealth Heads of State. Picture COBUS BODENSTEIN

Official takes a hard line and calls for more private oil facilities

Nigeria won't sell state refineries

CT (MR) 29/8/97 (22b)

FROM REUTER

Abuja, Nigeria — Nigeria would not sell its four oil refineries as advocated by industry executives, but private investors could set up their own refineries, a state official said on Wednesday.

"Government has no immediate plan to privatise the already established refineries," said Sam Aluko, the National Economic Intelligence Committee head.

"Those who are genuinely interested in investing in the sub-

sector should be prepared to invest in the industry by establishing their own refineries."

Nigeria's state-run refineries have a production capacity of 445 000 barrels a day, enough to serve the entire west African market. But because of poor management they do not produce enough for domestic consumption.

The result is a perennial shortage of fuel in Africa's most populous nation, requiring large imports of refined oil products to meet domestic demand.

Many Nigerian oil industry experts say if the refineries are run by private concerns they will be more efficient and make profits. But Aluko said "Those calling for the privatisation are insincere. They are people who just want to take over the downstream oil sub-sector for selfish reasons."

Last week Nigerian state radio said the government had contacted Total, the French oil company, to run the Kaduna Refinery and Petrochemicals Com-

pany in the north for three years.

Total said it was in talks with Nigeria to offer technical assistance for the refinery but no contract had been signed.

In the past two years the government has tried to lease out the refineries to prospective investors to manage but few have shown any interest.

Aluko said the state had issued two licences for private refineries since 1994 but the recipients had so far not done anything tangible about the projects.

SA pay-TV firms succeed in Nigeria

Bd 1/9/97. (226)

Dulue Mbachiu

LAGOS — SA firms keen to break into the West African market may have a few things to learn from the emergence of M-Net and Multichoice as the leading pay television service providers in Nigeria

With satellite transmission to the area beginning in the middle of 1992, cable rebroadcasts followed in November 1993, when Multichoice Africa went into a joint venture with Nigerian businessmen. Now it is a leader in the market, with a chentele including the biggest hotels in the country.

According to Richard Price, finance manager for Multichoice (Nigeria), the main attraction Nigeria had for their business was the sheer size of the population. "Without doubt, Nigeria is certainly the biggest market in Africa outside SA," he says.

"Even if there is only a very small percentage who can afford the services, a small percentage of 100-million people is still a large number of people."

Nevertheless, a major drawback to business is the fact that with a per capita annual income of about \$300, the average Nigerian has little disposable income to expend on entertainment. "If one looks at the disposable income for Nigeria, it is totally disproportionate to the size of the population," admits Price. "But any pay tele-

vision service will have to be aimed not at the general public but people of the middle to the higher income group," he says.

Therefore, for Multichoice and its M-Net products, the market response in Nigeria has been "encouraging" and progress has been steady despite "an extremely competitive environment" in which cable service providers are operating alongside several independent television stations.

"We are still very much at the beginning stage," says Price. "We have not yet tapped into the market to the full extent we could." The companies have adopted an approach of strategic expansion that has seen it first entrenched in three cities: Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital of about 8-million people, Port Harcourt, the oil city in Nigeria's southeast, where most foreign oil companies operating in the Niger Delta have their operational headquarters; and the city of Onitsha, also in the south, reputed to be one of the biggest commercial centres in West Africa.

Both companies have also extended their services further afield in West Africa to countries including Ghana, Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso and Niger Republic. Although they maintain presence in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) and Egypt in North Africa, officials of both companies say

focus is on the west, where the market appears more promising.

Officials of M-Net and Multichoice (which were originally one before splitting to become two separate companies listed at the stock exchange) say their interest is more enduring than the mere profit motive. "In SA we always try to put something back into the society," said Charmane Breytenbach, visiting M-Net manager for market research. "And now that we have broadened our base to the whole continent, we feel it is our duty to put something back in the business."

Two projects doing this at present are called New Directions and Faces of Africa. With the first, M-Net is sponsoring the making of two Nigerian films, which will be selected through competitive screening of scripts, to be "directed, filmed, acted and organised by Nigerians" for broadcast on M-Net to 37 African countries on completion.

But with Faces of Africa, Rabi Jar-nakam, M-Net's country manager for Nigeria, says the company is "launching a continent wide search for models from Africa", at the end of which the winning model will receive a 36-month international contract worth \$150 000. Explaining the rationale, Breytenbach said. "There is a demand for African super models but no supply. So we are doing an African competition to find people who can replace the likes of

Naomi Campbell"

Price explains that from the very beginning, when M-Net and Multichoice were still one, there was always a Pan-Africanist dream to provide genuine, quality African entertainment which is still enduring now they are partners in trade. "Because up until that time most of the satellite services were concentrating on Europe, the UK and America, and there was very little being sent into Africa. So M-Net was formed to provide entertainment and sporting coverage particularly aimed at the African market. "I think that is a measure of our success."

More than that, they have played a significant role in bringing different parts of the African continent closer culturally and in terms of information flow, from which businesses are bound to benefit immensely. Right now investment flow between SA and West Africa is increasing and may expand rapidly in a few years.

"We are not that many here (Nigeria) yet, but in the countries which are rich in the hard minerals, Ghana with gold, diamond in Sierra Leone, gold in Burkina Faso, SA firms have been at the forefront in investing," says Price. He also sees a number of factors in favour of SA firms: "SA is an African country. We have experience of doing business in Africa, and we have expertise which we can bring and share."

Nigeria plans to upgrade its oil refineries next month

CI(BR) 2/9/97 (226)

London — Dan Etete, Nigeria's minister of petroleum resources, said he would start a programme of refinery maintenance after breakdowns crippled supplies this year, a news agency reported yesterday.

Etete said he had received clearance from General Sani Abacha, the head of state, to start a maintenance campaign in October, Opec's information agency said.

The decision to revamp the

refineries comes after repeated problems caused a fuel shortage and forced the country to buy fuel from abroad. The finance ministry has been at loggerheads with the petrol ministry over the financing of the maintenance, analysts said.

"I have a definite directive from the head of state. This is to resolve the issue of petroleum products .. once and for all," Etete said. — Bloomberg

AFRICAN BUSINESS

Nigerian community stops Shell from mending pipe leak

FROM REUTERS

Lagos — A Nigerian community's refusal to let Royal Dutch/Shell repair a leaking oil pipeline has closed three flow-stations and shut in 15,000 barrels a day, a company spokesman said on Monday.

The spokesman said discussions were continuing with the Iyokiri community in southeastern River State for access for

Shell's emergency team to repair the leak on the buried pipeline in the Oruburi oilfield.

The leak, the cause of which has not yet been established, was first reported a week ago.

"We are talking to communities but they are asking for money before our team is allowed access," said Chris Haynes, the eastern division general manager.

"I want to assure this com-

munity that we do compensate communities for damage caused by spills as long as the cause is not sabotage."

An unidentified senior manager of Shell's Nigeria unit recently said incidents of sabotage in search of compensation were on the rise, while activists were gearing up campaigns to attack the company for environmental damage.

The joint venture between

(226)

Shell and state-run Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation pumps about half of Nigeria's over 2 million barrels a day of crude oil — most of it from onshore in the populated Niger delta region.

Oil companies working in Nigeria have increased the compensation paid to villagers for land taken over for production or damaged by pollution.

Local newspapers quoted a

at (88) 319197

senior manager of Elf Aquitaine's local unit as saying that compensation rates had been increased by more than 100 percent to 500,000 naira (R28,835) a hectare from Monday.

"If they are adequately compensated, people will no longer come for compensation," the manager said.

He added that all the major oil-producing companies had agreed to the new rates.

Nigerian ports lose out as ships turn to Benin, Togo

(226) 17/1/99

AGOS — Nigerian ports, which raised to account for between 60% and 70% of shipping in the west and central Africa region, have been losing business as ships turn away from its two main ports — Apapa and Tin Can Island.

The two ports, which are regularly used by SA ships, have seen shipping fall by half this year. The two ports used to berth an average of 60 ships a week at the peak of traffic in 1994, but now much of

the traffic carrying Nigerian-bound goods has gone to fellow west African countries Benin, Togo and Ghana. Most users blame reforms initiated by Gen Sani Abacha last April for the decline in traffic. "An importer has the right to choose any port to clear his goods, and the choice is often determined by the speed and efficiency with which

his goods can be cleared," says Adebayo Sarumi, head of the Nigerian Shippers' Council. The reforms, initiated to enhance the collection of revenue, are a combination of stringent measures (such as the requirement that most imports be accompanied by import duty reports) and higher charges on imports and exports. Importers say the

new measures have increased costs without ensuring the speedy and efficient clearance of goods. Most Nigerian importers who use neighbours' ports say rules are not as strict nor charges as high as those of Nigerian ports. "In Cotonou or Lome there is no strict insistence on preshipment inspection and provision of import duty reports," explains Chika Eze,

a Nigerian clearing agent. Security in Nigerian ports is a problem. In April, what was supposed to be a cargo of bicycle parts imported from India, turned out to be a container of human faeces. An inquiry revealed that the cargo underwent transshipment in Durban, where Nigerians argue the original cargo may have been exchanged. Then in July, an SA

ship was reported to have taken a cargo of fuel from a Nigerian port to Sierra Leone, breaking a Nigerian-enforced embargo imposed by the Economic Community of West African States. In addition, the governments of neighbouring west African ports have initiated measures to make their ports attractive. For instance, Benin has given Cotonou autonomous status, under which it benefited from a \$37m scheme from a group of French and Arab banks to upgrade facilities.

Commission criticises human rights record

Hilary Andersson

(226)

BD 19/9/97

LAGOS — About 60% of Nigerian prisoners are being held without trial, of which half have been waiting for five years or more, says Judge Patrick Nwokedi, chairman of the National Human Rights Commission set up by the Nigerian mil-

itary government. At a seminar on Nigeria's criminal justice system, Nwokedi condemned the government's human rights record. Law enforcement agencies regularly detained people before investigating their alleged crimes.

The commission had also found it was common practice to

detain the wives and children of suspects as hostages.

The commission was set up after the 1995 execution of nine minority rights activists led to international sanctions on Nigeria. It faces another year's suspension from the Commonwealth and more sanctions unless reforms are undertaken.

ANALYSIS

Opposition groups seek to halt thaw in SA-Nigeria relations

SAs opposition to the Nigerian military regime appears to have given way to an uneasy dialogue between the two nations. Dulue Mbachu reports from Lagos



MIBEKI

NIGERIAN opposition and pro-democracy groups are becoming uneasy about what they see as improving relations between the SA and Nigerian governments.

Frosty relations developed between the two almost two years ago after the Nigerian authorities executed nine minority rights activists. Mandela wanted sanctions against Nigeria but was not supported by other African leaders.

Shortly after Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi visited SA earlier this month and met President Nelson Mandela on behalf of the Nigerian military ruler, Gen Sani Abacha, Nigerian newspapers reported that SA Deputy President Thabo Mbeki would be visiting Abuja for further talks with the Nigerians on improving ties between the two countries. The SA high commission has said that Mbeki plans to visit but has not named a date yet.

Following his trip, Ikimi told the Nigerian news agency the visit "should send the right signal to the world that Nigeria and SA have nothing against each other", adding that "even the best of friends could disagree on issues

sometimes but they remain friends".

However, Ayo Obe, president of the Civil Liberties Organisation, one of Nigeria's leading human rights and pro-democracy groups, believes SA should not change its stand on the Nigerian military regime. "Nothing has changed, Nigeria's jails are still full of political prisoners, and we expect Mbeki, if he comes, to demand their release," Obe said.

Officials of the SA high commission in Lagos acknowledged there had been "regular contact" between the leaders of both countries recently.

Mbeki last visited Nigeria in 1995 as President Nelson Mandela's emissary in an unsuccessful bid to secure a reprieve for the Ogoni activists, who had campaigned against alleged environmental degradation by Shell Oil's operations on their land.

Evidence of growing contact between the leadership of both countries emerged in July when a diplomatic row erupted over comments attributed to Nigeria's information minister, Walker Ogonogor, that SA was "a white country with a black president".

23/9/97

(226)

The minister denied he made the statement and Mandela, in accepting the denial, disclosed that he had been consulting Gen Sani Abacha over issues of common concern, particularly the war that saw the overthrow of Mobutu Sese Sese.

Last month when Ledum Mitee, the exiled leader of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, visited SA, he expressed misgivings over the SA authorities' response to calls for more stringent action against Nigeria. "SA has an important role to play, but what is lacking is a commitment to take a leadership role," Mitee told a news conference after meeting SA Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo.

Chuma Ubani, secretary-general of the Democratic Alternative, who spent 10 months in detention last year, says Nigerians expect SA to lead a crusade for the international isolation of Nigeria's military rulers.

"We are only asking the SA government to be consistent in applying the lessons of its struggle," Ubani said. "We want Mandela and the ANC to spearhead the campaign for comprehensive

sanctions and the international isolation of the Nigerian regime."

Not all opponents of military rule in Nigeria, however, share the opinion of the radical opposition on sanctions. On September 14, the Nigerian Catholic Bishops' Conference called on the international community not to impose sanctions on Nigeria and urged it to engage the Nigerian regime in dialogue to end the political crisis.

"Sanctions are more likely to hurt ordinary Nigerians than those in government," their spokesman, Archbishop Peter Jahan, said. "The bishops nevertheless called for the release of all political prisoners, while advising Abacha not to contest the 1998 elections scheduled to return Nigeria to civilian democratic rule."

Lanre Ehonwa, the Lagos state coordinator of the Democratic Alternative, said his organisation disagreed with the Catholic bishops' strategy on sanctions. "The more friends the regime has the longer it will last," he said. "Given SA's prestige, the impression might be created that there is nothing terrible going on in Nigeria."



IKIMI

Nigerian govt minister attacks US ambassador

Hilary Andersson

LAGOS — A Nigerian government minister has launched a verbal attack on the US ambassador to Nigeria, Walter Carrington, days after security forces raided a farewell party for him

Special Duties Minister Alhaji Wada Nas called Carrington a "disaster" whose four years in Nigeria had been a waste of time. Nas held Carrington personally responsible for deteriorating relations between the US and Nigeria.

Washington imposed limited sanctions on Nigeria in November 1995, following the execution of

(226) BD 25/9/97
Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists, and relations have been in sharp decline since the beginning of this year.

The Nigerian government was angered in December when the US embassy in Lagos warned that there might be bomb blasts in Nigerian airports over Christmas which could endanger travellers.

Last week relations reached a new low when ambassador Carrington was forced to flee a farewell party organised for him by opposition groups. More than 20 armed security men raided the venue of the party and chased Carrington and his well-wishers

to a second venue, breaking the gates of the house down.

The incident prompted an angry response from Washington.

The Nigerian police have apologised for any embarrassment caused to the ambassador, saying they were on a hunt for illegal weapons and that his presence was a coincidence.

It is because Carrington identified closely with the prodemocracy opposition that his personal relations with the government have been so poor.

The row has come at a time when the US is reviewing its policy on Nigeria.

Summit looms

Nigeria and SA begin thaw as UK

JOYE OLORI

Lagos - Diplomatic relations between Nigeria and South Africa have been at a low ebb since 1995, when Nigeria's military government executed playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists, but recently the governments of the two countries have begun moves to normalise relations

Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi travelled to South Africa at the start of the month and South African Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki was to have visited Nigeria last Wednesday. The visit was postponed, but that has not doused hopes here for a thaw

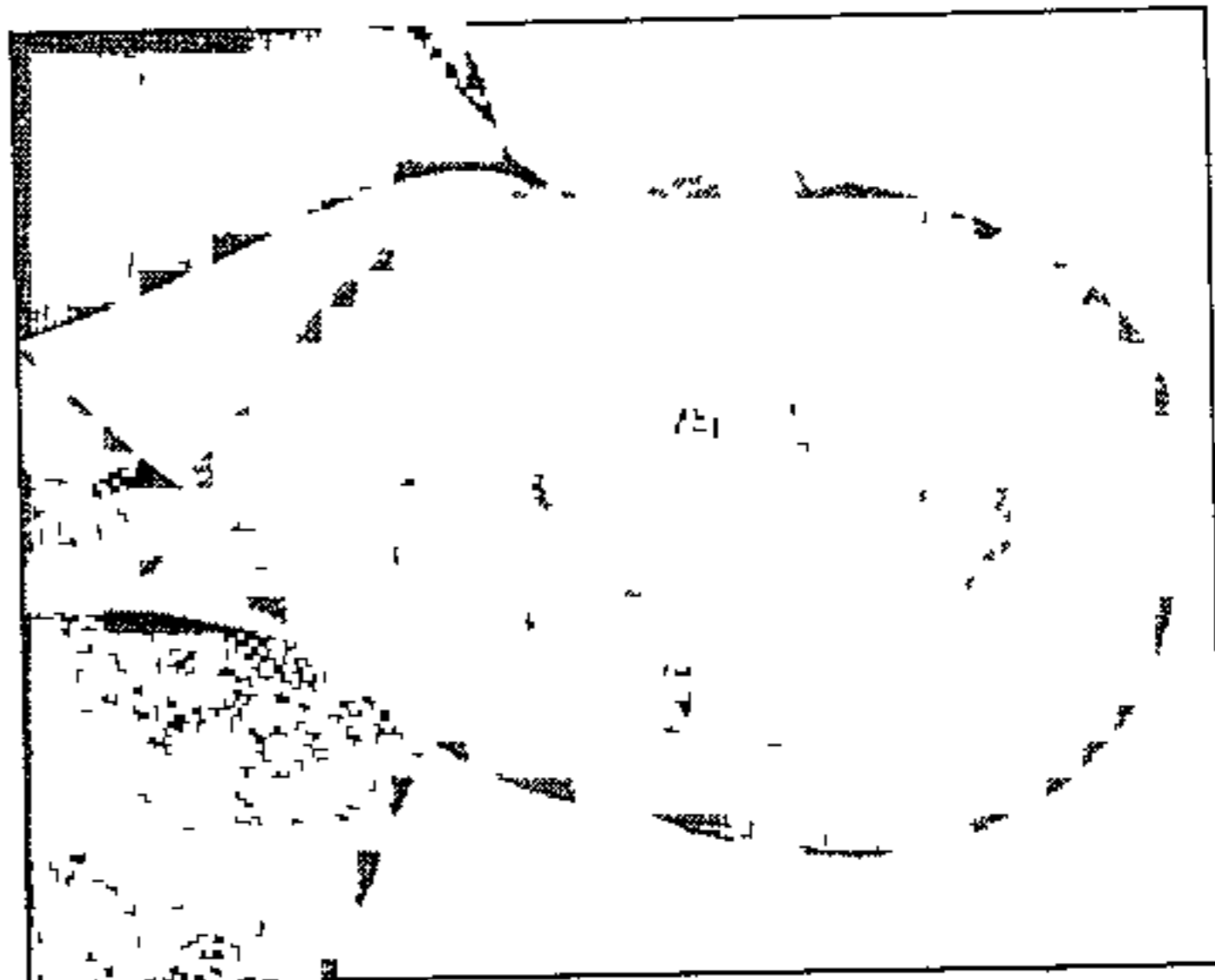
A source at the Foreign Affairs Office in Abuja said the Nigerian government was still eager to improve ties with South Africa ahead of a Commonwealth summit billed for Edinburgh in October

Nigeria, which was suspended from the body after the 1995 elections, is expected to be on the summit agenda

"Government has not changed its position on the visit. The visit has only been rescheduled at the insis-



Cordial relations: President Mandela is trying to normalise ties with Nigeria



Trip postponed: hopes are still high that Thabo Mbeki will visit Nigeria

tence of the South African Government," said the source, who did not want his name published. "Because of other pressing matters, we have to work out a new arrangement"

During his visit to South Africa, Mr Ikimi had said relations between the two countries were cordial - con-

trary to the picture external forces attempted to paint

"My visit should send the right signal to the world that Nigeria and South Africa have nothing against each other," Mr Ikimi said on his arrival in Johannesburg on September 1

James Foley said According to the US account, Nigerian security men armed with automatic weapons forced their way into a private compound in Lagos last Thursday and broke up a reception for Mr Carrington, who is ending his posting

Mr Carrington and other diplomats left unharmed A black American married to a Nigerian, Mr Carrington has long been at odds with Nigeria's government, which accuses him of supporting the opposition - Sapa-IPS-Reuters

ter Carrington The State Department said it had called in Nigeria's chargé d'affaires to tell him that "it is an unacceptable breach of diplomatic practice for armed agents of the Nigerian government to confront the president's representative in such a threatening and unprovoked manner" The charge, Adoga Onah, was told that under the Vienna Convention governing diplomatic practice, diplomats had the right to meet representatives of groups outside government control, department spokesman

Against this background, Mr Ikimi's trip to South Africa was of key significance to General Abacha Mr Mbeki's visit, if it does materialise, could further narrow the still wide gap between the two nations Meanwhile the United States said on Wednesday it had demanded an explanation from Nigeria over an incident in which police broke up a send-off party in Lagos by pro-democ-

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Nigeria and South Africa have always had a good relationship, although detractors of both countries are bent on deceiving the world about the level of relations," he added

"Even the best of friends could disagree on issues sometimes but they remain friends"

Mr Ikimi urged both countries to work together for the development of the continent and bring lasting peace to its troubled spots

Nigeria is sub-Saharan Africa's most populous country, while South Africa is its most powerful economy

Both could have been leading the democratisation of the continent had the Nigerian military not annulled presidential polls held in 1993 and believed to have been the freest and fairest in the history of Nigeria

The presumed winner of the 1993 election, Moshood Abiola, has been in detention since mid-1994. He is one of many political prisoners in the West African country, which has become almost an international pariah because of alleged human rights violations by the military government

Following the execution of Mr Saro-Wiwa and the other minority

rights activists, despite appeals by Commonwealth ministers at a meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, South Africa and Zimbabwe led a campaign for the expulsion of Nigeria from the Commonwealth. However, the multinational body opted for a suspension

South Africa and Zimbabwe had also called for the imposition of sanctions on the government. President Mandela was reported to have said that Nigeria's Sani Abacha was leading an "irresponsible government that has no respect for civilised international opinion"

General Abacha reportedly retorted that, because of the years Mr Mandela spent in prison on Robben Island, he had lost touch with "current global political trends"

The diplomatic row worsened when South Africa recalled its envoy from Lagos and withdrew an invitation to Nigeria to participate in a four-nation football tournament in Johannesburg. General Abacha retaliated by boycotting last year's African Nations Cup in South Africa

The South African envoy returned to his post in February last year, but a fresh diplomatic row almost erupted

Mr Oforogoro was quoted as describing South Africa as "a white country with a black president" at the opening of a forum of the Nigerian Guild of Editors. He later denied making the statement

The row was averted when two envoys from General Abacha met Mr Mandela over the issue and others say Mr Oforogoro has since been sanctioned by the Armed Forces Ruling Council, Nigeria's highest ruling body

Sources close to General Abacha matters affecting Africa say Mr Oforogoro has since been sanctioned by the Armed Forces Ruling Council, Nigeria's highest ruling body

agoro an unguarded statement by Nigeria's Information Minister, Walter Oforogoro demanded an apology from General Abacha over an unguarded statement by Nigeria's Information Minister, Walter Oforogoro

AFRICA

Nigerian economy 'is in steep decline'

BD 30/9/97

(226)

Hilary Andersson

LAGOS — The Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria has painted a picture of an economy in steep decline in its annual report made public yesterday.

The cardinal aim of Nigeria's 1997 budget — the expansion of production and productive capacity — has not been realised, according to the report, which was based on a survey of the performance of 281 companies.

The survey showed a decline in industrial capacity utilisation from 34% recorded in the last six months of last year to about 29% now.

The stagnation of the economy was attributed to low consumer demand and the worsening problem of deteriorating infrastructure.

"The prospects of achieving the projected gross domestic product annual growth of 5.5% is bleak and uncertain," the report read.

The economic problems seen in the first six months of the year were blamed on a petrol shortage and a lack of government spending, which has helped the decline of infrastructure.

The petrol shortage, which began in January, crippled economic activity in many parts of the country until emergency imports were ordered in June

The fuel shortage has pushed up transport costs about 200%, which lead to an increase in prices as well as higher operating costs for companies.

Severe fuel shortages, due partly to the fact that the refineries are poorly maintained, continue to frustrate economic activity in the north of country.

The power supply had also degenerated this year, the association said, forcing companies to rely on their own generators.

In January, firms relied on their own power sources for 84.3% of working hours, compared with 58.9% in February last year, a problem attributed to poor maintenance of the state-owned generating equipment.

The uncertain market conditions and high operating costs for companies had reduced capital investment, while consumer demand had fallen simultaneously, the report said.

The association credited the government with achieving some measure of macroeconomic stability, notably a reduction in inflation from 28% in December last year to 17.5% in June this year, but warned that it was being achieved at the cost of growth and employment creation.

The government is due to announce details of its economic plan today.

Nigeria still seeks 'understanding'

(296)

OT 3/10/97

LAGOS: Nigeria will continue to seek understanding of its situation from all the members of the Commonwealth, says the head of state, General Sani Abacha

In a national broadcast on the independence anniversary of Nigeria on Wednesday, Abacha said Nigeria hoped that the Commonwealth leadership would embrace fair play, genuine dialogue and negotiations to resolve the "unfortunate impasse between the association and Nigeria".

"Nigeria will always adopt a constructive posture in all these matters in spite of the unfair targeting of our country by a few influential members of the Commonwealth family," Abacha said.

He repeated his administration's resolve to hand over to a democratically elected civilian president on October 1 next year — but he did not douse speculation that he would then succeed himself as president

Instead, he continued to blame detractors for the negative reports on the country's human rights records.

"This is due in great part to the campaign of misinformation and misrepresentation waged against us by itinerant dissidents and

their sensationalist and ill-informed collaborators in sections of the international community and foreign media," Abacha said

A dozen notable Nigerians, including the presumed winner of the 1993 presidential election, Mr Moshood Abiola, are still in detention, most of them without trial. A former finance minister, Mr Olu Falae, and pro-democracy activist Mr Fredrick Fasehun are still being held for an alleged spate of bombings in the country.

Nigerians had hoped that the national broadcast would announce the release of some political detainees but their hopes were shattered because Abacha made no mention of it during his speech.

But Abacha believes his administration is doing well in the area of human rights having set up a National Human Rights Commission to investigate abuses

The commission recently berated the government for the growing number of prison inmates who had spent years awaiting trial for alleged offences that could have attracted lesser jail terms had they been convicted. — Independent Foreign Service

Nigeria to export petroleum gas

BD 8/10/97

(226)

Dulue Mbachu

LAGOS — It was a momentous event for officials of the Chevron oil company in Nigeria last week when a tanker loaded 30 000 tons of liquefied petroleum gas from the Escravos Gas Project for shipping to Texas

Tom Schull, Chevron Nigeria's GM for asset management, said it was the first export of liquefied petroleum gas from Nigeria and the first use of the gas (which occurs with oil) to derive a value for the company and Nigeria

The project is a joint venture between Chevron (40%) and the state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, which has the majority stake of 60%

Although Nigeria is the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries' sixth largest producer, its gas reserves, estimated at 3,115-trillion cubic metres, exceed oil reserves of about 25-billion barrels. However, since oil production started in Nigeria four decades ago, gas associated with oil was simply flared off by oil companies discouraged by the high costs of investing in gas

At present 0,057-billion cubic metres of gas are flared daily in Nigerian oil operations Chevron's share is 16,992-million cubic metres daily, of which the Escravos Gas Project, established at a cost of \$550m, is now taking up 30% or 5,098-million cubic metres a day

Chevron is the first oil company to take full advantage of incentives Nigeria is offering for investments in gas. These include a 35% tax on profit against the 85% normally charged on crude oil profits, a lower rate for royalties at 7% instead of 20% onshore and 10% offshore for crude oil, in addition to provisions for tax holidays

An oil and gas export zone has also been established at the Onne Port in the heart of the oil producing Niger Delta area

The other oil majors operating in Nigeria now have their own gas projects under way to take advantage of the incentives Shell, Elf and Agip are participating in a \$4bn liquefied natural gas project, expected to become operational in a few years' time with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Mobil's natural gas liquids project with the petroleum corpo-

ration is scheduled to start exporting gas by the turn of the century

However, the companies have a date with history as the Nigerian authorities have set the deadline of 2010 for an end to gas flagging

Chevron and Netco, a petroleum corporation subsidiary, are doing engineering work for two additional phases of the Escravos Gas Project which will enable it to process the entire 16,992-million cubic metres of associated gas produced in its oil fields.

Negotiations are also going on for a pipeline project which will enable Escravos Gas Project to supply neighbouring countries Benin, Togo and Ghana with gas

The Escravos Gas Project was made possible mainly by pioneering technology in the use of floating production, storage and offloading from what are known as "FSO vessels" Located 42km off the Escravos coast, Chevron's FSO for the Escravos Gas Project includes capacity for 54 000 cubic metres of gas, accommodation for 50 and a lifespan of 20 years without dry-docking From here liquefied petroleum gas is offloaded to export tankers.

No more free clinics in Nigeria, and deaths during pregnancy

By **MARY KAMU**
agos

Thousands of Nigerian women are dying in pregnancy or childbirth because they are unable to pay hospital and clinic fees for antenatal care and delivery.

The average Nigerian earns the equivalent of \$260 (about 1,200) per year, which means most cannot afford the fees charged by clinics. Average antenatal care and a normal delivery costs nearly R250, not counting the cost of drug and laboratory tests.

Bernice Oje, whose first baby was born in a Lagos clinic, has refused to return to deliver her second child. "I cannot afford it," she says bluntly. Instead, she is forfeiting antenatal care to engage the services of a local retired nurse. "I know I am risking my life there are complications during labour, but it took my husband and me six months to pay back the money we borrowed for the first baby," she adds. Maternal mortality rates in Nigeria are among the highest

in the world, with the United Nations estimating that 1,000 women die for every 100,000 live births (about half the deaths, however, are due to unsafe and illegal abortions).

The Nigerian government introduced user-fees for health-care in the mid-1980s as part of a structural adjustment programme (SAP) prompted by a slump in oil prices.

As in many other developing countries, its impact on the Nigerian poor has been catastrophic. Prices of basic goods and services have shot up, school education and health-care - once free or subsidised - now cost money, wages have fallen and unemployment has risen.

State funding for hospitals has been cut drastically. In 1987, the last year for which figures exist, government spent only 0.8% of its budget on health.

User-fees are a controversial matter. For instance, Andrew Cleese, a health economist with the World Health Organisation, argues "Poor people are both sicker and more sensitive to health-care

prices than wealthier people."

Writing in the British Medical Journal, Cleese says the higher the proportion of user-fees in the total mix of health financing, the greater is the relative share of the burden on the poor.

Despite financial hardships, many pregnant women in Nigeria do manage to scrape together the money needed for decent care. At military hospitals, they pay a flat fee of about R28. But they are told to provide bedding and meals, and pay for drugs and examinations.

The father-to-be must give blood, or pay an R80 advance in lieu of a donation. That brings up the average cost of having a baby at this level of health care to around R700.

Banke Ola, a journalist and user of a military hospital, will have spent more than three months' salary by the time her baby arrives.

"It's worth it," she says. "The most important thing is that I stay alive."

Other institutions, such as Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), are now finan-

cial no-go areas for middle-income families.

Women who can afford it pay a R300 registration fee which only covers routine blood and urine tests. A normal delivery costs R140, while a forceps delivery adds on another R410. Should a caesarean sec-

rose by 56%.

At the same time, there was a fall in childbirth admissions from 7,450 in 1983 (when maternal care was free) to 5,437 two years later when some user-fees were introduced, to 3,376 in 1988, when patients also had to pay for most of the materials

I know I am risking my life but it took my family six months to repay the money

tion be necessary, patients have to fork out a further R2,200.

Experts in Nigeria believe high user-fees are increasing the numbers of maternal deaths.

When researchers looked at records at the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital in the northern city of Zaria between 1985 and 1988, they found that maternal deaths

needed for treatment

There are other effects. If there are complications at delivery (approximately two-thirds of Nigerian women give birth without a trained midwife or traditional birth attendant), women delay going to hospital while family members beg and borrow money and provisions. By the time they are admitted, it is often too late

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Young mothers denied antenatal care and medical assistance at birth are particularly vulnerable if things go wrong. Marriage and childbearing begin early in Nigeria (half the women have children by age 20) and teenage mothers whose bodies may not be fully developed need timely intervention if their labour is obstructed and prolonged.

Researchers found that when hospital deliveries dropped, there was a surge in emergency admissions for women with ruptured uteruses and damaged bladder and rectum caused by obstructed labour.

Other research shows that more infants die when women at risk deliver at home.

At the Wesley Guild Hospital in Ilesha, a town in Western Nigeria, babies born outside hospital care accounted for 48% of hospital admissions between 1981 and 1983 - before fees were introduced in 1984. Between 1987 and 1990, the figure rose to 66%.

In addition, user-fees have led formerly affluent patients to

are rising steeply

Star 9/10/97

crowd out lower-income women at primary health-care centres that were established for the poor

"Most of the women you see here are those who would have patronised private hospitals before," says a matron at one such clinic in Lagos "But they have displaced the poor, who have gone elsewhere."

"Elsewhere" may mean traditional birth attendants, "spiritualist" clinics or quacks who lack hospital back-up should emergencies occur

The government response has been patchy A maternal and child health policy, drafted in 1994 and pledging to make the health of mothers its "highest priority," is yet to be adopted

And in a recent newspaper interview, Minister of Health and Social Services Dr Ihechukwu Madubuike promised that "most health problems" will be taken care of by a national insurance scheme when it comes on board".

Linda Osarenren of the Inter-Africa Committee on Harmful Traditional Practices be-

lieves the government is both inconsistent and insensitive

"Many women are dying and many more will die, seeing that prices forbid even 'enlightened' women from seeking expert medical attention," she says.

Meanwhile, health activists continue to campaign for accessible and affordable health care for pregnant women.

In 1990, the Society of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians of Nigeria launched a National Safe Motherhood Movement and demanded a reduction or abolition of user-fees for pregnant women.

Its co-ordinator Dr David Olurin says the high fees for government facilities are "unacceptable, dangerous and unfair", punishing women for the social act of childbearing

Linda Osarenren adds angrily. "Frankly, the government cares more for football than for women's health." In May, Nigeria spent some 16 million naira (R885 0000) on a single match against Burkina Faso. - Sapa-Panos

Nigeria sheds monopoly on telecommunications

Hilary Andersson

LAGOS — Nigeria has taken an important step towards the privatisation of its state-owned industries by opening up its telecommunications sector to private participation.

The agreement between the state-run Nigerian Telecommunications and a Nigerian company, Multi-Links Communications Nigeria Limited, is the first of its kind and effectively breaks the monopoly of the state-run company.

The state-run operation charges high and uncompetitive rates for telephone calls — \$2.60 a minute for international calls to Europe or the US, a price comparable to those charged by satellite telephone operators. It is also infamous for poor service and corruption.

According to the terms of the agreement, Multi-Link will be able to access Nigerian Telecommunications' network and provide communications services at its own prices.

The agreement follows a decision by Nigeria's military government last month to allow the private company Motophone Nigeria to provide

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international Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) satellite services in competition with Nigeria Telecommunications. Communications Minister Tajudeen Olanrewaju said at the time the move fitted with government's objective of deregulating the telecommunications sector.

Last week 13 senior figures from the state-owned electricity company were fired in a move which may indicate that reforms in other areas are imminent.

Nigeria has been under pressure from international organisations including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to embark on a major privatisation programme to eliminate the inefficiency of state-owned firms.

Foreign investors and others were disappointed when no such programme were announced in this year's budget. The government clearly indicated at the recent summit of Gen Sani Abacha's think-tank known as Vision 2010, that privatisation was the way forward for Nigeria, but gave no specific details of a time frame for action.

Commonwealth to debate Nigeria sanctions

Tim Cohen

LONDON — Sports and visa sanctions against Nigeria are likely to be discussed at the Commonwealth heads of government meeting later this month

Sources close to the pre-meeting talks say Nigeria's continued suspension is uncontroversial, but what further measures to take and when to apply them, is now a matter of debate

The balance shifted to a tougher stance earlier this year because of the new UK government's strong human rights position. The UK is part of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG)

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook has made it clear that the Nigerian govern-

ment's actions so far have been insufficient and suspension will be rolled over with the promise of further sanctions if Nigeria does not follow the reform programme it has set

Sources said the key would be a phased introduction of sanctions — such as sports and visa but not oil sanctions — with the triggers aligned to the implementation of the Nigerian government's democracy programme which is set to culminate in elections in October next year

Visa sanctions against Nigerian regime members are applied in the UK, the European Union, Canada and Jamaica, but the British government is upset that they are not applied elsewhere

The issue is particularly difficult for SA, after President Nelson Mandela went so far

as calling for oil sanctions after the execution of author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists in 1995. SA foreign affairs officials now regret the incident, saying that SA sounded the battle charge but when it looked around, everyone else had deserted the field

British officials emphasise that because the Commonwealth operates on a consensus basis, dilemma is have to find a formula on which all 53 members can agree

CMAG has discussed options including visa sanctions, sports sanctions, downgrading cultural contact and an end to military training and arms sales. All of these fall far short of what Nigerian activists are calling for, with many saying only oil sanctions would have a real chance of success

BD 14/10/97

(226)

Nigeria admits to higher oil output

LAGOS — Nigeria produced 2.24-million barrels a day of crude oil, Oil Minister Dan Etete said while giving a seminar at the National War College in Abuja yesterday.

His admission puts Nigeria's crude output about 350 000 barrels above official Opec production figures.

According to Opec, Nigeria's output was 1,872-million barrels a day in August. But Etete's output figure is more in line with industry estimates.

According to a Dow Jones survey, Nigeria pumped 2,257-million barrels a day last month. Nigeria's Opec quota was 1,865-million barrels a day, how-

ever, Opec quotas are not based on wellhead production, but on the concept of supply to the market.

At the seminar, Etete said the Nigerian government was making efforts to increase the country's producible reserves, although he did not say how this was being done.

Oil firms have been complaining that the government has been holding them back in terms of investment, through cutting their 1997 budget by 40%, and the nonconclusion of negotiations on a memorandum of understanding which should provide incentives for exploration — AP-DJ.

Nigeria won't be expelled⁽²²⁶⁾

— Anyaoku

CT 16/10/97

LONDON: Commonwealth leaders will consider further reprisals against democratic backsliders when they meet next week, but Nigeria's military government will not be expelled, says the secretary-general, Chief Emeka Anyaoku.

Anyaoku, himself a Nigerian, said it was tougher for the 54-nation association of Britain and ex-colonies to act against Nigeria than it had been to ostracise South Africa, because apartheid was condemned internationally.

Commonwealth leaders hold summits every two years

Anyaoku said the Commonwealth would wait to see if Nigeria's military regime stuck to a pledge to hold democratic elections by October 1998

"The Commonwealth is the only international organisation that has suspended Nigeria from membership," Anyaoku said in a BBC radio interview.

At their 1995 meeting in New Zealand, the presidents and prime ministers from the largely Third World organisation suspended Nigeria's military regime

They also set up a committee to pressure Nigerian leader General Sani Abacha to release the presumed winner of 1993 elections annulled by the army

Nigeria has largely ignored the Commonwealth group — Sapa-AP

Nigeria woos mineral investors

Dulue Mbachau

LAGOS — The oil sector attracts the bulk of foreign investment flowing into Nigeria, but Sami Abacha's military government is determined to prove that the country's solid minerals are worth foreign investors' time and money.

Tax holidays, permission for 100% foreign ownership and investment protection guarantees are among incentives being offered to investors keen to exploit Nigeria's coal, gold, iron ore, bitumen and several other solid mineral deposits.

"More than 450 mineral occurrences have been identified in different parts of Nigeria," said Solid Minerals Minister Alhaji Kaloma Ali, whose ministry was created in 1995.

Nigeria's coal, with proven reserves of more than 2,75-billion tons, is said to be of the best quality due to its low sulphur and ash content. Iron-ore deposits are estimated at more than 3-billion tons, while bitumen reserves, at 4-billion tons, is almost double existing crude oil reserves.

Gold and gemstones, which include sapphire, aquamarine, emerald, topaz and amethyst, are also said to occur in viable commercial quantities.

To facilitate investment in these minerals, the ministry awarded a contract at the end of August to a consortium made up of Nigerian firm Global Minerals, Canadian firm Doldéar and French firm Amtech to

undertake "more detailed studies" of mineral deposits in Nigeria. "The idea is to create an information data bank for prospective investors, save them time and enable them to make quick decisions", ministry spokesman Iro Okoroafor explained.

A number of foreign investors are taking advantage of the incentives. Last month Nigerian company Globemark signed a joint venture agreement with a Chinese firm, Geo-Engineering Corporation, to mine gold in the central region. Globemark chairman Aluru Momoh said his company went into partnership with the Chinese firm "after a careful study of its profile and experience in mining as well as its record in civil engineering".

However, western mining companies have been slow to take advantage of the incentives, being offered by Nigeria, perhaps because of the lingering political crisis since the military annulled elections in 1993.

The monopoly of the Nigerian Coal Corporation (NCC) has been broken to enable a yet unnamed Bulgarian firm to come into the coal industry. The Nigerian government is also revitalising its own companies operating in the sector. Apart from the NCC, other mining concessions in the country were being managed by the Nigerian Mining Corporation, which has eight subsidiaries mining various minerals, including tin, kaolin, bitumen, gold, gypsum, salt, barytes and iron ore.

In the 1950s and 1960s, these minerals,

along with agricultural commodities, were Nigeria's main export income earners. But

with the advent of crude oil, they became increasingly neglected until their contributions to the economy became insignificant. Coal exports slumped from a peak of more than 320 000 tons a year in 1973 to nothing within a decade. As part of the revival, the Chinese Civil Engineering Construction Corporation is building a multimillion-dollar coal yard at the export terminal in Port Harcourt, 200km south of the main coal mining centre of Enugu.

The NCC has been upgrading its coal production capacity and resumed exports to Europe last year after a break of almost 20 years. Two years ago the government banned the importation of gypsum, used in cement production; barytes, used in oil drilling and production; and kaolin, used in several industries, in order to encourage local production. "A substantial amount of foreign exchange has been saved by the use of locally produced solid minerals," says Finance Minister Anthony Am

The promotion of investments in solid minerals is seen by the government as a way of diversifying from petroleum, on which the government depends for more than 90% of its revenue. Ali believes his ministry will provide the much-needed alternative revenue source to oil. "When I was attending a business conference in London," he said, "I told them that soon we will be in a position to export coal to Newcastle."

BD 7/10/97

(22b)

AFRICAN BUSINESS

OIL Local firms need only government concessions before taking off

Nigerian oil firms slowly sprout in the shadow of multinationals

CT (PR) 20/10/97

(22b)

MATTHEW TOSTEVIN

Lagos — The reality is far from the dreams of national glory and fast money of the early 1980s, but a handful of Nigerian oil firms are slowly sprouting in the shadow of the world's energy giants

Three of the 38 firms that gleefully snapped up prospecting licences from 1990 to 1994 are pumping out a total of between 45 000 and 50 000 barrels per day (bpd) of Nigerian output of more than two million bpd.

The survivors of the early prospecting rush, who already have plans for expansion, say all they need is more concessions from the military government before they really take off.

"Most of these guys were involved in other business and are still cutting their teeth," said Florida Okunowo of the National Association of Indigenous Petroleum Explorers and Producers

"They soon found out that the business is seriously capital-intensive, and it's no easy matter to go out and start pumping oil," she told Reuter

The motive for encouraging local oil companies was to increase Nigerian participation in an industry run largely by foreigners. Even though with an average stake of 57 percent in joint venture agreements, the state-run Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) was in the world's top 20 firms.

But it is the companies with foreign "technical partners" — allowed an investment of up to 40 percent in the private joint ventures — which are doing best. The partners help not only with exploration and production but also in sourcing funds

"We understand the business of being carried by technical partners — all you can lose is a portion of your profit," said Austin Avuru of Allied Petroleum, whose partners are Norwegian Statoil and British Petroleum.

Of the companies currently producing, only Consolidated Oil, which industry sources say produces 10 000 to 12 000 bpd, is wholly Nigerian-owned.



Express, in which American DuPont's Conoco has a 40 percent holding, is pumping at its 20 000 bpd limit set by government, and could increase production further if it gets the green light.

Amni Petroleum, in which Canada's Abacan has a 40 percent stake, is producing 18 000 bpd and hopes to push above 40 000 when at least six new wells are drilled next year.

Abacan's other ventures have not been quite so successful. Industry sources say the company is looking to dispose of a 10 percent stake in Atlas Petroleum and 24 percent stake in Yinka Fola-wiyo Petroleum, which has found oil in its offshore block near Lagos but may still be more than a year from production.

Even with their foreign god-fathers, the small companies argue they are in no position to take off in a big way, and have

proposed to the military government a package of incentives to afford them a helping hand.

Government sources say the oil ministry is likely to look favourably on the request for a reduction in profit tax to 50 from 85 percent, and for investment tax credits for those producing less than 50 000 bpd.

But final approval can only be given by army strongman General Sani Abacha, and that takes time.

"Government policy in this country is not going the way of the multinationals, and we hope we can get in there and scoop up some decent concessions," said one Western oil man working with a local partner.

Oil Minister Dan Etete, a critic of the major players, has already said he thinks the marginal fields would be better off in the hands of small companies.

Meanwhile multinational joint venture partners are struggling with 40 percent less government funding than they had budgeted for in 1997, and warn of a drop in production if the ministries do not reconsider.

Royal Dutch/Shell, Mobil, Chevron, Elf-Aquitaine and Agip have all had to make cuts this year while negotiations drag on in fits and starts.

"We could easily produce in the so called marginal fields. When you have quotas to stick to, you produce where it's cheapest," said an executive with one multinational.

"Give us the go-ahead and the funding, and I have no doubt we can work the marginal fields more efficiently than the supposedly Nigerian companies."

"But if it's a political matter then we can do nothing but complain," he said. — Reuter

AFRICA

Mozambique aims to cut red tape

Fernando Lima

MAPUTO — Mozambique plans to speed up procedures involving the registration of businesses and is about to revoke a law dating from the previous century — as a first step.

New investors have been complaining about the bureaucracy surrounding the registration of companies, and government has said a commission examining the old code will submit new proposals to government by December.

The new legislation is supposed to simplify the creation and registration of new companies.

Private operators claim current procedures discourage their initiatives, increase administrative costs and foment corruption.

These are not the only complaints from the private sector. At a recent seminar in Maputo, radical proposals were made to "privatise" the handling of entry visas and to remove "old socialist labour laws". There are difficulties obtaining multiple entries and the granted periods of stay are short. The authorities now impose a fine of R400 a day on visitors whose visas expire.

Industry Minister Oldemuro Balon thinks "visa privatisation" is a radical proposal but says government is open to all proposals that will improve Mozambique's business environment.

Privatisation of crucial services in Mozambique is not new. Customs is already being managed by British firm Crown Agents' representative in Maputo, says in the first three months of operation record customs revenue was secured.

Crown Agents also detected \$22m of undeclared goods and \$42m of undervalued goods. However, some local businessmen complain about Crown, saying its reference prices are unrealistic. They say they buy products in SA, importation is approved by Intertech, the pre-inspection company working for Mozambique, but they are still confronted at the border by Crown Agents' officials who reject prices recorded in the invoices. They also criticise the bureaucracy at customs because it can take up to six weeks to process customs documentation before claiming goods in Maputo.

changes are needed to simplify and speed up these procedures.

Labour law has also come under fire from private investors. They say the legislation is outdated and that it is hard to get permission to employ foreigners.

Many locals have claimed in the past that foreigners, namely SA and Portuguese citizens, "steal jobs from Mozambicans". As a result the labour ministry has created barriers to approving contracts for foreign workers.

Carmen Martinez, the US charge d'affaires in Maputo, thinks the policy is "self-defeating", saying expatriates bring capital, technology and management experience, they pay taxes, and are important consumers.

Difficulties in this area have spawned a black market for the granting of visas, resident cards and labour contracts.

An SA businessman in Mozambique sums up the problem, saying "You cannot implement a market economy with socialist laws". He owns a company with Mozambican partners and wants to cut the labour force by two-thirds but claims there are legal impediments to doing so.

Legislation is about to be liberalised but unions fear this will mean more unemployment.

Unions and the private sector are still sceptical about the success of some reforms. For instance, government argues that 700 companies have been privatised, and that the Centre for Investment Promotion has approved 230 new projects worth \$650m over the past year.

But even Deputy Finance Minister Carlos Jensen says only 25% can be considered "real investment" because many projects involve the importation of goods. Dishonest businessmen use investment incentives granted by the investment centre to flood the local market with cheap goods.

Under the reform programme the Mozambican government is about to privatise the national airline LAM while the People's Development Bank was bought by a Malaysian group with Mozambican partners affiliated to ruling party Frelimo. The independent media suggested President Joaquim Chissano was linked to the deal, but no proof was supplied. It is clear however, that the deal was not transparent enough, a situation still common in Mozambican business.

Commonwealth gears up to tackle issue of Nigeria

Tim Cohen

LONDON — A jittery diplomatic face-off is preceding the Commonwealth heads of government meeting after suggestions Nigeria may pull out of the organisation to pre-empt criticisms for human rights abuses at the summit when it meets in Edinburgh at the weekend.

London-based political analysts said yesterday Nigeria was allowing it to be known that it would pull out of the organisation entirely if it became aware the Commonwealth intended to criticise it harshly.

Control Risks Group Africa analyst Tara O'Connor said whether Nigeria would leave the organisation to pre-empt criticism likely at the meeting was an open question. Some evidence of the Nigerian government's attitude was provided recently when the UK went some way to placating the Nigerian government by allowing direct flights between the two countries — a move not reciprocated by Nigeria.

However, members of the group have made it clear that Nigeria would continue to be suspended from the Commonwealth, although other sanctions are unlikely to satisfy Nigerian activist organisations. The action group is filled with squabblers which claim to be strong adherents to a human rights-linked foreign policy, including Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and — since the 1994 elections — SA.

Sources say, though, the group is constrained by the fact that the Commonwealth works by consensus, so must propose steps it thinks all 54 member nations will accept.

The issue is particularly difficult for SA, after President Nelson Mandela called for oil sanctions following Nigeria's execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists. No one acted. SA foreign affairs officials now regret the incident. "We were left high and dry," one official said.

While most of the action group are thought to favour a tough stance, Zimbabwe and Ghana are thought to be adopting a more relaxed attitude while Malaysia is thought to be willing to follow the consensus view.

UN team

BD 02/10/97

AFRICAN BUSINESS

TRADE *Human rights may overshadow this week's summit*

Commonwealth targets Nigeria

CF (BR) 23/10/97 (226)

DAVID LJUNGGREN

London — Commonwealth leaders will open a four day summit on trade in Edinburgh tomorrow that could be overshadowed by controversy over human rights abuses among its member states, particularly Nigeria.

Leaders of the 54-nation group are expected to sign a joint declaration on opening up markets and increasing trade.

But human rights activists said there would be a rift in discussing trade if member states were allowed to flout the Commonwealth's 1991 Harare Declaration, which laid down standards for good governance.

Unless the Edinburgh conference can tackle effectively the human rights issue — and particularly that of Nigeria — it will indeed be judged, and rightly so, as irrelevant," said the liberal Guardian newspaper.

Human rights group Article 19 said some states were literally getting away with murder, and expressed concern about abuses in Nigeria, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Cameroon.

Chief Emeka Anyaoku, the Commonwealth secretary-general and a Nigerian, strongly urged Nigeria yesterday to drop its plan to send a delegation to the summit, a spokesman said.

Anyaoku acted a day after the Nigerian government demanded a hearing when the group's leaders will discuss prolonging Nigeria's suspension from the organisation and possibly imposing sanctions over its delay in implementing



CENTRE OF ATTENTION Nigerian President General Sani Abacha faces possible Commonwealth sanctions

PHOTO, AFP

democratic reforms.

Anyaoku's spokesman noted that Nigeria's attendance would require unanimous agreement.

Nigeria is still bitter about its suspension in late 1995 after it executed author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other activists.

Diplomats and officials said the summit would maintain Nigeria's suspension and could decide to impose sanctions agreed last year but suspended to give the military government of General Sani Abacha more time. — Reuters

Debt management strategy ran for nine years, aiding 170 projects

Nigeria raises \$302m in foreign direct capital flow

CJ (PR) 23/10/97 (226)

TOYE OLORI

Lagos — Nigeria has recorded a total of \$302,18 million foreign direct capital flow through a debt management strategy adopted by the government since 1988

The amount represents the proceeds from the Debt Conversion Programme designed to help the country repatriate flight capital and reduce the debt servicing burden between 1988 and June this year

According to statistics made available by the debt conversion committee, charged with the responsibility of overseeing the programme, 170 projects

have benefited from the proceeds of the debt auction

Federal government established the programme nine years ago as a two-pronged measure to attract foreign investment into the country

The programme was also intended to reduce the external debt stock and consequently the debt servicing obligations

Under the programme, holders of Nigerian debt instruments purchased at the international secondary market submit them to the committee for conversion to local currency at a discount for onward investment in priority sectors of the economy

In 1989, a year after its take-off, \$81,49 million worth of Nigerian debt instruments were redeemed while proceeds from the debt auction declined to \$77,89 million in 1990

With the exception of last year, when earnings which accrued to the economy peaked at \$41,48 million, proceeds from the programme have been on a downward trend since 1991

Observers of the system have attributed the low patronage of the auction to disparities in the naira exchange rate between the official and parallel markets over the past five years — Independent Foreign Service

Abacha haunts summit

STIRLING, Scotland – The mural on the grey stone wall in Edinburgh's Princess Street is green and red. The face on the mural is black, unmistakably familiar and unsmiling.

The red of the mural, dripping like blood, runs over the green, tainting it and almost touching the face. And then the words underneath "Remember Ken Saro-Wiwa".

Saro-Wiwa is, of course, the Nigerian political activist and author from the Ogoni region who was hanged by the military rulers of Nigeria after being 'convicted' by a kangaroo court in 1995.

That was on the eve of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Auckland, New Zealand.

An international outcry followed, and calls for sanctions and worse were made against General Sani Abacha, Nigeria's military ruler. And then, like everything else in politics, it all died down.

But as CHOGM prepares for its meeting in Edinburgh, Scotland, today, some people have not forgotten. Right there in the middle of the Scottish capital is a green and red cry to remember Saro-Wiwa and his eight comrades.

It is a cry to remember Nigeria and all the detainees still held there, and the torture and maiming that continues unabated in defiance of the international community.

Top of the agenda

Will the Commonwealth leaders hear the plea of the mural? Will they remember October 1995? Will they even see the mural?

To the extent that remembering Saro-Wiwa is to raise the issue of continuing repression in Nigeria, the Commonwealth meeting will indeed accomplish that - Nigeria is top of the agenda following its suspension in 1995.

It must therefore decide whether Abacha has effected "demonstrable progress" in human rights and steering the country towards democratic civilian rule.

Despite noises by Abacha about pending elections next year, nothing real, no "demonstrable progress", has been achieved and detainees such as Moshood Abiola still languish in jail, with no immediate hope of being released.

On that score, there should be no doubt that Abacha has failed and should therefore be expelled from the Commonwealth. But life, or rather politics, is never that simple.

Last week, children of detainees such as Abiola made a plea to the leaders who will be meeting in Edinburgh to expel Nigeria, but talk around CHOGM this week is that Abacha will be gently rapped on the knuckles and urged to add details to his announced plans for

Nigeria tops the agenda at today's Commonwealth heads meeting, but the military junta will be treated with kid gloves, writes Political Editor **Mathatha Tsedu**

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Sowetan 23/10/97



Moshood Abiola.

elections next October.

So, to be sure, Saro-Wiwa will indeed be remembered, but the butcher of Abuja will get no more than a tongue-lashing.

There are two main reasons for this.

First, CHOGM is a collection of some noble, some not-so-noble and some downright ignoble men, some of whom are as bad as Abacha, if not worse.

These men, who form part of this 53-member organisation of mainly former British colonies, find it difficult to take a public stand against a regime similar in all main characteristics to the oppressive dictatorships that they themselves run in their respective countries.

Second, Nigeria has taken a correct stance in Sierra Leone, where a group of young officers, led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma, kicked out the democratically elected government and then declared themselves rulers and saviours of the country.

Nigeria stunned the world and opposed the coup, saying it was wrong to overthrow a democratically elected government. Many saw

the irony and said so.

But this did not stop Abacha from sending in troops to bolster those already in Sierra Leone and to take the new rulers head-on. Nigeria sent many soldiers and the problem festers on as Africa dithers over what to do with the military junta in Freetown.

Abacha sent soldiers in to defend a principle that he does not observe in Nigeria, but the action puts him on the side of the angels and will make Nigeria look good when Sierra Leone is discussed, making Nigeria's expulsion even more difficult.

Sierra Leone is another hot potato for CHOGM, and especially the African leaders. Deposed leader Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, now exiled in Guinea, has been specifically invited, and many here hope Koroma will also pitch up even though he may be denied entry into CHOGM.

Although this is an attractive option that would embarrass the junta and garner worldwide publicity against Koroma, it cannot be - if CHOGM wants to play a role in resolving this latest debacle in the Commonwealth it will have no choice but to negotiate with Sierra Leone's men in uniform, the *de facto* government of the day.

Mandela's role

These two issues, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, are the most pressing problems for the African delegates.

President Nelson Mandela, whose face is used by at least one newspaper here as part of its logo for CHOGM (although Queen Elizabeth, as head of the Commonwealth, is attending) will be expected to play a role even though the two countries are far from his responsibilities as chairman of the Southern African Development Community.

Having burnt his fingers on Nigeria in 1995 with correct, but hasty, action that did not carry the support of other African leaders, Mandela is likely to be more cautious.

But for people in Sierra Leone and Nigeria who see him as a pillar of strength such a course of action would spell doom for their cause. So, while ordinary will be pinning their hopes on him, Mandela will be hoping to draw economic benefit from what is likely to be his last Commonwealth heads meeting to combat unemployment at home.

Commonwealth 'will not expel Nigeria' despite calls

CT 24/10/97 (226)

EDINBURGH A Commonwealth summit opening here today is not planning to expel Nigeria, Commonwealth secretary-general Chief Emeka Anyaoku said yesterday

"The expulsion of Nigeria is not on the table, it is not one of the recommendations of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group."

He declined to detail other recommendations of the group set up to nudge Nigeria towards democracy and respect for human rights. It was suspended in 1995 for hanging nine minority rights activists, including author Ken Saro-Wiwa

Nigeria, Africa's most populous state, at 104 million, and a leading oil exporter, is expected to be the main talking point at the summit

Human rights activists earlier held a separate news conference and urged the Commonwealth to expel Nigeria from the 54-nation group

"Nigeria should be expelled," said Ms Flora MacDonald, a former Canadian minister, and patron of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

Mr Nike Ransome-Kuti of the Campaign for Democracy group in Nigeria, whose father, a human rights activist, is imprisoned in the country, said: "It has to be clear to the Commonwealth heads of government that this is no time to be pussy-footing about Nigeria and I call on them to expel Nigeria"

Commonwealth leaders are likely to put off any talk of imposing sanctions until October next year, when the military government in Abuja says it will hand over power to a democratically elected president

Opponents of the government say the real aim of Nigeria's transition to democracy plan is to have military ruler General Sani Abacha succeed himself as a civilian president through sham elections

"We do not believe Nigeria is on course for parliamentary democracy," said MacDonald, who led a fact-finding mission to Nigeria in the summer

Princess Anne focuses on risks of sex tourism

EDINBURGH: The problem of sex tourism was one of the many health challenges still confronting the Commonwealth, Britain's Princess Anne said yesterday.

She said experts should address "the impact of tourism in all its forms not least, I am sorry to say, those looking for easy sex not available elsewhere".

She was opening a Commonwealth Partnership in Medicine conference on the eve of the Commonwealth summit.

Human rights organisations have been pressing for tougher action against organised sex tours, particularly to Asian countries such as Thailand, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Several countries have made it a criminal offence to organise such tours.

From her experience as president of Save The Children, Princess Anne urged the scores of delegates to foster partnerships with people from all walks of life to further their programmes

"The Save The Children fund has spawned a completely new health initiative called Riders For Health with motorcycle enthusi-

asts in this country," she said.

The riders had passed their skills and knowledge on to other Commonwealth members who were now running an immunisation programme by motorbike. She said they maintained a fleet of motorcycles which were ideal for reaching remote areas.

The health challenges still facing Commonwealth member countries also included the welfare of pregnant mothers and reducing infant mortality rates.

Informing young people of the risks of HIV, particularly in Africa, where infection rates were rising, was also a key to containing the number of people becoming infected, she said.

Malaria, the prevention of tuberculosis and polio were perennial problems, particularly in Africa.

"To do that we will need co-operation on all levels," she said.

But it was important to create projects that local people could run themselves "rather than always being dependent on outside assistance" she added. — Sapa-AFP

of 1995

"During the last Commonwealth summit when Nigeria was suspended, there were 43 political prisoners and up till now none has been released," she said "In fact, the situation has deteriorated"

Nigeria has been in turmoil since ruling generals annulled a 1993 presidential vote that would have restored democracy

Among key political prisoners are Mr Moshood Abiola, the undeclared winner of the annulled vote, and former head of state Mr Olusegun Obasanjo, who was imprisoned with others for an alleged plot to topple Abacha

Anyaoku said the Edinburgh summit would focus on economic issues and the criteria for new membership. — Reuter

Nigeria reprieve defended

(226)

ART 24/10/97

Edinburgh – British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook denied today that the Commonwealth's decision not to impose immediate sanctions on Nigeria was a sign that the group's nerve was failing.

Officials said yesterday the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), which was set up to investigate Nigeria, would submit a report advising that the military government should be given another year to show that it was serious about introducing democracy

The news disappointed Nigerian dissidents and human rights activists, who have accused the Commonwealth of appeasing the government of General Sani Abacha

"I think there's a very serious misconception about what is in the report it is a very tough and robust report," Mr Cook said during a BBC radio interview

He said that Nigeria faced an oil embargo or even expulsion if it did not introduce democracy on time

"It's difficult to see what tougher measures could be taken," he said "Nobody is saying we just sit around and give Nigeria another year "

CMAG recommended a set of limited sanctions last year but suspended them to give Nigeria more time

Mr Cook said the grouping would have the right to impose the measures at any time over the next year

"If by next October (the Nigerians)

have missed the deadline, then the very tough proposals we're making – for an oil ban, for the seizure of financial assets of members of the government – will be recommended by the ministerial action group," he said

"Expulsion must be considered as one of the options "

Mr Cook and other CMAG members met representatives of various Nigerian non-governmental organisations earlier this year to help them complete the report

"I would say that when we met (the groups), most of them did not actually ask for expulsion because they wanted the Commonwealth to be able to continue to put pressure on Nigeria to meet its commitments," he said – Reuters

Expulsion not on the cards for

Nigeria

By ANGELA QUINTAL

Edinburgh - Nigeria would not be expelled from the 54-member Commonwealth, its secretary-general Emeka Anyaoku said in Edinburgh this week.

Speaking at a briefing ahead of yesterday's start to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, he said, "The expulsion of Nigeria is not on the table... it is not part of the recommendations of CMAAG (Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group)." CMAAG, of which South Africa is a mem-

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ber, was set up at the last heads of government meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, in 1995 to deal with persistent human rights violators.

Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth at the Auckland meeting following the execution of minority-rights activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogonis.

CMAAG made a set of recommendations which would be made public once the issue had been discussed by the heads of government in Edinburgh. British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook

Star 25/10/97

made it clear the Commonwealth would vote for Nigeria's continued suspension. He praised the "robust" package of punitive measures recommended by the CMAAG trouble-shooters.

Firmly committed

Anyaoku said CMAAG members had been conscious of a number of factors, including that Nigeria's human rights record was still very poor.

"The detainees and prisoners are still largely there. CMAAG is very much aware of that."

He added that as far as the democratisation programme was concerned, CMAAG had been assured Nigeria was firmly committed to having a democratically elected government in place by October 1 next year.

However, outraged human rights activists questioned the Commonwealth's commitment to upholding human rights and cross-examined Anyaoku about the Nigeria issue.

One Nigerian activist said the Commonwealth had betrayed the people of Nigeria. A large number of Nigerian activists

are present in Edinburgh to lobby for stricter measures against the military government of General Sani Abacha.

They include Saro-Wiwa's son Ken, Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka, and Nike Ransome-Kuti, whose father was jailed by Abacha's government.

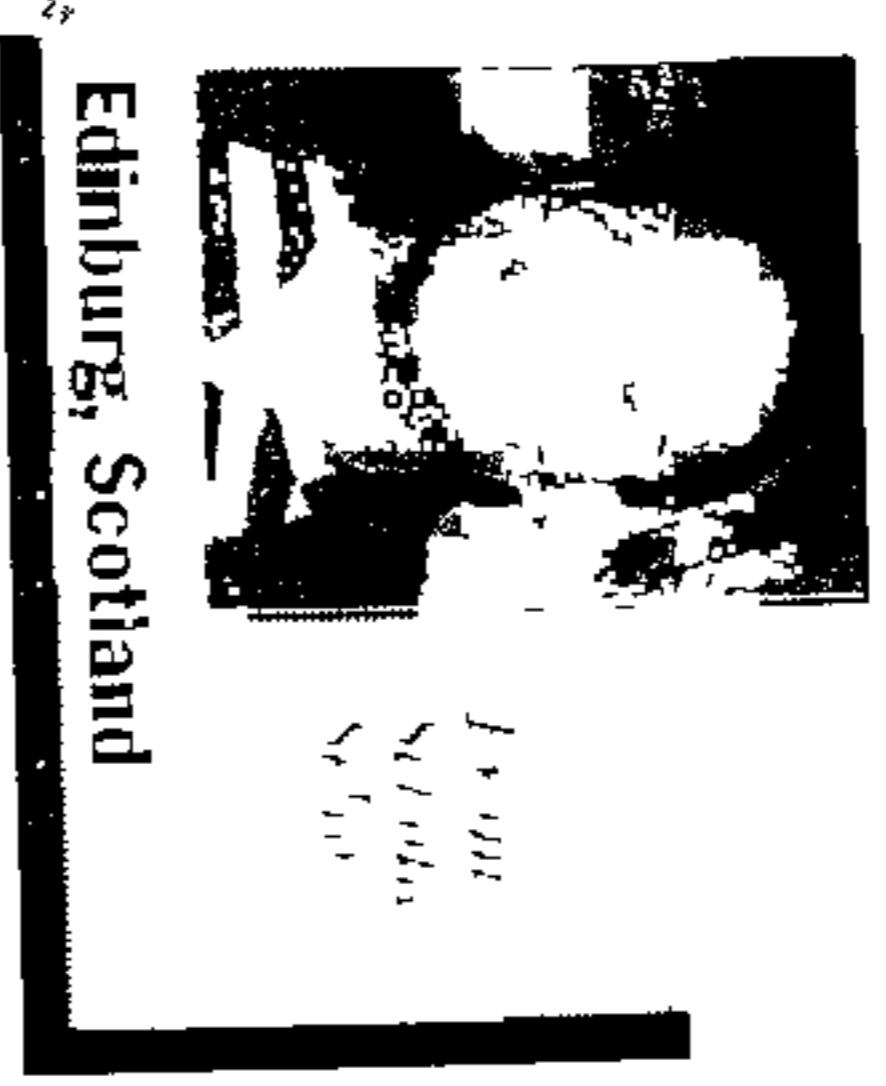
There was still no clarity yesterday on whether a Nigerian government delegation would attempt to gatecrash the heads of government meeting.

Anyaoku said he had sent a letter to Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikim urging him against arriving uninvited. - Sapa

Nigerian exiles angry Over SA's stance

CP 26/10/77

(226)



Edinburgh, Scotland

IT WILL go down in history as the first Commonwealth Conference which had no absence - but to the Nigerian opposition movement this success must rank as a major let-down

Many Nigerian opposition leaders, who are mostly in exile, came to the conference, in Edinburgh, Scotland, with high hopes that the military junta in their country would be sent a strong message, more punitive measures, including the threat of expulsion

But a day before the official opening, Commonwealth Secretary-General Chief Eneke Anyaoku told startled Nigerian exiles at a media briefing that the question of the country's expulsion from "The Club" was "not on the table"

If the Nigerians are baffled - and angry with this - they are even angrier at what they perceive to be a let-down by South Africa in particular. Many came to the conference with the hope that President Nelson Man-

Nigerian opposition
hope the assembled
leaders 'take action'
against their country
during the Conference.

dela would be in the forefront of those calling for the further marginalisation of the military dictatorship

Dapo Olorunyomi, a member of the opposition, who in many ANC days participated in his student campaigns in Nigeria, encapsulated the feelings of his countrymen when he said they were "terribly embarrassed and terribly confused" with the position of South Africa

In this cauldron of confusion and anger, many conspiracy theories abound. Mandela is still exonerated from any blame but Deputy President Thabo Mbeki is inexplicably being held responsible for not campaigning more vigorously to help restore democracy in this most populous state in Africa

The other theory doing the rounds among the exiled opposition community is that the increasing trade between the two countries - they could not quantify it - could also explain why South Africa is not more vocal in its opposition to Abacha's regime. South Africans are being accused

Why do you support 'that brutal regime?'

of opportunism
Nigerian opposition leaders argue that since the suspension of the country from the Commonwealth two years ago - following the execution of human rights activist Ken Saro Wiwa and other leaders from Ogoniland - General Sani Abacha and his militarymen have "not done enough" to deserve their membership

In imposing the suspension, the Commonwealth conference, held in New Zealand, had recommended that "if no demonstrable progress is made by the military junta in respecting human rights" more serious measures - including possible expulsion, should be considered

The present secretary-general was hardpressed this week to explain the sort of progress that Abacha has made
He conceded that the Nigerians' human rights record "is poor" and that there are still many detained and imprisoned people

However, he said the holding of local government elections in March; the promise of national elections next October and allowing for the establishment of five political parties could have influenced the decision of the special minister-

ial committee - tasked with this issue - not to take the extreme measure of suggesting expulsion

This did not wash with the Nigerians and they accuse the secretary-general of "ambivalence" because it is suspected that he may have personal interests to protect

Anyaoku has dismissed charges that he has not been "strongly critical" of the Nigerian regime

He detailed a series of public statements and lectures he has given criticising the military regime - even inside Nigeria itself

Disappointed that the expulsion of their country is not going to be discussed during this three-day meeting, attended by 43 heads of state, the Nigerian opposition is hopeful that when the conference winds up its discussions tomorrow the leaders will call for tougher sanctions against the regime in travel and economic spheres

Nothing short of this will decrease the growing perception among Nigerians at home and in exile that the Commonwealth is giving succour to a brutal regime

This is not the sort of image which South Africa - just emerging from apartheid - would want to be attached to her

CP 26/10/197

Commonwealth may collapse if leaders don't act against Nigerian regime – Soyinka

(26)

By SEKOLA SELLO

NIGERIA'S world-renowned writer Wole Soyinka has warned that failure by the Commonwealth leaders to take strong punitive measures against his country's military regime could lead to the break-up of this 53-member world body

Soyinka sounded this warning at an international media conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, where the Commonwealth is holding its two-yearly meeting

The sentiments of Soyinka, Africa's first Nobel literature prize winner, were echoed by other members of the Nigerian opposition who have coalesced under the banner of the United Democratic Front of Nigeria

Soyinka and other prominent Nigerians have condemned the decision by the Commonwealth not to expel their country from this body

The Commonwealth heads have instead decided to extend Nigeria's suspension for another year

This decision flies in the face of recommendations taken in Auckland, New Zealand, two years ago which called for the country's expulsion if General Sani Abacha and his military junta did not take demonstrable steps towards bringing democracy to Africa's most populous state.

Soyinka said the "democratic train" in Nigeria could not be stopped – in spite of the brutality of the Abacha regime and in spite of the failure by the Common-

wealth to rally to the aid of the Nigerian people

Sounding an ominous tone, Soyinka said after the overthrow of the Abacha regime, Nigerians would reconsider their continued participation in the Commonwealth

"This will happen," he said emphatically

He said that those struggling for democracy in his country would remember who had helped them, and those who paid lip service to their continuing being members of the Commonwealth

Soyinka said they would oppose the Abacha junta with non-violent means but did not rule out the possibility of other opposition tendencies in Nigeria adopting violent means to achieve this goal

"We do not want a violent route. We are going to travel along a diplomatic route

"But there may come a time when we stand aside for those who want to take a violent route"

The Nigerians have also warned that if the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity and international efforts fail to end the military dictatorship, "conflagration in Nigeria is bound to resonate across the continent" and that its implications could be "far worse than Rwanda and Zaire"

The warning that the Commonwealth could collapse unless it intervened on the side of democratic forces was also echoed by Zambia's former minister of justice and leader of the opposition Liberal Progressive Front, Dr Rodger Chongwe, who is also attending the conference

Chongwe recently survived an assassination attempt when Zambian police shot him in the head and slightly injured the country's first head of state, Dr Kenneth Kaunda

He was critical of the Commonwealth for what he said was its support for the "civilian dictatorship" of President Frederick Chiluba's government.

He said the Commonwealth ran the risk of becoming a "talking shop" if principles it set for itself were discarded for friends and colleagues in The Club – as the world body is affectionately known

Mandela urges leaders to be tough on Nigeria

OT 27/10/97 (226)

ST ANDREWS, Scotland: Mindful of his 27 years behind bars, President Nelson Mandela is eager to deal firmly with Nigeria to force the release of political prisoners

SOUTH AFRICAN President Nelson Mandela yesterday urged Commonwealth leaders to find more ways of pressuring Nigeria to release some of its political prisoners, officials said

Commonwealth leaders on Saturday agreed to suspend Nigeria for another year, and threatened expulsion unless it fulfilled its long-standing promise to democratise by October 1 next year.

But officials and diplomats said Mandela — who spent 27 years in jail for fighting apartheid — was deeply worried by what he saw as Nigeria's total intransigence over the release of political prisoners

"He has suggestions on how Nigeria could be dealt with. The leaders are now hearing for the first time his proposals on Nigeria," an official told reporters

"The leaders will consider ways the Commonwealth can bring about the release of prisoners," the official said after leaders began an informal session at the luxurious Old Course Hotel in the ancient university town of St Andrews, 80km north of Edinburgh

Mandela is said to be particularly worried about Mr Olusegun Obasanjo, a former military ruler who handed back the reins of power to a civilian government in 1978, and about Mr Mashood Abiola, presumed winner of presidential elections in June 1993

Obasanjo was jailed in 1995 for allegedly trying to stage a coup and Abiola was imprisoned in 1994 for proclaiming himself president after the generals had

annulled elections

British Foreign Secretary Mr Robin Cook earlier denied the Commonwealth had given in to Nigeria by deciding not to impose immediate tough sanctions

"Nigeria is to all intents and purposes outside the Commonwealth, and it will stay there until we have a democratic government to deal with," Cook said

"It undervalues the report of that ministerial action group to suggest that in any way they condone (Nigeria's behaviour) or do not propose robust action"

Human rights campaigners have called on the Commonwealth to expel Nigeria over the persistent failure of General Sani Abacha's military government to hand power to a democratically elected government

Commonwealth secretary-general Chief Emeka Anyaoku said they had made quite clear to Nigeria that unless it lived up to its promise to transfer power by October 1 next year, expulsion or an oil embargo would follow

"I think (the Commonwealth) has been brave and it's progressively getting braver every day on Nigeria," he said

Most of the Commonwealth leaders spent yesterday in retreat to do some of their main business out of the public gaze

Heads of government already have an economic declaration approved, and have agreed to a package of measures against Nigeria. But leaders still have time during the retreat to toughen up the measures, as human rights groups

have been urging. Their final report still has to be published

Mr Ken Wiwa, son of Ken Saro Wiwa, whose judicial execution two years ago led to Nigeria's suspension, said "The Commonwealth has failed its own principles and the people of Nigeria"

He urged tougher action and Commonwealth support for refugees and for the Ogoni people

The Edinburgh Commonwealth Economic Declaration, published late on Saturday, committed the 54 member nations to liberalise markets. It highlighted concern about the persistence of extreme poverty in many countries

The declaration also set an ambitious target of halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015 as well as seeking ways to solve the debt problems of many countries

Yesterday some of the leaders, such as Singapore President Goh Chok Tong, took the opportunity to play golf on one of the courses at St Andrews' Royal and Ancient Club, the home of golf

Tennis is the game of British Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair and he had offered to take on anyone he could beat. But aides hinted that he was having second thoughts about displaying his skills on the court to the world's TV cameras

He is basking in the success of winning backing for Saturday's economic declaration which British officials believe would not have been possible even as recently as a few years ago

Blair said before the Commonwealth meeting began that he hoped to turn it into a global economic powerhouse. He also got agreement that all countries should play a role in reducing greenhouse gases — Sapa-AFP

27/10/99

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SCOTTISH RETREAT: Nelson Mandela (centre) is accompanied by Indian Prime Minister Kumar Gujral, and Graca Machel, as they arrive in St Andrews for the retreat day of their Commonwealth summit yesterday

PICTURE AP

Mandela's bid to make Nigeria toe line spurned

Story 27/10/97 (226)

Commonwealth leaders oppose request to send special team in bid to improve country's human rights record

REUTERS

St Andrews, Scotland

Commonwealth leaders rejected a suggestion by President Nelson Mandela yesterday that a special team be sent to Nigeria in an effort to improve its human rights record, officials said.

A day earlier, the leaders had extended Nigeria's suspension from the 54-nation grouping and threatened it with expulsion unless the military government of General Sani Abacha stuck to its latest timetable for the long-promised restoration of democracy.

Mandela urged an informal meeting of leaders in the ancient university town of St Andrews to find more ways of pressuring Nigeria to release some of its most eminent political prisoners.

"One of the proposals was that another team of ministers should go out to Nigeria and

see what could be done, but I don't think that idea really took off," a British official said.

The decision to suspend Nigeria and threaten it with a series of tough sanctions was contained in a report by the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group.

Some African leaders have seemed keen to explore ways of engaging Nigeria in further dialogue.

Officials and diplomats said Mandela was deeply worried by what he saw as Nigeria's total intransigence over the release of political prisoners.

Mandela is said to be particularly worried about Olusegun Obasanjo, a former military ruler who handed the reins of power to a civilian government in 1978, and Moshood Abiola, presumed winner of presidential elections in June 1993.

Obasanjo was jailed in 1995 for allegedly trying to mount a coup, while Abiola was impris-

oned in 1994 for proclaiming himself president after the elections were annulled.

Nigerian dissidents and human rights activists want the Commonwealth to expel Nigeria, which was suspended in late 1995 after executing author Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority-rights activists.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook earlier demed the Commonwealth had given in to Nigeria by deciding not to impose immediate tough sanctions "Nigeria is to all intents and purposes outside the Commonwealth and it will stay there until we have a democratic government to deal with," he told BBC television.

Commonwealth secretary-general Emeka Anyaoku said the grouping had made it quite clear to Nigeria that unless it lived up to its promise to transfer power by October 1 next year, expulsion or an oil embargo would follow.

Sanctions deadline imposed on Lagos

Tim Cohen

EDINBURGH — The Commonwealth will today call for an oil embargo against Nigeria if a democratic government is not in place by October 1 next year, but has rejected President Nelson Mandela's proposal for an eminent persons group to visit the country

In contradiction to criticism that it is softening its position on Nigeria, a report to the 54-member organisation suggests only light sanctions until October, but recommends potentially crippling sanctions after that

The report by the Commonwealth ministerial action group, which also recommends Nigeria's continued suspension from the Commonwealth, was adopted. It proposes that the group be empowered to invoke Commonwealth-wide implementation of measures if it thinks these would "serve to encourage

greater integrity of the process of transition and respect for human rights"

The measures which could be invoked before October include visa restrictions against members of the Nigerian regime, withdrawal of military attaches, an arms export embargo, a visa-based ban on sporting contact and downgrading of cultural and diplomatic links

If after October 1 Nigeria has not completed a credible transition to democratic government, heads of government can consider expelling Nigeria from the Commonwealth

In addition, a mandatory oil embargo, a ban on air links with Nigeria and the freezing of the financial assets and bank accounts in foreign countries of members of the regime and their families would be considered

Although the sanctions proposed satisfy Nigerian democracy activists,

(226)
no measures are proposed which ensure compliance with the recommendations should they be imposed

The report is sharply critical of Nigeria's progress towards democracy, noting increasing limitations on freedom of speech and that detention without trial continued to be commonplace

British officials said Mandela's proposal for a visit to the country by a new eminent persons group was discussed but "fizzled out"

It is understood the idea was dropped after intervention by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, who proposed that since the action group was already established, it should continue to be the investigating body. It was recommended that the group be enlarged with more representation from west African countries

BD 27/10/97 See Page 6

daranaike Kumaratunga had expressed concern that Tamils in foreign countries,

Sanctions against Nigeria postponed

CT 28/10/97

(2ab)

EDINBURGH: British Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair wrapped up the Commonwealth summit here yesterday, but his crusade to transform the group into a cohesive trade body was eclipsed by continued concern over Nigeria's human rights record and the 1988 Lockerbie bombing.

Blair said the four-day summit had touched on a number of issues of "controversy and difficulty", but leaders agreed on few concrete measures to pressure Nigeria

into returning to the democratic fold.

Ministers endorsed Nigeria's continued suspension from the Commonwealth, but ruled out the immediate imposition of sanctions. If Nigeria fails to hold elections by October next year, it may face an oil embargo and expulsion.

Renewal emerged as a key theme at the summit.

Leaders sealed their economic agenda with the publication of the Edinburgh Dec-

laration of economic principles, which committed members to market principles, free trade, gender equality and political stability.

The document is high on ideology but low on practical measures capable of achieving its goal of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015.

Ministers launched a \$200-million (R944m) investment fund to finance businesses in South Asia. — Sapa-AFP

BIGGEST RANGE, LOWEST PRICES EVERYDAY!

CAPE TIMES

Commonwealth readies for steelier grip on Nigerian regime

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Country remains beyond the pale until democracy is restored

28/11/97

REUTERS
Edinburgh

Commonwealth leaders ended a four-day summit yesterday by vowing to crack down on Nigeria unless it improved its human rights record, and stressed the need to improve economic ties between members

Human rights activists and dissidents have criticised the 54-nation grouping for not expelling Nigeria over its failure to introduce democratic reforms, but the leaders made clear they wanted to adopt a carrot-and-stick approach.

The meeting's final commu-

niqué confirmed that Nigeria would remain suspended from the Commonwealth, as it has been for the past two years. If its military government did not restore democracy by October 1 next year as promised, it faced possible expulsion and an oil embargo.

"Far from not taking tough action here, we have taken very, very tough action," British Prime Minister Tony Blair told a concluding news conference.

"The suspension continues, there will be further sanctions which follow, and if there isn't proper progress then there's no doubt at all that Nigeria's position will be in grave jeopardy in

the Commonwealth."

Blair, who is trying to make the Commonwealth more relevant, stressed the importance of the economic declaration leaders agreed to at the weekend, which spelt out the need to boost trade and the role of the private sector.

"In the end we are going to be better able to produce stable and democratic regimes if we raise the standards of living of people throughout the Commonwealth," he said.

"So it's important we see both the economic and political rights going together. The stronger the economic basis of a country, the easier and better

it will be to enhance the democratic rights."

Several African nations say more should be done to engage Nigeria in dialogue, but the leaders rejected a call from President Nelson Mandela to send a high-level team for more talks.

To assuage Mandela's concerns, they did insert a paragraph into the communiqué expressing concern about the continued detention of many prominent Nigerians.

The Financial Times said the Commonwealth had made a grave mistake by not imposing immediate sanctions on Nigeria.

SA Leaves Nigerian Monitoring Group (226)

Tim Cohen

EDINBURGH — The Commonwealth heads of government meeting ended yesterday with the organisation under fire for not having taken a tougher line on Nigeria, while SA dropped out of the group of countries monitoring the Nigerian situation and human rights abuses.

At the closing news conference, British Prime Minister Tony Blair defended the Commonwealth's position on Nigeria, arguing that it specified clearly defined sanctions which would increase in intensity should elections not take place in October next year.

Blair was answering criticisms which included the accusation that the recommendations did not specify minimum conditions for free elections in Nigeria, nor did they indicate that any decision to impose sanctions would be binding on Commonwealth members.

Blair argued that instead of focusing on issues of detail, the overall thrust of the report did indicate that Nigeria was a "prime source of Commonwealth concern."

The final communique indicated that modest sanctions would be imposed up to October next year,

and much stronger sanctions could be imposed if elections did not take place in October.

Earlier, President Nelson Mandela said there would be a strong demand that these measures should be applied if elections did not take place.

"We cannot allow a situation to exist where the people are denied basic human rights."

The imposition of sanctions would be imposed following recommendations of the Commonwealth ministerial action group, which was made up of foreign ministers from eight Commonwealth member countries.

The group, established after the Commonwealth meeting in Auckland, consisted of Britain, Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Malaysia, Zimbabwe, SA and New Zealand.

The action group said it had reviewed its composition and had decided that the group should remain the same except that SA and Jamaica should be replaced by Barbados and Botswana.

The remit of the new action group was extended to examine other member countries deemed to be in serious or persistent violation of the Harare principles.



SA President Nelson Mandela drinks whiskey from the traditional Scottish quaiach, a ceremonial drinking cup, after being awarded the freedom of the city of Edinburgh, at a private ceremony in Edinburgh.

Picture AP



Commonwealth again fails to grasp Nigeria

nette

Activists dismayed at kid-glove treatment despite 1995 promises, writes Mary Braid in London

Star 29/10/97

(226)

The end-of-conference backslapping and endless playful jibes about Tony Blair's tender years were salt in the wounds of Nigerian political activists at the Commonwealth summit in Edinburgh.

Presidents from all over the English-speaking world had come together to chew the fat, but to many Nigerian human rights groups the conference was literally a matter of life and death. While heads of state looked forward to teeing up on St Andrews' famous golf course the activists were fighting in an Edinburgh back street with supporters of General Sani Abacha's military regime. For while this was the first Commonwealth Conference to have an economic theme it was overshadowed, like the last,

by the excesses of African dictators and strident demands from human rights activists for the expulsion from the Commonwealth of Nigeria.

Two years after Nigeria embarrassed Commonwealth leaders by executing political activist Ken Saro-Wiwa in the middle of its Auckland summit, Nike Ransome-Kuti, whose father Beko now languishes in a Nigerian jail, had her hopes dashed. She said the Commonwealth had failed to live up to its New Zealand promise to expel Nigeria in Edinburgh if democracy was not restored. Instead, it had acted, she said "as if its existence depends on placating Nigeria not to unilaterally quit the fold". The ordinary people of Nigeria would be bitterly disappointed. Edinburgh would be remembered as the place where the Commonwealth lost its credibility, she said.

Even President Nelson Mandela, who once led attacks on Abacha, fudged on Nigeria this time. But for Tony Blair the summit was a wonderful event. Self-interest was certainly served.

The host government used the opening ceremony to plug its own patch with an extraordinary in-your-face, Riverdance-style video, which celebrated Labour's brave new ever-so-modern Britain. And Blair's assertion that outside the UN there is no comparable international body was endorsed by President Nelson Mandela, once again the darling of the conference, despite his controversial intervention on Libya's behalf over the Lockerbie bombing, which rather dominated events. "The very fact that we can come here

and exchange points of view and opinions is a tremendous signal of optimism for the future of our world," said Blair. That did not comfort those for whom the conference was a human rights disaster and who pointed out the number of despots sitting comfortably, despite the 1991 Harare declaration on democracy and human rights, around the table.

Frances D'Souza, spokesman for freedom of expression group Article 19, criticised the backsliding on Nigeria, and the fact that Cameroon and Kenya had been allowed to glide through the weekend without any criticism of their own disgraceful records.

"Commonwealth leaders' vague references to the importance of the Harare declaration are of no comfort to the peo-

ple in Nigeria, the Gambia, Kenya and Cameroon, among others, who are suffering human rights abuses." The chick-ens she promised would come home to roost. "The Commonwealth is storing up trouble for itself as those who have no commitment to the democratic process and welfare of their citizens see the le-acy with which abuses are treated." In two years the Commonwealth will roll into Durban. For the ANC it will be another international boost. But Nigerian activists painted a nightmare picture. Inaction, they said, could result in Abacha the despot rigging an election to become Abacha the president. In Durban, having traded his uniform for some fetching beachwear, he might very well be promenade along the beachfront, a fully pledged Commonwealth member. - The Independent, London

Lagos praises support for its democracy plan

BD 30/10/97

(226)

LAGOS — Nigerian Foreign Minister Tom Ikimi applauded the Commonwealth for what he called an endorsement of the military government's plan to restore civilian rule next year, local newspapers reported yesterday.

Ikimi was speaking in Lagos after Commonwealth leaders decided to prolong Nigeria's expulsion by a year to give the democracy plan a chance.

The Commonwealth leaders insisted they were not taking a soft line by not expelling the oil-rich West African country.

"I think it is a good thing that they support our transition programme," Ikimi was quoted as saying at Lagos airport by the independent Vanguard newspaper.

Human rights activists and Nigerian dissidents criticised the 54-nation Commonwealth for not expelling Nigeria over its failure to introduce democratic reforms.

However, leaders at the biennial summit, which ended in Scotland on

Monday, made it clear they wanted to adopt a carrot-and-stick approach.

Nigeria was suspended from the Commonwealth two years ago after hanging nine minority rights activists for murder, including author Ken Saro-Wiwa, despite international pleas for clemency.

Nigeria was given two years to mend its ways or face expulsion from the Commonwealth.

"We asked them to consider our transitional plan two years ago, but they failed to do that."

In June 1996 ... in London we asked them to endorse our transition programme and support it.

"So at the end it seems that is what they want to do now," Ikimi said.

Activists and many Western countries are wary of the plan to restore civilian rule in October next year.

They suspect the democracy restoration plan may be used to keep military strongman Gen Sani Abacha in office. — Reuter.



Mandela and Blair trade routes are the way to go

COMMONWEALTH

Looking to world markets in search of growth

But compromise is the order of the day on Nigerian democracy and environmental imperatives

At last. A Commonwealth conference at which the main business was to be business. Though the attention of the weekend summit in Edinburgh was distracted by political difficulties, such as General Sani Abacha's reluctance to return Nigeria to democracy, for the first time the 54-nation postcolonial club managed to set, and largely stick to, an economic theme.

The 51 heads of State and government gathered in Scotland agreed to a set of economic principles to complement the formula for democracy that their countries produced at the 1991 Harare summit.

The Edinburgh declaration, as it is known, hipped all the right hoorays. Gone were the old stresses on the economic role of the State, trade barriers and the ox-wagon.

In their place was this core statement in the declaration: "Expanding trade and investment flows, driven by new technologies and the spread of market forces, have emerged as engines of growth."

Voicing these sentiments involved a belated, grudging admission by some, particularly the Africans present, that the doctrine of national economic self-reliance can, paradoxically, prove the quickest route to dependence on aid donors.

But many of the leaders at the summit were afraid of the implications of free trade and current world market conditions on their economies.

It is not difficult to see why.

Thirty-one Commonwealth member states have populations smaller than 1.5m. Singapore, with about 3m people, may have succeeded brilliantly. But it has a fortunate geographical position along international trade routes, and can hope to attract funds from the large, wealthy emigrant Chinese merchant class in southeast Asia.

But what of, for example, the chain of coral atolls in the south Pacific called Tuvalu? It has only 10 000 people. Their kinsmen over the seas use only canoes and their chief exports are coconuts, copra,

handicrafts and postage stamps. These are unlikely to command much attention when the World Trade Organisation starts its new round of negotiations on the liberalisation of trade in agricultural goods and services in 1999.

But being swamped economically is not the biggest issue on the minds of Tuvaluans. Like fellow Commonwealth members on the Pacific island chain of Kiribati, and residents of the Maldives southwest of India, Tuvaluans fear quite literally being swallowed up by the ocean.

If there is much more global warming, leading to further melting of the polar ice cap, they will soon need flippers and fins instead of feet.

This threat meant that the debate over cutting emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases took on a certain passion in Edinburgh. But it still tended to be conducted in familiar terms.

The rapidly developing countries, such as Malaysia, argued that the industrialised countries must lead by example on cutting emissions since they are primarily responsible for climatic problems.

The industrialised countries, such as Australia, fear for the competitiveness of their industries if they enforce tough environmental laws, so they tried to put the onus on developing countries.

The Edinburgh summit did get the industrialised members to agree to push for "significant reductions" in greenhouse gas emissions at the December conference on the environment in Kyoto, Japan. But that formulation is, of course, broad enough for a mob of kangaroos to jump through.

That is, however, the Commonwealth's way of doing things: compromise to whatever extent is necessary to get an agreement.

And the club's new position on Nigeria is no less porous. There will be no immediate sanctions against Nigeria and, though suspended, it will not be expelled from the Commonwealth.

Instead, sanctions will be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the regime's plan to return the country to civilian rule by October next year. If the Commonwealth then deems the transition unsatisfactory, it has given itself the option of sanctions. These range from visa restrictions on government officials to an embargo on Nigerian oil, the commodity which provides more than 90% of the country's foreign earnings.

It is a strategy couched in enough "ifs" and "buts" for an armed column to drive through it. The odds are about even that General Abacha will do just that.

Howard Barrell, London

Nigeria eases grip on telecoms sector

CTLR) 31/10/97 (22b)

MATTHEW TOSTEVIN

Lagos — Nigeria's military government had passed the point of no return in opening up the lucrative telecommunications sector to private investors, the state-run phone company's first competitor said yesterday.

Chandru Ramani, the Indian businessman heading Multi-Links Telecommunications which is now poised to put 50 000 new lines into the commercial capital Lagos, said state-run Nitel was also firmly committed to an open market.

"I don't think they can back out now, and there are at least two other serious private operators. It would be too difficult to stop it once we have customers," Ramani said.

Telecommunications is seen by analysts as a litmus test of the military government's willingness to take its hands off the inefficient but potentially lucrative state-run sector and allow private companies the freedom to operate.

It has taken five years from the first announcement that telecoms would be deregulated to the stage where Multi-Links can say it is ready to provide 50 000 fixed wireless telephone sets in Lagos after an initial investment of \$22 million.

"Now it is plain that (the gov-

ernment's) intentions are genuine and the sector is ripe for investment from anyone outside or inside who is interested. I know for a fact that many people are," said Ramani.

Foreign investors who had been cautiously eyeing Nigeria as a potential emerging market were turned off in January when military ruler General Sani Abacha said there would be no more privatisation of state enterprises without further study.

Hopes of an open market received another blow in July, when private firms operating satellite phones cried foul after being told they had disobeyed the rules and would henceforth have to work through Nitel.

Ramani said he believed all worries that Nitel would not accept another company in the market would disappear now that Multi-Links has an interconnectivity agreement with the state firm.

Nigeria's phones are in a mess, and despite a Nitel programme of digitalisation, customers are frequently cut off by rain or even by company officials looking for a very unofficial "fee" to reconnect them.

For Africa's most populous nation of at least 104 million people, only an estimated 400 000 phone lines are in service. — Reuter

World turns its back on Saro-Wiwa — again ⁽²²⁶⁾

M+G 31/10-6/11/97

Angella Johnson

How do you live with the knowledge that your father's last thoughts on the way to the gallows might have been, "If only my son had done more to save me"?

Ken Wiwa's eyes darken with pain as he shares this recurring nightmare, which is fuelled by guilt that he could not prevent the Nigerian military regime from killing acclaimed writer and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa.

That was two years ago. The execution was defiantly carried out during the last Commonwealth heads of government meeting in New Zealand while Wiwa (he changed his name a few years ago to avoid being called Saro-Wiwa junior) was frantically trying to persuade international governments to stop it.

Over the past week he has been lobbying them again. It's like *déjà vu*, same summit meeting, same issues. Only this time the venue is the Scottish city of Edinburgh and his father is already dead. "But we want his body so that we can give him a proper burial," he says.

When Saro-Wiwa was arrested in 1993 for murder, Wiwa became an unofficial envoy, travelling the world to spread his father's message about the Ogoni people, Shell and Nigerian human rights abuses.

World leaders queued up to shake his hand and offer platitudes. An unwordly young man with aspirations to become a journalist, Wiwa found doors opened to him by the likes of United States Vice-President Al Gore, former United Nations secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali and prime ministers across the globe.

It was all a cynical act of political convenience by players who know the power of appearances. "They just wanted to be photographed with me, to make it look as if they were really doing something. But in reality they were too cowardly to act against Nigeria because of the oil."

It has been a steep learning curve for Wiwa. "It was an eye-opener, and that's putting it mildly," he sighed. "I, however, realised that I didn't want to go into politics — it's far too duplicitous."

But Wiwa was in Edinburgh trying to get the same cynical politicians to levy tough sanc-



Ken Wiwa: Fuelled by guilt that he couldn't save his father

tions against the Nigerian junta for its failure to restore democracy. "We want to expose the hypocrisy here. Maybe we can shame them into action."

Wiwa and other Nigerian activists were hoping the summit would sanction an independent inquiry to go to Ogoni and find out who was responsible for the murders. Saro-Wiwa was condemned for, and the estimated further 3 000 locals who have been killed throughout the crisis.

They also wanted to see the end of the military occupation of Ogoni and asylum for the refugees who had fled to West Africa, including members of the Saro-Wiwa family.

Most importantly, Wiwa wanted pressure to be brought on the Nigerian government to clear his father's name, retrieve the body from an unmarked grave and give him a proper resting place. He failed on all counts.

But he certainly tried his best to shock the Commonwealth leaders into action. He points to a coil of heavy industrial rope lying at his feet, which the campaign group brought to Edinburgh for a publicity stunt. They had planned to erect makeshift gallows outside the conference centre. But it didn't happen.

the stakeholders

the Christ himself.

Consolidation of accounting firms causes jitters

The planned mergers among the 'big six' accounting firms could face regulatory intervention, writes Jim Kelly

Ed 19/11/97

THE decision of the world's leading stock market regulators to scrutinise the latest crop of mergers among the big six accounting firms introduces a significant new hurdle to global consolidation in the sector. The news must have chilled the blood of those who have risked so much in floating ambitious plans to create big firms.

The intervention was entirely unexpected and came from an unlikely source. The International Organisation of Securities Commissions (Iosco), the organisation of securities regulators, issued a communiqué on the Internet from Taipei following its annual conference hosted by the local Securities and Futures Commission. Representatives of the US Securities and Exchange Commission and Britain's new Financial Services Authority were present.

Several observers at the conference have said the merger plans recently announced by Price Waterhouse and Coopers & Lybrand, and Ernst & Young and KPMG, were a topic of considerable informal discussion among senior regulators.

The final communiqué devotes a paragraph to "taking note of the consolidation of the largest international accounting firms". The rest of the paragraph will have been read with some horror by those in the profession who fear regulatory intervention.

Iosco went on to note "the increasing reliance on revenues from consulting and other nonaudit services" among the big six firms and the need to "ex-

amine the impact of those developments on the independence and quality of audits conducted and other accounting services provided by those firms".

The argument apparently behind these remarks is an old one, but potent nonetheless. It is also highly sensitive. Does the increasing reliance of the big firms on fee income from business advice — in many cases from audit clients — undermine their ability to be independent in their roles as statutory auditors?

Until now the presumption has been that regulators would rely on self-regulation by the firms to safeguard independence. A whole sheaf of rules is followed by the big firms to safeguard shareholders and secure auditor independence. Certainly the European Commission has decided to work with the profession — rather than seeking to intervene.

But the Iosco communiqué confirms the worst fears of critics of the mergers — that they would focus attention on this area again and force regulators to consider safeguards. As one observer said "The big six firms have put their heads above the parapet."

The communiqué makes it clear that such concerns do exist. But the regulators are also worried about their own lack of choice when it comes to using professional firms to help them regulate the market — such as in the British statutory requirement that auditors report on internal controls within a bank.

Several regulators complain that the big six are already bumping into themselves — finding that conflicts of interest severely reduce the choice available.

In the light of the mergers regulators are concerned that the big six are in many cases the only firms they can ask to undertake many of these tasks, which include a range of roles linked to corporate failures, rescues, and transactions. Global expertise across borders — are rare — but regulators are clearly worried at the small size of the pool which will be left.

If both mergers go through the big six will become the big four.

But regulators know that the logic which has

forced such consolidation may eventually produce a big three — indeed the European Commission has already privately indicated it will in part consider the merger applications against a backdrop of an eventual market of three big firms. In such a market regulators must be concerned about lack of choice.

Iosco's intervention is surprising because until now it was felt that regulatory opposition would come from competition authorities — principally in the US, Europe and Tokyo. Concern among securities regulators is potentially more dangerous as it will focus on audit — where the merged firms are most exposed to allegations of market dominance — and because it involves large multinational clients — the very market they are merging to serve.

Of course Iosco is just a club. But it is powerful, with prestigious members. Its pronouncements are likely to establish practice. It is understood that while it may not make a submission to the competition authorities, it may alert them to concerns about the mergers. The communiqué says that

Iosco's technical committee — which facilitates the listing of multinational companies — "will consider the policy implications of changes within the accounting profession on independent audits of financial statements of securities issuers and of financial services firms". While no judgement is given in the communiqué it is clear genuine concerns exist.

It is ironic that Iosco's interest should bring attention to the big six. Since the mergers were announced they have pleaded for a global view to be taken of the markets in which they operate. Iosco takes such a view — but has to deal with the realities of policing the individual stock exchanges which underpin the system. And it has to take a view of the market where the big six hold sway. Meanwhile, the big six want regulators to look at the global consultancy market — a more flexible and varied sector.

It will also be ironic if the rush to merge finally brings to the surface yet again the argument that the big firms should be further restricted in the hands of big firms they can provide. World Accounting Report editor David Cairns said "Global mergers require global regulation. If this means Iosco is going to limit the big firms doing nonaudit work for audit clients, then it has big implications." Those implications are unlikely to include blocking the mergers — but they may mean the big six have to pay a high price for their global ambitions — Financial Times

TRC sacks corrupt staff

(252)

MTC 31/10-6/11/97

Wonder Hlongwa

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) has been forced to sack or discipline about 20 staff members in the last year for offences ranging from poor work performance and drunkenness to fraud and rape.

Equipment valued at thousands of rand, including cars, computers and cellphones, has been stolen or abused in this time and many commission employees have fraudulently claimed money they were not entitled to. An investigator was sacked after being found guilty of rape and indecent assault of a minor.

The *Mail & Guardian* is in the possession of a document that lists some of these offences, the names of 22 staff members concerned and the outcome of disciplinary procedures — most often dismissal or resignation.

The most senior staffer on the list is Loyiso Mpumlwana, former regional head of the commission's East London office. He faced 10 charges of poor work performance, was found guilty on eight charges, but "resigned before sanction was passed", according to the document.

However, most staff members were dismissed after inquiries into their poor work performance. Although some of them faced additional charges of abuse of equipment or "unbecoming behaviour" and drunkenness at work, only three staff members have been found guilty of fraud.

But many were axed after misusing motor vehicles and other equipment. One was dismissed after using the commission's international courier service for personal mail.

Staffers who were found guilty of fraudulent or unauthorised expenditure were ordered to reimburse the commission. Those who presented fraudulent degrees or misrepresented themselves were dismissed.

The disciplinary action took place at the commission's Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg and East London offices.

Commission representative John Allen said the organisation had 400 staffers and it was "normal" in a body that size that 22 people



Not blessed: Desmond Tutu's commission had to get rid of a number of bad apples

were disciplined and dismissed.

"We are accountable to Parliament. If people do not perform up to standard we have to take action against them," Allen said.

At the Durban commission offices, at least one car, two computers and four cellular phones were stolen. "I can't say the cellular phones were stolen, because in some instances staffers lose them, like forgetting them at the airport," said the commission's Kwazulu-Natal regional manager, Wendy Watson.

Staff members at the office claim expenses are far higher than they should be, as claims were made for overnight accommodation in Pietermaritzburg, 90km from Durban.

"Two staffers went to Hammersdale for a day, which is only 60km away but claimed

money, saying they had to stay overnight. Watson said she was not aware of this claim but Satchie Govender, head of investigations, said they had been paid. "We have a system whereby, when people travel to do investigations and stay overnight, they make claim and are paid," Govender said.

Staff members claim theft in commission offices was not only a financial loss, but a serious breach of security as well.

A memorandum sent to Durban staffers following the theft of computers valued at R21 000 said "The contents [of the computer] are the results of investigations, and are confidential. People's lives could be endangered by access to this information. We will, in future, lock the foyer doors outside office hours."

Goosen quit after 'sinister' slur

Peta Thornycroft

When the truth commission's chief investigator, Glen Goosen, was accused of having a "sinister" agenda two weeks ago it was the last straw. He abruptly resigned and has refused to discuss his reasons outside the commission.

Some of his colleagues in the regional offices now say they were shocked when Goosen's boss, Dumisa Ntsebeza, sent round an internal memorandum accusing Goosen of "sinister" motives in reorganising the investigative unit before the commission's shutdown.

In the regions, investigators had already been briefed by Goosen about their new responsibilities, a reorganisation process sanctioned by the commission. But the reorganisation meant some investigators were told their contracts would not be extended.

Some objected, and in Durban, one of them complained about Goosen, saying he was a racist. But the overwhelming number of black

staff in the Durban office supported Goosen in a letter to Ntsebeza.

The investigators and Goosen believed the accusation of "sinister" motives — in the context of uncovering the truth about South Africa's past — was a terminal insult.

Ntsebeza, the public, affable face of the investigations unit, chose to back the factions against Goosen. Ntsebeza expressed his "regret" at the use of the word "sinister" in his memo but it had been the final blow in the deteriorating relationship.

Goosen, who will help write up a section of the commission's final report, worked at the Port Elizabeth Bar. He will now have to re-start his career.

The majority of the investigators and those who have worked closely with the commission say they regret his departure before the end of their work.

"This is a highly partisan perception by staff on the ground," says commission representative John Allen.



Ntsebeza: Regrets calling a colleague's actions 'sinister'

McBride forces judicial showdown

M+G 31/10/97-6 (252)
11/97

The wife of a death row survivor this week demanded that judges be compelled to appear before the truth commission to account for their actions. David Beresford reports

Moments of high drama have become familiar to the proceedings of the truth commission. But there can have been few as memorable as a moment this week when the wife of a survivor of death row threw down the gauntlet to South Africa's judiciary.

In one of the most forceful expositions of *j'accuse* yet heard by the commission, Paula McBride tore into the record of the judiciary under apartheid with a submission that threatened to put truth commission chair Desmond Tutu and his commissioners on a collision course with the Bench.

The drama developed as hearings on the judiciary and the legal profession — described by the former archbishop as the most important after those involving victims of human rights abuses — got under way in the commission's Johannesburg headquarters on Monday.

They opened with a statement by Tutu expressing his "distress" that not a single member of the judiciary had seen fit to put in an appearance. He said their failure to turn up indicated that "they have not yet changed a mindset that properly belongs to the old dispensation."

It appeared, however, that he was going to let the issue lie with his rebuke until McBride — who married her husband, Robert, on death row in the 1980s and fought an extraordinary battle to save him from the hangman — took the witness stand to demand that the judges be forced to appear.

Her attack had Tutu and his fellow commissioners holding a hurried meeting during

the lunch adjournment to decide whether to subject the judges to the ultimate humiliation of a subpoena. No decision was taken, but it is believed sentiment was in favour of confronting the Bench if it proved necessary.

McBride accused the country's judges of having made a bigger contribution than all the state's assassins in shoring up the system. "The judiciary enforced every aspect of apartheid from the most petty and degrading to the most murderous and genocidal," she said.

"They sent people to jail for walking the streets of their own country without a pass, for using 'white' facilities, for loving someone of the wrong colour, for trying to live, or set up business outside of ghettos and bantustans. They sent people to jail or the gallows, knowing full well that they had not had a competent defence. They gladly accepted statements that had obviously been secured through torture. They enforced legislation that silenced the press.

"They presided over commissions of inquiry that whitewashed security force excesses and corruption. They upheld the grand theft of the homes and lands of black people. They punished opponents of their system (for their's it was) with the harshest array of cruelties, including banishments, house arrests, hard labour, lengthy jail sentences and, wherever they could find any pretext, death.

"Yet even up to now they have managed to preserve and propagate the absurdity that they were somehow above it all — impartial." The judiciary "gave the system a veneer of respectability which the state could flaunt to the outside world and at the same time added steel



Judicious intervention: Paula McBride made a submission to the truth commission. PHOTO: ELLEN ELMENDORP

to the hand that crushed so many of the people of this country."

Pointing out that leaders of the liberation movement had previously been subpoenaed, McBride — her voice trembling with emotion — demanded "Why are the judges not being subpoenaed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to account for what they have done in our history?"

McBride went on to give an analysis of cases which she said showed the identification of the judiciary with the apartheid system. She contrasted the trial of a teenage ANC guerrilla who, in an act of war, had planted a landmine which killed five people with that of a white farmer who — "irritated" by trespassers — had killed two children, aged five and nine, by running them down with a truck. "He drove over them repeatedly, backwards and forwards, just to make sure they were dead."

The guerrilla, Andrew Zondo, was hanged after his age was found not to be extenuation. The farmer's age — 70 — was found to be extenuation and he received a suspended five-year sentence. "He didn't even spend a day in jail."

CT NIGERIA

(226)

China to resurrect Delta Steel operations

China would take control of the almost lifeless Delta Steel Company in southern Nigeria for an initial renewable 10-year period, the Nigerian pro-government Daily Times reported yesterday.

Bashir Dalhafi, the Nigerian power and steel minister, said the two governments had recently signed a memorandum of understanding sealing the deal, but added that details remained to be worked out. According to Dalhafi, Chinese officials have assured that the firm at Aladja would attain 40 percent of its installed production capacity within a year of its takeover and reach the 100 percent level within five years, the newspaper reported.

Established more than 15 years ago under the ministry of power and steel, the Delta Steel Company has so far been a "white elephant" project. The paper reported that under the new dispensation, it would now be run as a business venture. —AET, Lagos

CT (BR) 4/11/97

AFRICAN BUSINESS

ENERGY Escravos project will end the careless flaring of billions of dollars' worth of reserves in Niger Delta

Nigeria joins the world's top 10 gas producers

KUNLE ADEKOYA

Abuja — Nigeria will tomorrow take its position among the world's top 10 gas-producing nations when Chevron Nigeria's Escravos Gas Project (EPG) is commissioned — a climax to a six-year effort to put an end to the flaring of the country's 146 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves.

By September 30, Chevron had already exported 30 000 tons of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to the US for \$39 million, a rate of \$130 a ton

Industry experts said these developments opened a new vista in Nigeria's effort to establish another key source of foreign exchange and reduce dependency on crude oil

For decades Nigeria carelessly flared off billions of dollars'



ET (OR) 4/11/97

worth of gas in the Niger delta

"Nigeria has taken an initiative to join other leading gas producing nations of the world to make good money from the resources nature has provided her," said oil industry expert Isichei Osamgbi about the \$500 million joint venture between the Nigerian National

Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and Chevron

Given a boost by this venture, other gas projects are springing up all over the country. Among these are the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) project and Mobil's \$800 million Oso Liquefied Natural Gas project, expected to come on stream

in February next year

Chevron's project, located on Escravos Island in the Delta state, aims to end the flaring of gas reserves in the Okan and Mefa fields in Oil Mining Lease 90

The fields, located about 12km offshore from Escravos, supply the gas for the project which is gathered, compressed

and piped offshore to a liquefied extraction plant that removes the LPG and condensate

The Escravos Gas Project, built to stop gas flaring and commercially utilise the 20 trillion cubic feet of gas in its operational area, will be processing about 165 million cubic feet of associated gas a day

This will conserve about 500 billion cubic feet of natural gas over a 10-year period and will reduce the production of greenhouse gases by nearly 100 000 tons

Similarly, over 8 000 barrels a day of LPG and natural gas will be produced in addition to the 2 000 barrels a day of condensate, and will be fed back into the NNPC/Chevron crude production stream

Chevron chairman George Kirkland said the company was

so enthusiastic about the viability and sustainability of the gas project that it had decided to commit another \$90 million to the expansion of the plant under the project's second phase

That would boost output by 73 percent from the phase-one output of 165 million cubic feet of gas a day to about 285 million cubic feet a day

Kirkland said the Escravos project would cover three phases through to 2003 and would by then have swallowed up investments of \$1 billion

"The pace at which the other phases develop will depend on a number of factors, including the growth rate of gas demand, the market price for gas and the continued application of government policies that encourage gas development," he said — Sapa-DPA

Nigeria moves to regulate gas use in its oil industry

CT (BR) 10/11/97 (226)

GODDY IKEH

Lagos — Nigeria's head of state, General Sani Abacha, said last week that all oil companies operating in the upstream sector of the country's oil industry would have to obtain approved gas utilisation plans from the government before pursuing any new crude oil project.

Abacha was speaking at the inauguration of the \$550 million NNPC/Chevron joint venture Escravos Gas Project (EGP) in the southwestern Delta state.

He said the government's decision was motivated by the fact that much of the associated gas being produced with crude oil was flared.

"The implication of this is that the nation has lost a sizeable amount of revenue. Besides, gas flaring has been identified as one of the major contributors to environmental pollution and the attendant global warming," he said.

Abacha said Nigeria's gas reserves were believed to exceed 3.4 trillion cubic metres, and the wastage of the valuable non-renewable national resource was no longer acceptable.

He said the government was

putting in place a comprehensive national policy on energy which would address the issue of oil and gas utilisation as a subset of the national energy mix in all its ramifications.

Abacha reiterated the government's resolve to eliminate gas flaring by 2010. He said fiscal incentives needed to encourage gas development projects had been put in place to facilitate the flare-out objective.

Dan Etete, the Nigerian oil minister, listed strategies the government was using to derive the greatest benefit from its participating interest in the petroleum industry.

He said there was an emphasis on higher local content in the execution of jobs and transfer of technology.

Etete said many of the projects designed to utilise the gas resources were at various stages of completion, with substantial progress recorded.

George Kirkland, Chevron's managing director, said the first phase of the project would eliminate 165 million cubic feet of flared gas a day from about 20 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves in Chevron's fields — Independent Foreign Service

Nigerian junta bans Ogoni demonstrations

LAGOS — Nigeria's military junta banned any rallies or protests by ethnic Ogoni activists yesterday, the second anniversary of the highly controversial execution of nine of their leaders, press reports said.

Authorities in Gokana, the main town in the oil-rich Ogoni land in the southern Rivers State, warned that if public servants failed to show up for work they would be sacked, while security measures were stepped up.

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (Mosop) had planned a whole week of demonstrations to culminate in rallies and prayer meetings, two years after writer Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Mosop leaders were executed following a trial by a special court on murder charges.

Last year, local authorities took strong measures throughout the state and imposed a curfew on its capital, Port Harcourt, on the

first anniversary of the hangings, which led to an international outcry and the suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth.

Defence lawyers and human rights bodies had argued that the trial of the prominent writer, who headed Mosop, and his colleagues, was a trumped-up affair to crush Mosop and disruptive activities by members of the Ogoni community of about 500 000, who had strongly protested against what they saw as the plundering and destruction of their region by oil companies.

On Sunday, a pro-government rally was mustered outside the offices of the Rivers State military governor, Col Musa Shehu, where speakers called on the federal government of Gen Sani Abacha to remain steadfast in the face of international pressure and criticism over its human rights record.

Mosop, which was forced into virtual

inertia by the executions, had planned to turn yesterday into a "Liberation Day" marked by public rallies and other events.

A demonstration by pro-democracy and human rights activists outside the Shell Centre and the Nigerian High Commission in London, England, were also planned.

Another organisation, called the Chicoco movement, launched recently and which claims to represent the communities in the Niger Delta region, seems to have taken over the struggle from Mosop.

British authorities, which faulted the trial and conviction of the nine activists, described their execution as "judicial murder".

The executions, which were carried out during the 1995 Commonwealth summit in Auckland, New Zealand, triggered Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth, which is still in force, while the European Union, the

US and Canada imposed sanctions, including an arms embargo.

The exiled acting president of Mosop, Ledum Mitee, said in a recent interview that the second anniversary was an opportunity to "rededicate ourselves to those ideals and goals to ensure that they (Ken Saro-Wiwa and his colleagues) did not die in vain".

Abacha's junta, which took power in 1993, ousting a short-lived unelected civilian government, has sought to present its international opprobrium as unjustified. It has pledged to hand over to a democratically-elected regime on October 1 next year.

It has also sought to win back friends on the international stage by military and diplomatic action to restore the toppled civilian president of Sierra Leone. Junta leaders in Freetown are now due to hand back power next April — Sapa-APF

BD 11/11/97

(226)

AFRICAN BUSINESS

Wasting the non-renewable resource 'no longer acceptable'

Nigeria alters gas law for upstream oil firms

CF (BR) 11/11/97

(226)

GODDY IKEH

Lagos — General Sani Abacha, Nigeria's head of state, said yesterday all oil companies operating in the upstream sector of the country's oil industry would be required to obtain approved gas utilisation plans from the government before pursuing any new crude oil project.

Abacha was speaking at the inauguration of the \$550 million NNPC/Chevron joint venture Escravos gas project. He said the decision was made because much of the gas being produced with crude oil was being flared.

"The implication of this is that the nation has lost a sizeable amount of revenue. Besides, gas flaring has been identified as one of the major contributors to environmental pollution and the attendant global warming," Abacha said.

He said Nigeria's gas reserves were estimated at over 3.4 trillion cubic metres and that wasting the

non-renewable resource was no longer acceptable.

The state was putting in place a comprehensive policy on energy which would address oil and gas utilisation as part of the national energy mix.

Abacha reiterated his government's resolve to eliminate gas flaring by 2010 and said fiscal incentives that were needed to encourage the flare-out objective had been put in place.

The incentives would be reviewed periodically to make them relevant, attractive and sufficient to encourage investment.

Dan Etete, the oil minister, said there was an emphasis on a higher local content in employment and in the transfer of technology. He said many of the projects designed to utilise the gas resources were at various stages of completion, and substantial progress had been made.

"Operating companies are now required to demonstrate what percent-

age of contracts or projects is to be executed using goods and services of Nigerian origin, as this adds value to the national economy."

Etete said this objective was achieved in the Escravos project. A local company, Nigerian Engineering and Technical Company, did the engineering design.

George Kirkland, the managing director of Chevron, said the first phase of the project was designed to eliminate 165 million cubic feet of flared gas a day from an estimated 20 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves in Chevron's operating fields.

Kirkland said the project was based on the growing profile of gas as an energy source and the need to cleanse the environment through the reduction of gas flaring.

The project is aimed at diversifying Nigeria's revenue sources from its dependence on crude oil exports — Independent Foreign Service



GREEN LEADER General Sani Abacha, Nigeria's leader, has changed laws on gas projects

NIGERIA Human rights groups continue to call for sanctions against Lagos

Saro-Wiwa's voice is still raised in US

Laurie Lande

Washington, DC — Two years after Nigerian playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists were executed by Lagos's military government, about a dozen environmental and human rights groups still seek the imposition of US trade sanctions on the oil-rich nation.

The groups, led by the Sierra Club, staged a protest of Nigeria's violations of human rights outside the Nigerian embassy here on Monday evening. The protest began with a rally outside the Washington, DC office of Shell Oil, the US subsidiary of Royal Dutch/Shell, the largest foreign energy company operating in Nigeria.

"We have two goals," said Stephen Mills, the Sierra Club's director of international programmes. "One, we want the Clinton administration to impose tough sanctions on

Nigeria, including an oil embargo, and two, we want Nigeria to take certain actions to move towards democracy."

The protesters wanted Nigeria to release the bodies of the nine Ogonis who were executed on November 10 1995, to withdraw military troops from Ogoni lands, and to allow environmental groups in the country to organise, Mills said.

Other groups joining the protest on Monday included Human Rights Watch/Africa, Friends of the Earth, Trans-Africa, Amnesty International, the United Nigeria Organisation and The Body Shop, a chain of cosmetics stores.

Despite the outcry against the regime of Sani Abacha, Nigeria's leader, since the Ogoni executions two years ago, Nigeria remains one of the few "outlaw" nations that has not been subject to US trade sanctions.

Nigeria has been considered

an "outlaw" nation by the US since it annulled the results of democratic elections two years ago and hung Saro-Wiwa. It also appears on the US state department's human rights report as a violator of basic freedoms.

There are strict US trade bans on fellow "rogue" states Iran, Libya and Cuba. Last week President Clinton imposed a trade ban on Sudan for its support of international terrorism and its poor human rights record. US environmentalist groups want Nigeria added to this group.

The activists also plan to release petitions to Clinton and Philip Carroll, Shell Oil's chief executive officer, calling for US sanctions on Nigeria unless human rights improve. A few thousand people had signed the petitions, Mills said.

The petition to Clinton is aimed at changing US policy towards Abacha's

military government

"Despite worldwide condemnation, the military government of General Sani Abacha has remained unbending in the face of national and international protest," one petition reads.

"The multinational oil companies, in particular Royal Dutch/Shell, continue their business as usual at the expense of the Nigerian environment. Oil wealth gives General Abacha the means to remain in power to continue his reign of terror."

The groups note that the US consumes nearly half of Nigeria's oil exports. According to the October 1997 review by the Energy Information Administration, part of the US department of energy, the US imported 866 000 barrels a day in August. The eight-month average for the year is 691 000 barrels a day — AP-Dow Jones

ET (BR) 12/11/97 (226)

IN BRIEF

Nigeria to ask Opec for a larger production quota

(226)

BN 13/11/97

LAGOS — Nigeria is expected to ask for a larger production quota at the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) meeting in the coming days held to put a better face among member countries.

The country's quota is now 1.5 million barrels a day, but it has been requested to be increased to 2 million barrels a day. Opec has a total quota of 25 million barrels a day, and it is expected that the other members will be asked to increase their quota.

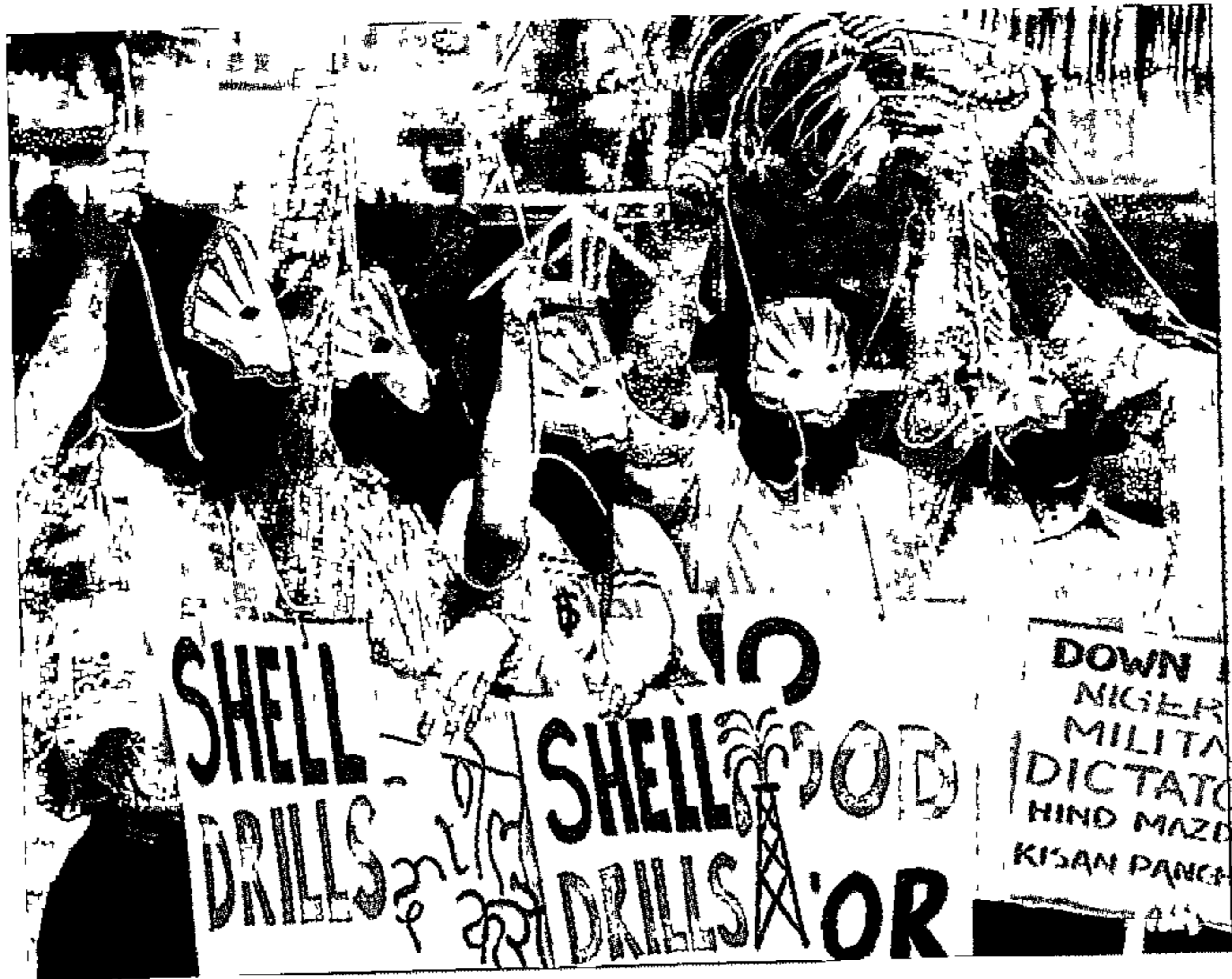
The country's oil production is about 1.5 million barrels a day, which is about 6 per cent of the total production of about 25 million barrels a day. The country's oil production is expected to increase to 2 million barrels a day.

The country's oil production is expected to increase to 2 million barrels a day, which is about 8 per cent of the total production of about 25 million barrels a day. The country's oil production is expected to increase to 2 million barrels a day.

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5



SARO-WIWA SOLIDARITY Thousands of angry residents of Nigeria's southern Delta state this week shut down 12 Shell oil wells and a flow station in a row over compensation.

A spokesman of the Etkpamre community, Matthew Efi guma, told a witness, who asked not to be named, that Shell had failed to pay compensation for land acquired for the construction of a road. He said the community had not met demands that it pay for infrastructure for the road.

ET(BE) 14/11/97

The wells reported to have been shut down have a production capacity of 19 000 barrels of crude oil a day. The witness said production stopped after more than 3 000 youths felled trees across the roads leading to the oil locations, drove out all the Shell workers there and shut down the wells. The youths carried placards calling on Shell to "give us our demands" and "stop drilling on our roads."

The protesters issued a one week ultimatum calling on Shell to build and tar roads in the area, employ more people, build hospitals and provide electricity for the community.

(226)

The latest confrontation between Shell and a Delta community came 48 hours after the second anniversary of the execution of writer and minority rights activists, Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other members of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (Mosop). The community belongs to the Urhobo ethnic group.

It is not immediately clear whether the community is affiliated to the Mosop or the Chicoco group, a new movement which claims to be defending the interest of communities in the oil-producing region.

Communities in the Delta region have in recent years protested strongly against their marginalisation and the pollution of their communities by foreign oil companies.

They accuse these companies of either not paying at all or not paying enough compensation for the use of their land through oil exploration and exploitation. Money paid to the government in Abuja rarely finds its way back to the communities. — Sapa-AFP, Lagos

Robbers in Nigeria make appointments

DULUE MBACHU

(226)
CT(OR) 17/11/97

Onitsha — When armed robbers come calling in eastern Nigeria's trading capital of Onitsha they do not bother with the element of surprise — instead they make an appointment

Confident that the police will be unable to stop them, the bandits often write to their victims, naming the date and time of their coming so that the householder can ready the valuables and prepare to be out

"Outgunned and outnumbered, the police have become of little or no use," said Gozie Agbakoba, a local politician running in the December elections under a banner of cleaning up the crime-ridden city of some 1 million people

Angry that the same gang of robbers could raid three markets on three successive days in October, thousands of traders marched through the streets to protest at police inaction

Police commanders were stung into setting up Operation Purge, but the immediate results were not what traders expected

"A few days after Operation Purge was announced, a gang of about 50 armed robbers cordoned off my street and ransacked every block of flats," said John Ekwueme, a textile importer

"As they were leaving my flat with their loot, including electronics and cash, their leader turned to me and said 'We are that Operation Purge you've been hearing about'"

As a market centre, Onitsha draws traders from across west and central Africa Trade is

almost exclusively in cash, making it a magnet for thieves, particularly in Nigeria, with its unenviable reputation for crime

Police say gangs operating in Onitsha have been joined by robbers flushed out of Lagos by anti-crime squads set up with the help of the army

"In addition to patrols, we are acting on the intelligence we receive by raiding criminal spots and rounding up well-known suspects," the leader of one of Onitsha's anti-robbery squads said

"It is a question of a little time before we flush them out"

Still facing criticism from traders, the special police units are also now being accused by human rights groups of carrying out extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrests

The activists say paramilitary squads would not be needed if enough money were spent to turn the regular police

into an effective force

"The police should be given the requisite training and equipment to fight crime, with their remuneration enhanced to make them more dedicated to the task," said Clement Nwankwo of the Constitutional Rights Project

But few residents shed tears when the robbers become the victims, and warn of the threat of popular justice.

"Faced with a similar (problem) in 1980 when criminals were on the verge of overrunning the city, residents rose up en masse, attacking, lynching and driving known criminals out of the city," Agbakoba said

"It took 17 years for another set of criminals to bring the city full circle," he said — Reuter

The bandits often write to their victims, naming the date and time of their coming

Call to make Abacha the sole candidate in Nigerian elections

(226)

BD/7/11/97

Hilary Andersonn

LAGOS — Nigerian Minister for Special Duties Wada Nas has called on the country's political parties to allow the military leader, Gen Sam Abacha, to stand as the sole candidate in presidential elections set for next year.

The minister, frequently the first to voice government thinking, called the idea a power-sharing arrangement, saying political parties should share five of the other senior executive positions.

"No doubt, Gen Abacha remains the only capable leader to stand by the nation," he said in the Nigerian capital, Abuja.

The minister said the draft constitution, which is due to take effect after elections set for October 1 1998, would allow for single candidate elections. So far details of the new constitution have been seen only by Abacha's close allies.

There is widespread support within Nigeria's political parties for Abacha's candidacy. This, together with the strained political atmosphere, has prevented others from suggesting they want to contest elections.

One prominent civilian politician, Don Etiebet, said he was going to contest the elections earlier this year, but later retracted his

position in a terse statement which indicated he had been under pressure by the government.

Nas justified the proposal for single candidate elections by saying that real democrats should be open to all ideas of how to govern a country. "Those opposed to Abacha after 1998 should hold their peace and allow democracy to play itself out," he said. "This is what democracy is all about."

The Nigerian government has long maintained that Abacha came to power not by force, but to save the nation from disintegration during the political crisis which followed the annulment of the 1993 elections.

But supporters of Chief Mashood Abiola, the jailed politician who was in the process of winning the elections when they were annulled, say the crisis was carefully planned by the military so that it could hold on to power.

Nas has voiced the view of a number of senior government figures in saying that Abacha is still needed to maintain the stability of the country.

The Nigerian military has long justified its grip on power by saying the country is too volatile to survive under a true democracy.

Abacha has not made a categorical statement yet on whether

he has further political ambitions, although he has hinted he supports the idea of military leaders standing for election, as has happened elsewhere in west Africa.

The Nigerian government backed the recent election of the former military leader of the Gambia, Yahyah Jammeh, voted in as civilian president under controversial circumstances.

Abacha is also a close ally of a number of other military leaders in the west African region who have transformed themselves into civilian presidents.

Opposition groups in Nigeria say even if other candidates stand in next year's elections the polling will be meaningless. They accuse the government of hand-picking the five political parties, and have no faith in the independence of the electoral commission.

"The said transition programme is most unfree, unfair and unrepresentational," said the Lagos-based opposition group the Campaign for Democracy in a recent statement titled "Transition to Nowhere".

Nigeria's new voters' register, which was created earlier this year, is also highly controversial as voters' cards were freely available on the black market for the equivalent of US\$1.

Abacha moves to rally support

BD 18/11/97 (226)

LAGOS— By dissolving his cabinet yesterday, Nigeria's military ruler Gen Sani Abacha might have helped shore up support ahead of next year's election, analysts and diplomats said.

In a broadcast to mark four years since taking power in Africa's most populous nation, the 54-year-old general said he would appoint an entirely new cabinet. He has not said whether he will stand in the elections.

"A reshuffle was not entirely unexpected given the actions of some of the ministers and their long time in office," said a western diplomat in Lagos. "A fresh cabinet could definitely help to shore up popularity before elections."

Ministers who took out full-page advertisements in newspapers yesterday to con-

gratulate Abacha on his good governance might now be wondering whether it was enough to save their jobs.

Those who were key politicians in earlier eras can now position themselves to take part in Abacha's plan to restore democracy, for which many of Nigeria's biggest political names have so far shown distinct apathy.

"If Abacha is going to run in the elections, then it would look better if there were some other serious contenders. Maybe that's what some of those ministers could become," said one African diplomat.

No candidate has appeared to contest Nigeria's top job — something some politicians attribute to the fear that if Abacha did stand he would be certain to win.

With the transition described as a sham,

the promised release of political detainees would help to answer critics, but Abacha's qualification that those who might pose a security threat would not be let out has done little to reassure opponents.

Few people expect the immediate release of businessman Moshood Abiola, presumed winner of annulled 1993 presidential elections. Nor are they hopeful that former military ruler and retired general Olusegun Obasanjo, jailed for coup-plotting, will be going home any time soon.

The signs that Abacha is planning to stand himself, and emulate other West African military rulers who extended their mandates at polls, grow almost daily with frequent pro-Abacha marches and a chorus of calls for him to take part. — Reuter

SPAN 20/11/97

Abiola may be among Nigerian detainees to be freed

Lagos - Detained Nigerian presidential claimant Moshood Abiola is on a list of 75 political prisoners who may be freed by military ruler General Sani Abacha, a local newspaper reported yesterday.

The independent *Vanguard* quoted a member of a special committee, set up by the presidency to scrutinise detainees, as saying the final decision would be taken by Abacha.

The committee began work on

Thursday and was expected to pass on its recommendations to Abacha yesterday, the paper said, adding that the detainees might be freed at the weekend.

Abacha, in a nationwide broadcast on Monday to mark his four years in office, promised to release detainees - but not those who were considered to pose a threat to peace and security.

Millionaire businessman Abiola, widely believed to have won an annulled 1993 poll meant to restore democracy, has been among dozens of political prisoners since 1994, when he declared himself president based on results of the annulled poll.

Abacha, who seized power amid the chaos ignited by the poll

annulment, has promised elections and the handover of power to a civilian ruler next year.

This Day paper reported yesterday the release of its publisher Nduka Obaigbena, who had been arrested and held since last weekend by Nigerian security men in the capital Abuja.

The fate of political prisoners, including Abiola, is one of the main points of contention with Nigeria's former Western allies.

Nigeria, already facing limited sanctions from Western countries, was threatened by the Commonwealth last month with expulsion and more sanctions if Abacha did not show good faith in carrying out his plan to restore civilian rule.

- Reuters

Quest prepares to flood Nigeria with new beverage

GODDY IKEH

Lagos — Quest International, a South African company, is planning to storm the Nigerian market with its brand of non-alcoholic beverages

Quest, in association with Rodco, a Nigerian company, organised a workshop in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital city, on Monday to showcase its products and to seek

interested Nigerian investors and manufacturers who could produce its brands in that country

According to the facilitators of the workshop, the aim was to take advantage of the Nigerian market, which was not adequately catered for with cheap, quality beverages

The workshop provided a forum for information sharing on their products, for weighing

the strengths and weaknesses of the product and evaluating the chances of Quest's brand of beverages in Nigeria, they said

The choice of the Nigerian market was also informed by its large size and climatic conditions

For the greater part of the year it is hot, with temperatures averaging between 25degC and 38degC, encouraging the consumption of more

non-alcoholic beverages

The beverage product, which comes in various colours and flavouring such as cream soda, raspberry, pineapple, orange, mango, lemon, cola, tonic, granadilla, peach and gingerberry, was freely sampled at the workshop

Some of the participants expressed satisfaction with the product concept and expressed their willingness to go into the

production of these brands

Quest, however, told interested manufacturers that it would only supply them with flavouring, food ingredients and fragrance

The success of Quest in Nigeria will translate into the West African market, since Nigeria supplies the bulk of goods sold in most west African countries — Independent Foreign Service

SA firm in Namibian tender

(226) BD 25/11/97

Christof Maletsky

WINDHOEK — An SA-based firm and its French partner have won an important contract from Namibia's power utility, NamPower, to construct the 400kV transmission line from Kenhardt in SA to Auas near Windhoek.

The ABB Powertech/Cegelec consortium was awarded the N\$366m contract to construct the transmission line, while ABB Powertech Transformer of SA won a separate contract to supply and install transformers and reactors to the value of N\$66m.

Nampower is responsible for about 735km of line, from the border via the existing substation at Kokerboom near Keetmanshoop to the proposed Auas substation near Windhoek, while SA will be responsible for the rest of the line to Aries near Kenhardt.

The construction contract is the largest tender awarded by NamPower in recent years and is believed to be the largest transmission project under

construction in the world.

For its part, NamPower has to fork out N\$750m, and so far contracts worth N\$432m have been awarded.

Forty-nine companies from 23 countries originally competed for contracts to construct the transmission line, but this was later trimmed to 21 companies from 13 countries.

Eight contractors were finally nominated from that group and the tender was issued on July 24 and closed on September 30 this year.

Similarly, 21 companies worldwide received documents for the supply and installation of transformers and reactors and 13 manufacturers submitted pre-qualification documents and were issued tender documents from NamPower. Only seven submitted their final tenders from which detailed evaluations were undertaken.

SA's main power supplier, Eskom, will be responsible for a 150km stretch of line from Aries substation near Kenhardt in SA to the border.

(226)
EU exempts

soccer from

Nigeria bans

CF (OR) 25/11/97
Brussels — European Union nations agreed last week to prolong sanctions against Nigeria's military regime but with certain exemptions, notably to allow the country to play in the soccer World Cup

The sanctions, which include denying visas to Nigerian officials and barring Nigerian teams from sporting events organised by the 15 EU countries, were decided in November 1995 after the execution by hanging of nine minority rights activists belonging to the Ogoni people of southern Nigeria. The nine included writer Ken Saro-Wiwa.

The sanctions which would have expired on December 4, were extended until legislative and presidential polls scheduled for October 1998 in Nigeria. Exemptions were agreed in a few cases, in particular to enable European countries to meet commitments made before the sanctions came into force.

This will allow the Nigerian soccer team to take part in the final stage of the World Cup next year in France — Sapa-AFP

the scheduled six super crimes against children. Certain offences committed by all other prisoners must serve at least 50% of their sentence, but the court can increase this to 67%.

AFRICA

Kabila's political opponents arrested

BB 27/11/97

KINSHASA — A prominent opponent of Democratic Congo's President Laurent Kabila and the acting army chief of staff were arrested in different parts of the capital on Tuesday, witnesses and aides said yesterday.

Witnesses said police arrested politician Z'Ahidi Arthur Ngoma and five of his supporters shortly after he addressed a news conference.

Z'Ahidi, a former employee of the UN cultural agency Unesco, was for a long time a staunch opponent of Zaire's late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

Since Mobutu was toppled in May, he had also been one of the fiercest critics of Kabila, whom he accused of in-

A senior internal security official confirmed the arrest but did not give the reason for it.

Massasu has been acting chief of staff since Kabila came to power last May after a successful seven-month guerrilla campaign against Mobutu.

Massasu was a political leader in Kabila's then rebel AFDL movement.

Kabila told a news conference last week that the current military chiefs were only interim appointments.

Officers from the Rwandan army which backed Kabila's successful revolt have remained in Congo, occupying senior positions with influence over the Congolese armed forces.

Z'Ahidi, who leads the Forces of the Future party, held a seminar in Kinshasa on Monday in which he accused Kabila's AFDL movement of holding an entire country hostage to its wishes.

Kabila banned political parties and their activity shortly after taking power last May. Dozens of politicians and activists opposed to his policy have been arrested, and troops have been sent out on numerous occasions to break up demonstrations.

On Saturday soldiers broke up a meeting at the headquarters of chief opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi's popular Union for Democracy and Social Progress Party.

Côte d'Ivoire govt set to complete privatisation

Shareen Singh

ABIDJAN — The Côte d'Ivoire government would privatise by next year the sectors of the economy still in government hands, Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan said yesterday.

Addressing the opening of a four-day conference to attract investment, Duncan said the remaining 16 anta-

More than 2 000 investors and dignitaries from 38 countries were at the conference and trade fair and many said they were optimistic about forging trade relations with Côte d'Ivoire, attracted by its political stability, opportunities emerging from privatisation and government initiatives in developing the economy.

Duncan said the processing of raw

Burundi sanctions hit neighbouring states

Chilombo Mwendole

LUSAKA — Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania have been hardest hit by economic sanctions imposed on Burundi by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa).

This is the view of Boney Katatumba, president of the Eastern and Southern African Business Organisation, who claims SA, Europe, America and Asia have taken advantage of the gap created by the Comesa economic sanctions and have flooded the Burundi

market with essential commodities previously supplied the neighbouring countries. Katatumba urged the fourth Comesa council of ministers meeting held in Lusaka to review the trade embargo against Burundi.

Zambian Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry chairman George Chabwera said this week that Zambia's sugar exports had been greatly affected by the embargo.

"Already, export earnings from regional sugar sales have dropped about 30% and this is not helping us," he said.

Groups to sue Nigerian govt

Hilary Anderson

BB 27/11/97

Fourteen prodemocracy groups in Nigeria have filed a lawsuit against the Nigerian government for disrupting a reception they had organised for the outgoing US ambassador, Walter Carrington, in September.

The groups, which include the National Democratic Coalition and the Campaign for Democracy, are suing the government for the equivalent of \$500 000 for allegedly violating their human rights.

When soldiers and armed policemen raided the ambassador's farewell party — also attended by SA ambassador George Nene — two months ago, guests fled to another location. Soldiers broke down the gates and tore a guest's speech from his hands.

The incident sparked a fierce diplomatic row between the US and Nigeria.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES 'UNCALLED FOR'

Nigeria's junta akin to apartheid generals

ABUJA: Dictators can't go on forever, an ANC leader says, in calling for the end to Nigeria's rule by military junta, reports **GILBERT DA COSTA**, Independent Foreign Service

World right
to interfere

ANC MP Ms Ela Gandhi has denounced an "appalling" human rights situation in Nigeria, equating it with South Africa under apartheid

Gandhi, 57, here on a private visit last week expressed this view in an interview with the local press

"I have observed that people in Nigeria are being treated the way we in South Africa were treated under apartheid

"I have been exposed to what is happening in Nigeria and I believe the kind of abuses are uncalled for," she said

According to Gandhi, the abuse of human rights in Nigeria is beyond what could be tolerated by the world

She urged Nigerians to seek worldwide support "I think dictators in Africa should remember that they can't go on forever. Apartheid fell, Hitler fell, Napoleon fell and so will other people who try to follow that track

"(Nigerian military ruler) General Abacha could change if the Nigerian opposition is strong enough to put him in a corner and say 'now let's negotiate and these are our demands' "

Gandhi condemned the 1995 execution of Ogoni writer Ken Saro-Wiwa: "I thought he was doing remarkably good work mobilising people against an issue which affected all the people "

Gandhi said apartheid SA and Nigeria shared not only a bad human rights record, but also a

large gap between rich and poor.

"In Nigeria there are very few people who have the wealth of the country, (while) there is lots of poverty — which was what happened in SA," said Gandhi

She said the equitable distribution of Nigeria's political and economic resources, as well as respect for basic human rights, could douse the palpable tension that has engulfed the West African nation since the cancellation of the 1993 presidential ballot

The presumed winner of the annulled ballot, southerner Mr Moshood Abiola, has been detained since 1994, amid deliberate campaigns by the Nigerian regime to delay his trial

Nearly all of Nigeria's post-independence chiefs of state, including incumbent General Sani Abacha, have come from the Muslim-dominated northern Nigeria

Yet oil, from which Nigeria earns nearly all its foreign exchange, is produced entirely in the south

Northern domination of the Nigerian polity has long created a very rich and powerful clique of businessmen and women from the north who have entrenched themselves in the corridors of power, cornering the juiciest of all government contracts and patronage to the consternation of southerners

Nigerians fought a bitter civil war between 1967 and 1970, the most formidable and striking challenge to the northern oligarchy

INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

LAGOS: A legal luminary and Nigerian senior advocate, Mr Rotimi Williams, says international interest in Nigeria's human rights issues is justified interference under the universal declaration on human rights

In a keynote address at the opening here on Tuesday of the Nigerian Law Conference, Williams also warned against labelling as unpatriotic Nigerians who joined the outside world in criticising the country's human rights record

Many human rights activists are in jail for speaking out against the regime, and several others have gone into exile

Williams said "It is true that the interest shown by the international community in certain aspects of Africa's internal affairs is a new development. During the cold war when both sides were scrambling for friends, moral considerations were thrown to the wind

"The superpowers and their satellites failed to condemn open violations of human rights, there for all the world to see. The courage to condemn human rights violation only came after the end of the cold war "

Williams said just as it was not an infringement of South Africa's sovereignty to oppose apartheid, so too with Nigeria's military junta

Nigeria waits for amnesty releases

(226) BD 28 11/97

LAGOS — Ten days after Nigeria's military leader Gen Sani Abacha dissolved his cabinet and promised an amnesty for some political prisoners, no new cabinet has been formed and no detainee has been released.

The Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), a Lagos-based human rights organisation, has drawn up a list of at least 120 detainees, who, in its view, should benefit from the amnesty.

In a nationwide broadcast on November 17 to mark the fourth anniversary of the coming to power of his regime, Abacha announced the dissolution of his cabinet and promised to amnesty "those detained persons whose release would constitute no further impediment to the peace and security of our country".

Since the broadcast, the nation has been anxious to know who will be appointed to the cabinet and who will benefit from the amnesty.

The local press has published reports speculating on who may likely be appointed minister and who they think should be given amnesty.

The CDHR list, sent this week to police Insp-Gen of Ibrahim Coomassie, included Chief Moshood Abiola, the self-proclaimed winner of the June 1993 presidential election, some journalists and human rights activists.

Abiola was widely believed to have won the 1993 civilian poll held and then annulled by a previous military junta, though international observers called the election free and fair.

The Muslim millionaire businessman was jailed and charged with treason a year later for declaring himself head of state on the strength of the voided poll.

The rights list also includes the name of former head of state Gen Olusegun Obasanjo, who ruled from 1976 to 1979, and others convicted of alleged involvement in the March 1995 failed coup to overthrow Abacha.

Meeting

A meeting of the Provisional Ruling Council, the highest ruling body, which will discuss and ratify the list of ministers, is yet to be convened.

But a report published in newspapers in Lagos yesterday, quoting a prominent member of the council, said that some ministers in the dissolved cabinet may be reappointed.

Three ministers — those of finance, foreign affairs and federal capital territory — were retained on the day that the dissolution of the old cabinet was announced.

Since then the three have continued to function in their posts — Sapa-AFP

No dashing through Lagos traffic

(226)

BD 3/12/97

Dianna Games

MOST visitors' problems used to start at the airport in Lagos — Nigeria's business centre and de facto capital — which used to be one of the worst experiences you could have in Nigeria

A "clean-up" by the government appears to have sorted this out. Now the problems start once you hit the road into town.

"Horrible" is the word SA businessmen use most frequently about Lagos and its environs

You can easily spend two hours in a traffic jam in sweltering heat, encountering the madness of Lagos roads in a taxi with windows that do not wind up or down, gasping for air thick with petrol fumes, just for one business appointment.

Add to this the scores of beggars and hawkers trying to sell you anything from shower curtains to a full wardrobe while your car is trapped in traffic (Former head of state Murtala Mohammed was assassinated while stuck in a Lagos traffic jam)

Constant hooting appears to be the effective rule of the road, and only a handful of traffic lights in this huge city is functional

Making appointments is a major undertaking as many businesses do not have telephones. But even when a time and date are set, the struggle across town can prove fruitless when you find an office empty and a secretary uninterested in your outrage

"If you see three people a day, that is a real achievement," said one SA businessman who is based in Lagos

The constant power cuts — five or six a day — are another source of irritation. Many businesses and residences rely on generators which add to the already high noise pollution levels and to costs as diesel and petrol are imported at a premium because of problems at domestic refineries

The electricity network is suffering from neglect and is unable to keep up with the demands of an ever-increasing population. The Nigerian Electricity Power Authority (Nepa) is better known as Never

Expect Power Again.

Overheads are pushed up by the lack of running water in many parts of Nigeria. Water tankers are hired by those who can afford them. Property rentals have to be paid between two and five years in advance

Telecommunications are a major bugbear. A large industrial area of Lagos recently suffered a total telecommunications blackout for a fortnight after the telephone exchange was replaced. Eventually the lines were reconnected — for a "dash" fee of more than \$300 a line. A further payment ensured the reinstatement of international dialling facilities

Nigeria has one of the lowest installation ratios in Africa — about two lines for every 100 000 people. To get a line allocated costs about \$2 500 and to get a line moved across town can cost \$400 and take up to two years

Another problem which makes life difficult for outsiders in Nigeria is the banking system. It is almost impossible to cash travellers' cheques and, if you can, you pay a penalty of about 15% of the amount. Use of credit cards is generally advised against because of

pervasive fraud.

Cash can also be inconvenient. The largest note is 50 naira. Given that there are about 80 naira to the dollar (and about 18 to the rand), cashing even small sums of money means having to carry around large wads of notes

Then there is corruption which affects routine aspects of life. There are stories of visitors with confirmed hotel bookings having to "dash" money to the desk clerk to secure the room on arrival

It is estimated that the average kickback to secure contracts can be between 10% and 25%. Some countries, notably Germany, allow bribes to be written off against tax, although this is not just for Nigeria.

Although business visitors might find Lagos daunting, persistence could pay off. Tapping in to even a small percentage of the population will have good yields — a small percentage of 110-million is still a lot of people

One SA businessman who travels regularly to Lagos is upbeat. "None of the markets look or behave like SA markets. It really is like no other place. But if you are flexible, you can make a killing"

ANALYSIS

Trade with Nigeria will flourish only if corruption is reined in

It is one of Africa's leading economic powers, but it is no easy place to do business. After a recent visit, news editor Dianna Games reports on the difficulties SA businessmen face there.

ABOUT 30 members of the first Nigerian trade delegation to visit SA two years ago — under the auspices of the newly formed SA-Nigeria Chamber of Commerce — never returned, presumably joining the legions of their countrymen believed to be illegally in SA.

This was not a positive development in business relations between the countries, and a vivid example of the difficulties encountered in establishing links. The setting up of trade and other business contacts has been slow and tentative since the resumption of official ties in 1984. Many businessmen have had their fingers burned and lost money.

For SA businessmen, Nigeria can be a minefield. It is notorious for dubious business practices, corruption, huge scams and stifling bureaucracy. This is compounded by the fact that Nigerian frauds are professional, well-informed and have a grand vision of what they can accomplish.

Many Nigerian businessmen philosophically accept corruption, referring to it as a "tax" or "bribe". Others call it a "holistic economy" — if you do not pay, you do not get.

Either way, it adds enormously to the cost of doing business there — monetarily and emotionally.

If you do not know what to expect or how to deal with it, the cost goes up accordingly. The much-valued term African renaissance does not hold sway there — people just get on with the business of surviving and making money.

Although Nigeria is one of the biggest recipients of foreign direct investment in Africa, this is mostly oil related, and emerging market fund managers consider the political risks involved in investing in Nigeria too great to have it on their books. It was recently voted the second most corrupt emerging market in a survey of US and European businesses.

However, the fact remains that it accounts for 70% of economic activity in the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) — a grouping of 16 countries. Most business in West Africa goes through the country, although the surrounding Francophone countries display a longstanding resistance to Nigeria — and former British colonies generally — that is only just beginning to thaw more than two decades after Ecowas emerged.

With an estimated population of 110-million people, the business opportunities are enormous.

The urban growth rate stands at about 6% and nearly half the urban economy is estimated to be informal with at least 100 000 street traders in Lagos alone.

The government regularly sends in task teams to clean up corruption. However, "dash" money has become a part of life, especially given the fact that petronage is alive and well, running at 20%-40% and unemployment is high.

The last official figure — in 1991 — put unemployment at 70% of the population. Even government — by far the largest employer — pays the lowest survival wages. For example, an official at director-

general level earns less than the equivalent of R500 a month and yearly salary increases are not guaranteed.

The Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (Naccma) says the private sector is trying to lead the corruption clean-up. Deputy director-general I Awolapo says the government, when confronted with the issue, simply puts up its hands and says "If you don't give, no one can take."

However, he says officialdom is so obstructive, it has made bribery the preferred option for even the most minor transactions. "So much damage has been done, it will take a long time to address it."

Nigerian businessmen feel the ties between SA and their country, the two major regional powers, are naturally symbiotic and that there are great prospects for bilateral trade and investment. They see opportunities for South Africans to use Nigeria as a platform for ventures into western Africa.

SA imports from Nigeria rose more than 80% and exports — mainly base metals, wood pulp and machinery — by 181% over the two years to December last year, but both are off a low base and represent only about 1% of SA's exports and imports from Africa.

Nigeria's biggest nonoil sector is that of agriculture, which accounts for 25% of the country's nonoil gross domestic product, while manufacturing accounts for about 9%.

According to latest trade and industry figures, exports to Nigeria from SA showed negative growth last year, even though imports grew by more than 40%.

Although many South Africans are reluctant to do business in Nigeria, one SA businessman said there was another side of the story — Nigerians had been burned by SA

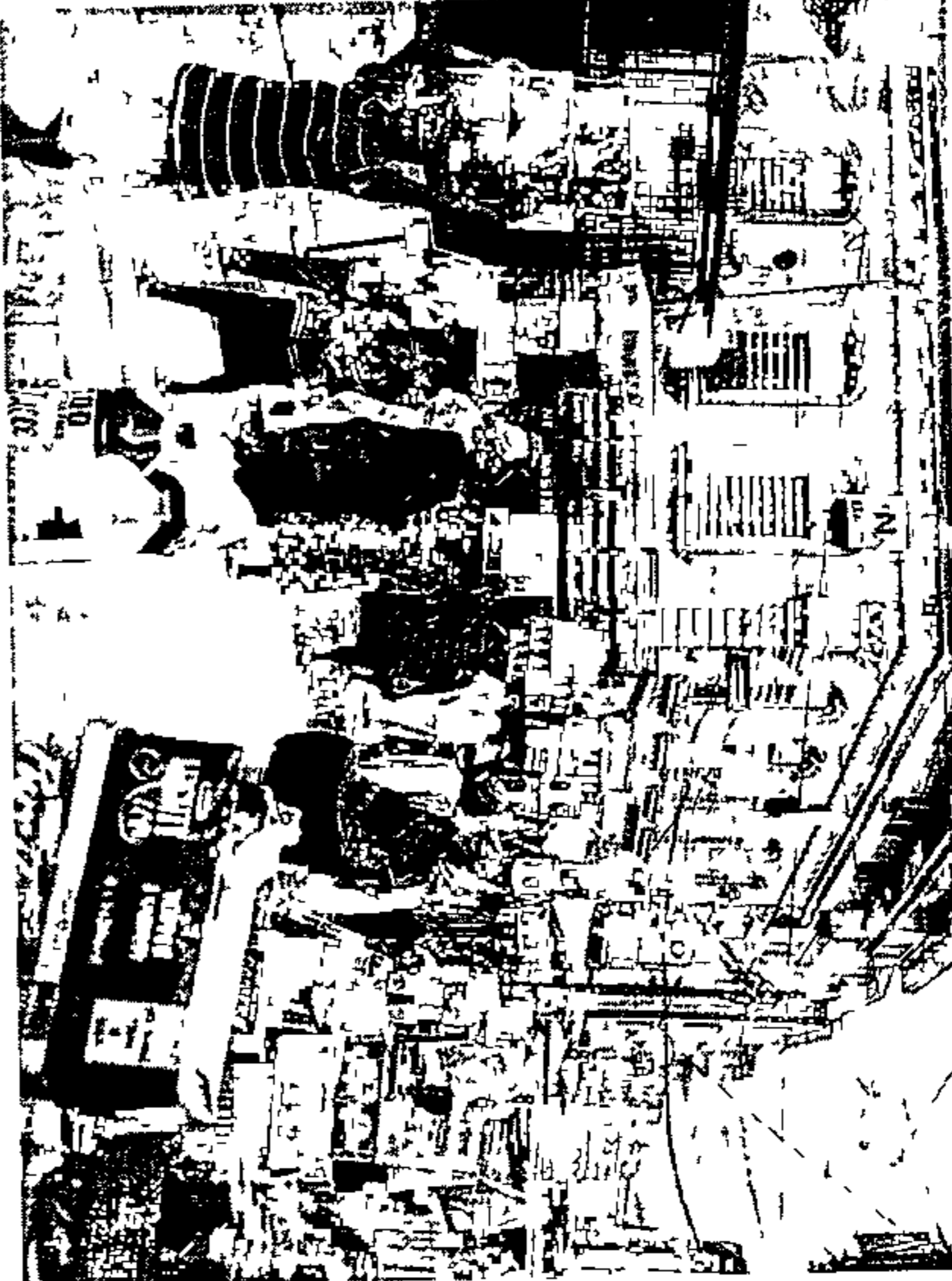
companies which had dumped substandard goods on the Nigerian market. He said this had damaged relations and put many reputable Nigerian companies off doing business with SA.

Another businessman said there were many positive sides to business dealings with Nigeria, not the least of which was the highly competitive market. "Export companies from all over the world are looking at this market," he said.

Some companies do business through a middleman or agent and money transactions are handled offshore or through overseas banks, a procedure which lessens the risk and di-

lates potential problems. Among the SA companies doing business in Nigeria are Sapin, Mond, Mulchoco, Stellenbosch Farmers' Winery, Ceres, Langenberg Foods, Unifruco and Toyota. SA goods also penetrate the market through other West African countries such as Ghana and Benin.

The Chamber of Commerce has not been a success even though, since its inception, it has been taken over by Naccma as one of only six bilateral chambers. Awolapo says that



Lagos, the business centre of Nigeria and one of the world's five biggest cities

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Dianna Games reports on the

scams perpetrated by Nigerians. He has nearly been a victim himself several times.

If businessmen in SA are worried about who they are doing business with here, they should check with the chamber.

This is the view also of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce, which rigorously screens its members.

The lack of direct air links adds to the inconvenience and cost of doing business. A bilateral agreement between the two countries has been installed but was put on hold after the hanging of nine Ogoni activists in 1986.

With an air embargo forming part of a punitive Commonwealth package of sanctions against Nigeria, conditional on next October's elections, it is unlikely anything will happen before then.

At least seven shipping companies operating in SA visit Lagos ports. However, freight delivery has fallen off there because of problems of pilferage, fake entries, forged documents and false declarations of goods.

Cotonou in neighbouring Benin is becoming the preferred port. In addition, bribery allows goods to be smuggled across the road border more cheaply than using ports in Lagos.

SA businessmen seem reluctant to step up business ties because of uncertainties surrounding the promised October elections.

Whatever the political outcome, there is no guarantee that trade relations will flourish in the absence of any concerted campaign to provide a climate in which businessmen can operate normally.

What will happen after the elections next year is anyone's guess. Abacha, who is reportedly planning to stand for election, could end up replacing himself. This is not likely to help confidence in the political situation or lead to the fundamental changes necessary to instil confidence.

Expect Power Again. Overheads are pushed up by the lack of running water in many parts of Nigeria. Water tankers are hired by those who can afford them. Property rentals have to be paid between two and five years in advance.

Telecommunications are a major hindrance. A large international

cash can also be inconvenient. The largest notes are 50 naira. Given that there are about 18 to the dollar (and about 18 to the rand), causing even small sums of money means having to carry around large wads of notes.

Then there is corruption which affects various aspects of life

No dashing through Lagos traffic

Dianna Games

MOST visitors' problems used to start at the airport in Lagos — Nigeria's business centre and de facto capital — which used to be one of the worst experiences you could have in Nigeria. A "clean-up" by the government

has not been a success even though, since its inception, it has been taken over by Naccma as one of only six bilateral chambers. Awolapo says that

3/12/87

West's rules don't apply to Africa, says Abacha

(226) CT 3/12/97

LAGOS: Nigerian military ruler General Sani Abacha, criticised for his plans for a return to democracy, says the rules for African democracy are different from those in the West and some leeway should be allowed.

Accusing Western countries of touting democracy in Africa while ignoring its absence in other parts of the world, he said military regimes had been no barrier to stability in Africa.

Abacha, under pressure from Western governments to initiate reforms, has proclaimed a transition to civilian rule. He is scheduled to hand over to an elected president in October.

The carefully prepared timetable, under which parliamentary elections are to be held on Saturday, has done little to assure critics in the West of his intention that Africa's most populous nation is on a democratic path.

A criticism of the plan is that it leaves no space for opponents to take part. Also, Abacha's democratic credentials have been thrown into doubt by his keeping dozens of political prisoners in jails.

It is a travesty of democracy for the international community to demand their brand of democracy for sub-Saharan Africa while condemning monarchy in many parts of the world and dancing around the People's Republic of China purely for economic reasons, Abacha told a regional security conference on Monday.

Limited Western sanctions, imposed in reaction to the hanging of nine minority rights activists in 1995 and to force the pace of democratic reform, appear to have done little to temper Nigeria's defiance towards the rest of the world.

Abacha promised last month to release detainees who didn't pose a security risk, but none has been freed.

Nigeria's last attempt to restore democracy ended in political chaos during which a previous military government annulled presidential election results and Abacha seized power in 1993. The presumed winner of the presidential poll, businessman Mr Moshood Abiola, has been among the detainees since 1994.

Local analysts have long predicted that the winner of next year's elections will be Abacha. He has yet to say publicly if he will stand, but frequent pro-Abacha marches broadcast on national television and calls from prominent citizens for him to do so leave little doubt that the option is being considered.

"I expect Abacha to stay in power next year by one means or another," an African diplomat said yesterday. "His latest remarks do not lead me to believe that the transition is not on the course Abacha intended." — Reuter

AFRICA

Nigerian central bank head paints bleak picture

Hilary Andersson

LAGOS — The governor of Nigeria's central bank, Paul Ogwuma, says Nigeria's economy is in a bleak state and has criticised the implementation of the government's economic policies.

"The monetary policy instruments of the Central Bank of Nigeria have managed only to keep growth in the monetary aggregates modest," Ogwuma said, citing excess liquidity as the root of the country's economic woes.

He told a meeting of accountants that a number of the country's banks were still in financial distress and blamed this on poor implementation of the policies aimed at cleaning up the banking sector and boosting the economy in general.

Ogwuma said the country's ex-

BD 4/12/97
ternal debt, which officially stood at \$28.1bn, remained a key problem. "For a number of years, Nigeria has not been able to negotiate meaningfully with the external creditors, resulting in the accumulation of unpaid debt service," he said.

In a frank tone uncommon among prominent officials in Nigeria, who usually laud economic stability as one of Gen Sani Abacha's achievements, Ogwuma painted an accurate but depressing picture of the conditions which were preventing the manufacturing sector from growing.

He pointed to the sporadic fuel shortages in the country, which crippled economic activity for several months this year. The severe diesel shortage which had now taken over had forced numerous companies to shut down their op-

erations because they were unable to run generators, he said.

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It is impossible to run a business efficiently in Nigeria without an operating generator because of the constantly declining efficiency of the state-owned electrical company, which in parts of Lagos has recently been providing power only at night.

Ogwuma highlighted the plight of the agricultural sector, whose growth was being stunted by the high costs of farm equipment and the lack of basic rural infrastructure such as water, roads and irrigation facilities.

The bank chief predicted that this year's gross domestic product would grow at a rate of 3.8%, a marginal increase on the growth of 3.4% last year. This is negative growth in real terms, because of the rapidly rising population.

Junta jails exiled journalist's wife

MTG 5-11/12/97

(226)

Eze Anaba

Since Sanj Abacha, head of Nigeria's military government, dissolved his Cabinet and announced the impending release of some political detainees last month, the mood in his country has changed from elation to anxiety

Instead of releases, there has been a spate of new detentions, among them the wife of a journalist who fled into exile

Ladi Olorunyomi, wife of journalist Dagbo Olorunyomi — who is in exile in the United States — was among the targets in a crackdown on journalists and activists around the time of Abacha's November 17 announcement. The "amnesty" was hailed in some quarters as another step towards the restoration of democracy in Nigeria, but the results have yet to be seen

Olorunyomi was seized by security agents who scaled a fenced wall to enter her house in the early hours of the morning. She was reportedly driven around Lagos for two hours before being taken to a notorious Directorate of Military Intelligence detention centre

Other new detentions included lawyer Egun Olu Adegborinwa, the brains behind a series of birthday parties for political detainees. He was also part of an organising committee for the send-off party for Walter Carrington, the departing United States ambassador to Nigeria. Security men violently disrupted the party, causing a diplomatic incident between the two countries

Another victim was Ogaga Ifowodo of the Civil Liberties Organisation, who was arrested at Murtala Mohammed Airport on his way home from the Commonwealth summit in Edinburgh, where he and other activists — largely unsuccessfully — had put the case for stronger sanctions against Abacha's government

Days after Abacha broadcast his intention to release detainees, a caveat was added to the effect that political detainees to benefit would be those whose release would not affect "peace and security" — dimming hopes that the likes of Chief Moshood Abiola, presumed winner of the annulled 1993 presidential elections, would be freed.

Despite that, another announcement said security agencies

were still compiling a list of those suitable for release. At last count, some government sources said 73 political detainees were in custody and that they were still compiling

Among detainees speculated to be in line for release is Chief Olu Falae, former Secretary to the Federal Government. He was arrested early this year in connection with his alleged role in a spate of bomb blasts. He was arraigned before a magistrate's court that had no jurisdiction to try him, and has been in police custody pending another court appearance. Dr Frederick Fasehun, acting president of the Campaign for Democracy and also arrested after the bombings, may benefit as well

Another in this category may be businessman Otunba Olabiyi Durojaiye, a leader in the Nadeco opposition group, after repeated judicial orders that he be produced in court were ignored by military authorities

But many Nigerians remain sceptical. What good will come from a few releases when men like Abiola and oil union chief Frank Kokori remain in jail, and new arrests swell the ranks of those already in detention?

ET 9/12/97

Nigerian

state voters

apathetic

LAGOS. Because of enormous voter apathy official party agents resorted to buying voters' cards from registered voters who refused to turn out for State House of Assembly elections in Nigeria on Saturday

"I don't have the time to go and queue for an election I know will yield nothing positive," said one housewife who gave her name simply as Alhaja. "Because they agreed to pay for my card if I released it for them to vote, I sold it for 100 naira (about R5,70)"

The News Agency of Nigeria reports from the North Central state of Katsina that few voters showed up at most centres in the capital three hours after voting began at 8am.

At some stations in the Central State of Benue eight voters had cast their votes two hours after the start of voting

In Lagos State, the base for most pro-democracy and human rights groups which had called for a boycott of the election, the exercise was smooth and peaceful but a low turn-out was also reported

Party leaders in Lagos said many of the eligible voters had complained that they were "tired of elections which led nowhere"

Worried party leaders then sent out agents to try to persuade voters to cast their votes before the close of voting at 3pm local time and bought voters' cards

Apart from the low turn-out, most voters found it difficult to find polling centres because of lack of voter education — Independent Foreign Service

Top Nigerian political detainee dies in prison

Star 10/12/97 (226)

Lagos - One of Nigeria's most prominent political prisoners, former military vice-president Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, has died, an official statement said yesterday.

The Emirates Council in Yar'Adua's birthplace of Katsina in northern Nigeria said the 54-year-old politician and retired major-general had died in prison in the eastern town of Enugu after a brief illness.

Until his arrest in 1995 for alleged coup-plotting, Yar'Adua was regarded by political analysts as military ruler General Sani Abacha's most formidable political opponent after de-

tained presidential claimant Moshood Abiola

Katsina residents said Yar'Adua's body had been flown to the historic town in the heartland of Nigeria's politically dominant Hausa people.

A local journalist said tens of thousands of people followed the corpse through the streets to the cemetery. There was no sign of tension.

Yar'Adua was sentenced to death at a secret military trial in 1995 of more than 40 people, including his former boss, General Olusegun Obasanjo. His sentence was later com-

muted to 25 years in jail.

Political analysts said Yar'Adua's death could be a major embarrassment for Abacha's military government, which has promised open democracy and is under pressure both at home and abroad to free political detainees.

"It is very, very nasty and Abacha will have to react very quickly to explain the cause of death," said one Western diplomat in Lagos.

In 1994 Yar'Adua sponsored a motion to force Abacha to hand over power. It was reversed after his arrest. - Reuters

Private phone firm connects

10/12/97 (22b)

LAGOS — A private Nigerian telephone company on Monday became the first telecoms firm to provide telephone services when it formally connected some 200 subscribers, a company official said.

Granting a licence to the private Multi-Links Telecommunications (MLT) firm is part of the government's efforts to deregulate telephone services, dominated by the state-owned Nigerian Telecommunications company (Nitel).

MLT's digital wireless service uses Nitel exchanges for its services and plans to provide lines to 50 000 subscribers in Lagos while the addition of lines to other Nigerian cities are planned in the coming years.

"Our aim is to remove the hassles and hurdles faced by Nigerians and foreigners seeking telephone facilities and to improve on telecommunications generally," said company spokesman Barman Keshav. — Sapa-AFP

Nigerian activist dies isolated in detention

Hilary Andersson *MD 10/12/97 (120)*

LAGOS — One of Nigeria's most famous detainees, the politician Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, has died of unknown causes and is being buried today in the northern town of Katsina

"He died at Enugu Prison after a brief illness," said a terse statement from the Katsina Emirate Council issued yesterday morning

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua had been in detention since early 1995, when he was convicted of involvement in an alleged coup plot and sentenced to death. He was convicted along with 39 others, including the former military leader, Gen Olusegun Obasanjo

After an international outcry that the charges had been trumped up, the military government reduced some sentences. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua's sentence was commuted to 25 years in jail

Yar'Adua, formerly chief of army staff, served in Obasanjo's military government which handed over to a civilian government in 1979

He was a strong advocate of the need for civilian rule in Nigeria, a country ruled by military governments for most of the years since independence in 1960

While Yar'Adua was in detention few people had access to him and there had been speculation about his ill health

Yar'Adua was one of the most popular politicians in northern Nigeria and his death might raise emotions about the reason for his detention

Although the north has traditionally been the bastion of support for the military, many northerners feel aggrieved that their major politicians are not playing a role in the transition programme intended to lead to democratic presidential and parliamentary elections next year

Low turnout in the state assembly elections this weekend in the north, as well as in the southwest which is traditionally the bastion of the opposition showed that the government still has work to do to convince Nigerians that its promises of democracy and prosperity are genuine

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For observers of Nigeria, the death in prison of the former military vice president, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, at the age of 54 was not a shock. It could have been Chief M K L Abiola, the expected winner of the aborted 1993 presidential elections or Yar'Adua's ex-chief, General Olusegun Obasanjo. It is a cold and iron age in a country of military corruption and muscle whose prisons brim with political prisoners.

Some have already pointed out that when Udurat, the wife of Abiola, was shot dead in road daylight in Lagos in 1996, the heavens did not fall. Others have recalled the 1995 election, amid international entreaties, of Kenaro-Wiwa and eight others to buttress their conviction that Yar'Adua's demise will, at first, only embarrass the government of military ruler General Sani Abacha.

But they miss the point. Yar'Adua belongs to a different class. Abiola's strength is in the south-west, but Yar'Adua was born in Yar'Adua village near Katsina in the northernmost part of Nigeria. By virtue of his Fulani origins, he belonged to a relatively small but politically astute ethnic group affiliated to the Hausa who have, either directly or indirectly, always controlled the levers of power in Nigeria.

His father was a minister in the First Republic government of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, terminated in the country's first coup d'état in January 1966.

Yar'Adua attended Katsina Government Secondary School. He was one of the many school leavers from the core north, encouraged by Northern People's Congress leader Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the most powerful politician of the time, to join the army. Yar'Adua attended the Military Training College, Zaria, and Sandhurst.

At the time of the January 1966 coup he was an army lieutenant in Eastern Nigeria, a post which meant that he was not, physically, a part of the bloody July 1966 counter-coup.

During the civil war, he fought the Biafran secessionists, rising by 1970 to brigade commander.

In 1975, Lieutenant-Colonel Yar'Adua, backed by Brigadier Murtala Muhammed, teamed with other middle-ranking officers to depose General Yakubu Gowon's regime. Yar'Adua became transport minister under



Top brass: Shehu Musa Yar'Adua in brigadier's uniform in 1978

Murtala Muhammed — who was killed six months later in a failed coup attempt.

Olusegun Obasanjo replaced Murtala as head of state, and Yar'Adua leapfrogged at least 15 senior officers to become Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters and number two to Obasanjo. The preference given to Yar'Adua

was political, since he was a far north Muslim like the murdered Murtala, and it was felt important to assuage the almighty region's feelings.

In 1979, the Obasanjo regime relinquished power to President Shehu Shagari's elected government and Major General Yar'Adua, still

only 33, returned from the army — a lifetime and money, and a political future beckoned. The opportunity came during the transition-to-civil-rule programme of General Ibrahim Babangida.

Yar'Adua gave a good account of himself in the presidential primaries, but he never had a crack at the presidency because the process was cancelled while Yar'Adua and many others were banned from politics. This was the development that enabled Abiola and other unbanned politicians to stand for the presidency.

When General Sani Abacha seized power in November 1993, he set up a constituent assembly, to which Yar'Adua won election and from where he orchestrated the body's overwhelming motion that Abacha should relinquish power immediately. Soon after, Yar'Adua and Obasanjo, as well as many officers and some civilians and journalists were arrested and tried by a military tribunal, which sat in secret. Most of the defendants were convicted. Yar'Adua's death sentence was later commuted to 25 years in prison after an international outcry.

From behind bars Yar'Adua still wielded enormous influence, through his political association. Reports of such exploits necessitated his movement from prison to prison to curb what his gaolers considered his "excesses".

Those who witnessed Yar'Adua's funeral in Katsina said the mourners were in tens of thousands. And there were no signs of tension. Indeed Abacha, the current dictator, himself was born in Kano, and claims that ancient city of the north as his home, but his stock is undoubtedly Kanuri. Historians are aware of the political differences between the Hausa, Fulani and the Kanuri.

After the death of the north's Ahmadu Bello in the coup of January 1966, mourners were also in their tens of thousands yet there was no immediate tension in the streets. But Nigeria is still quaking from the backlash that followed only months later.

Of course, Yar'Adua and Ahmadu Bello were not of comparable status. But with Yar'Adua's passing another part of the regional jigsaw of opposition to Abacha has fallen into place. He leaves a wife and five children.

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, soldier, born March 5 1943, died December 8 1997

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OBITUARY

A death that could rock Nigeria

(226) MTG 12-18/12/97

Uneasy Nigeria looks at prospects for

Andersson in Lagos

(2ab) BD 19/12/1997

Despite promised reform, an atmosphere of uncertainty and confusion prevails in Nigeria, writes Hilary

democracy

NIGERIA's military leader Gen Sani Abacha seems set to fulfil his three-year-old pledge to hand over power to a democratically elected government on October 1 1998, but speculation of his own have cast doubts over what kind of democracy he has in mind.

Abacha's hints that he may be interested in staying on in power after elections next year have prevented other major politicians from announcing their interest in contesting the presidency — which has left a dangerous political vacuum.

The five registered political parties seem unlikely to pose a challenge to Abacha if he does decide to stay on as head of state, since at least three of them have been competing for his candidacy under their banner.

All the parties are fraught with internal squabbling, and none of them are led by any weighty political figures.

The Nigerian National Electoral Commission, in theory an independent body, exposed its own weaknesses earlier this year when it succumbed to a random decision

taken by a senior military officer that the results of a by-election were null and void, and that the poll would be decided instead by the flip of a coin.

Abacha's recent comments hinting that Nigeria "needs its own kind of democracy" and stating that western democracy is not always appropriate in Africa, have led to speculation that he is trying to foster a one-party state in Nigeria and thereby follow the lead of many other African countries.

Some Nigerians support the idea of the general staying on in power as a civilian leader, because they believe this might be the only way that the military could be slowly edged out of the political equation.

Nigeria has experimented with democracy numerous times since it acquired independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, but its democratically elected governments have always been overthrown by military coups.

Nigeria's human rights community, and many independent

observers, scorn the view that the country would be better served by a one-party state than it would be by democracy, and they are becoming increasingly despondent about the future.

Abacha's promised transition of Nigeria to civilian rule is taking place in the context of a nation that is still locked in an unresolved political crisis, which began after democratic presidential elections were annulled unexpectedly by the military in 1993.

The man widely presumed to have won those elections, Chief Mashood Abiola, is in detention. He has been detained for the past three years, awaiting trial on "charges of treason".

The international community has attempted to create some pressure for an improvement in Nigeria's human rights situation, by applying limited sanctions on the nation, but this pressure appears to have had little effect.

Meanwhile, Abacha's image-makers have been hard at work, to promote the profile of a man

whose character is unknown to most Nigerians, but who has marred his reputation in the international community.

The pro-Abacha campaigners have stressed the general's commitment to the militaristic themes of patriotism and security, and portray him to the nation as a great visionary who is capable of leading Nigeria forward into the next millennium.

The main plank of Abacha's plan for the future of the country is contained in a report that was drawn up by a committee known as Vision 2010, a vision for Nigeria's future, which is supposed to rally people to the ruling government's side.

The committee's frequent references to the need for more openness in Nigerian government and society sound hollow, however, when the details of the plan have not been made public.

This, and the continuing economic crisis in the country, has done nothing to alleviate the widespread scepticism about the

government's promises of imminent prosperity.

Nigeria has suffered a devastating energy crisis this year, which has crippled the domestic manufacturing sector.

The first six months of the year were marked by a gruelling fuel shortage, which left the streets of one of the world's major oil producing nations clogged with long lines of cars waiting for a few litres of overpriced black market fuel.

The fuel shortage was followed by a severe diesel shortage, which proved equally devastating in a country where many businesses are forced to rely on their own diesel-operated generators to obtain electricity.

The monstrous inefficiency of the government-owned electricity company is outflanked only by the decrepit condition of the state-owned refineries, which have not been maintained because of a government spending squeeze.

Abacha has brought a welcome measure of macroeconomic stability to the nation since he came to



ABACHA

power in 1993, by reducing inflation and stabilising the currency. However, in the face of declining growth in the economy, these achievements have earned him little praise.

Lesson to learn

from Namibia

21 19/12/97 (226)

GRAHAM LINSOTT

TO REVISIT Windhoek is a heartening experience. Seven years into Namibian independence, it defies the stereotypes of Africa, the bar-room punditry.

Windhoek is a city that works. Its streets hold no menace. They are not thronged by cheapjack traders, pickpockets and muggers, neither are they thronged by a swaggering soldiery keeping order. I still don't know what a Namibian cop looks like.

They are thronged instead by a parade of humanity going about its business that ranges in pigmentation from the inky black through various stages to the flaxenly blond.

The people converse mainly in Afrikaans, though also in the indigenous African tongues and German. English is the official language but the least-used day-to-day.

The streets are not littered. You could eat your breakfast off the pavements. The lawns are watered and meticulously clipped, the towering palms that fringe exquisite German colonial buildings seem taller than ever.

Nothing is out of place. Nothing needs painting. The place sparkles. And the pleasing prospect is cradled in a ring of rugged hills whose bare bleakness is of surpassing beauty, caught in a clarity of light that only desert can provide.

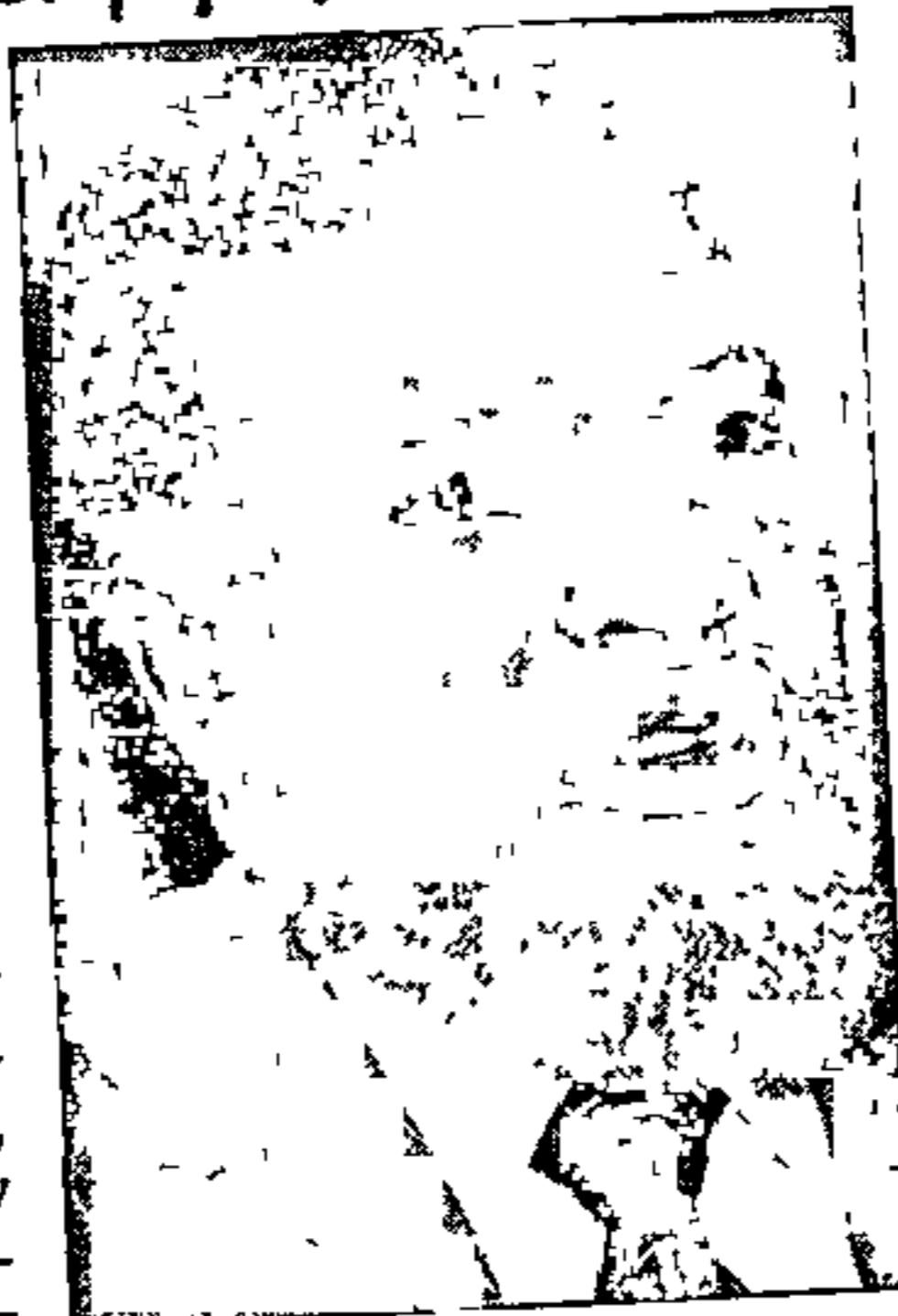
Yes, Windhoek is quite something to anyone grown accustomed to South Africa's urban settings, whether decaying, crime-infested CBD or run-down rural dorp buried under beer cans.

The place is physically separated by distance from the social forces that have so blighted parts of South Africa.

It always did feel more "European" — purely in the cultural/architectural sense — than any part of South Africa. Perhaps some of the residual German values of neatness, punctuality and hard work have taken deep root.

But the Namibians themselves have without doubt got a few things right as well. They are quite palpably a people reconciled. The range of pigmentations really does seem to count for nothing. In government and business the mix is random.

Former South African soldiers — Afrikaner veterans of the bush war — are back in the north of this vast country in the very localities they came to know so



SAM NUJOMA: He's steering Namibia firmly into the future.

well while fighting. But this time they have their finger on the firing button of the till.

Having taken out Namibian citizenship, they have set up as traders and are making fortunes they could not have hoped to amass back in South Africa.

Their customers are the relatively wealthy subsistence farmers (whom they not long ago suppressed) in that rare, well-watered part of Namibia and the people across the border in southern Angola

(whom they not long ago mortared). As many as 15 giant lorries a day ply backward and forward. (In spite of everything, southern Angola is relatively rich in US dollars, mainly from diamond mining. Whatever the World Bank statistics, Africa often discovers its own vitality.)

When I expressed astonishment at this development, a high government official smiled wryly. "We have reconciled," he said. "You have the Truth and Reconciliation Commission."

Yes, the Namibians have closed the book on the past. They have their eye on the future. They have harnessed the nation's energies.

They have a National Planning Commission, drawn from government, private sector, trade unions and NGOs, which sets objectives and tracks progress.

They have embarked on an ambitious and innovative export-processing programme with which they intend to become the producer for all kinds of overseas markets.

Namibians have their problems, of course — who hasn't? Drought and unemployment are high among them.

President Sam Nujoma makes worrisome noises about staying on for another term, which would require an amendment to the constitution. That is a definite blip.

But the overwhelming impression is that Namibians have freed themselves of the past, without seeking to obliterate it.

Namibia was once a German colony, then a South African mandate, then a bone of contention at the United Nations, then — along the northern border — a war zone.

But today it is Namibia with its eye on the future. That is what makes revisiting Windhoek so truly heartening.

□ Graham Linscott is an associate editor of *Independent Newspapers, Natal*

Coup attempt foiled, 12 held in Nigeria

Star 22/12/97

Generals among those arrested in bid to seize power in troubled country

AFP
Lagos

Nigeria's military government yesterday put down an attempted coup and arrested a dozen people, Nigeria's official National Television (NTA) said.

Among those arrested were strongman General Oladipo Diya, the number two man in the government, and two other serving generals, Major-Generals Abdulkarim Adisa and Tajudeen Olanrewaju.

Adisa and Olanrewaju were previously ministers for public works and communications in the government dismissed on November 17 by Nigeria's military ruler General Sani Abacha, NTA said.

Abacha swore in a new government on Thursday. A former defence minister, he came to power in a coup in November 1993 and has promised to hand over power to a civilian regime by October 1 next year.

Nigeria has been ruled by military regimes for all but 10 of its 37 years of independence from Britain, and has seen a series of coups since the mid-60s.

NTA quoted an official statement by the chief of defence staff, Major-General Abdul-

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salam Abubakar, naming the others arrested.

These included five colonels: Daniel Akintonde, former military administrator of Ogun State, Edwin Jandu, commander of the artillery brigade, Emmanuel Shoda, a military assistant to Diya; Femi Peters, of the National War College; and Olu Akinyode, former military assistant to Olanrewaju, the NTA said.

Others named as arrested were Majors Biliaminu Mohammed, an administration officer in the presidency; Olusegun Fadipe, the chief security officer to Diya; and T A Ishaku, of the artillery department.

Professor Femi Odekunle, the political adviser to Diya, was named as the only civilian among those arrested.

In June 1993 presidential elections were held to return the country to democracy after eight years of military government under General Ibrahim Babangida. They were annulled by the military soon afterwards.

The man widely believed to have won them, Moshood Abiola, is in jail on treason charges. An interim civilian administration was overturned by Abacha on November 17 1993 and all democratic institutions dissolved.

Top brass accused of coup plot in Nigeria

Abacha's No 2 among 12 arrested

(226)
ADG 22/12/97

Lagos - Nigeria's military regime has put down a plot to "violently overthrow" the government and arrested a dozen people, including the regime's second in command, official television reported.

Among those arrested on Saturday on suspicion of plotting to overthrow the government were strongman General Oladipo Diya, No 2 in the military regime, and two other serving major-generals, Abdulkarim Adisa and Tajudeen Olanrewaju, NTA national television said

General Diya, 53, an infantry officer has been military ruler Sanj Abacha's deputy since the administration came to power

From 1984 to 1985, he was military governor of his native Ogun state in the south-west

Generals Adisa and Olanrewaju were ministers for public works and communications respectively in the government dismissed on November 17 by General Abacha

General Abacha, widely rumoured to be ill, swore in a new government last Thursday

He has promised to hand over power to a civilian regime by October 1 next year

NTA quoted an official statement by the chief of defence staff, Major-General Abdulsalam Abubakar, naming the others arrested

The others named included five colonels Daniel Akintonde, former military administrator of Ogun State, Edwin Jandu, commander of the artillery brigade, Emmanuel Shoda, a military assistant to General Diya, Femi Peters, of the National War Col-

lege, and Olu Akinyode, former military assistant to General Olanrewaju, NTA said

Among others listed as arrested were Biliaminu Mohammed, an administration officer in the presidency, Olusegun Fadipe, the chief security officer to General Diya, and T A Ishaku, of the artillery department, all majors

Femi Odekunle, the political adviser to General Diya, was the only civilian arrested

NTA said investigations into the abortive coup were continuing - Sapa-AFP

THREE NIGERIAN GENERALS ARRESTED

Abacha squashes coup bid

CT 22/12/97 (22b)

LAGOS: The second most powerful man in the Nigerian military government, Oladipo Diya, is among those arrested yesterday after a reported coup attempt failed

NIGERIA'S military government put down an attempted coup yesterday and arrested a dozen people, including the regime's number two man, Nigeria's official National Television (NTA) said

Among those arrested were strongman General Oladipo Diya — second in the government to military ruler General Sani Abacha — and two other serving generals Major-Generals Abdulkarim Adisa and Tajudeen Olanrewaju, NTA said

Adisa and Olanrewaju were previously ministers for public works and communications in the government dismissed on November 17 by Abacha

Abacha, widely rumoured to be ailing, swore in a new government last Thursday. He has promised to hand over power to a civilian regime by October 1, 1998

NTA quoted an official statement by the chief of defence staff, Major General Abdulsalam Abubakar, naming the others arrested

The others named included five colonels: former military administrator of Ogun State Colonel Daniel Akintonde, commander of the artillery brigade Colonel Edwin Jandu, a military assistant to Diya Colonel Emmanuel Shoda, Colonel Femi Peters of the National War College, and Colonel Olu

Akinyode, former military assistant to Olanrewaju

Among the others named as arrested were Major Biliaminu Mohammed, an administration officer in the presidency, Major Olusegun Fadipe, the chief security officer to Diya, and Major T A Ishaku, who is in the artillery department

Professor Femi Odekunle, the political adviser to Diya, was named as the only civilian among those arrested

Nigeria was a British colony from 1900 to 1914 before becoming a protectorate up to independence on October 1, 1960. Between then and 1985 there were five successful coups and a bloody secessionist war

On June 12, 1993 presidential elections were held to return the country to democracy after eight

years of military government under General Ibrahim Babangida. They were annulled by the military soon afterwards

The man widely believed to have won them, Muslim tycoon Mr Moshood Abiola, is in jail on treason charges

An interim civilian administration was overturned by Abacha on November 17, 1993 and all democratic institutions dissolved

On October 1, Abacha outlined a programme of elections leading to a civilian administration being sworn in on October 1, 1998

His administration said in March 1995 it had put down a coup and jailed a number of senior former officers it said were involved

According to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies there are 78 800 men in the Nigerian army — Sapa-AFP

Stunned Nigerians ponder puzzle of how the trusted could

226 Star 23/12/97

Lagos - Stunned Nigerians wondered yesterday how key generals who were thought to be staunch supporters of General Sani Abacha could have plotted to overthrow him

Both Lagos and Abuja, respectively the economic and political capitals, were abuzz with the news of the plot yesterday, while others called for transparency in the affair, recalling the secret hearings that led to 44 convictions following an alleged coup plot in 1995.

The military regime, which has promised to return the nation to democratic rule in October, said the transition programme was still on course despite the coup plot

The plot, uncovered on Sunday by Abacha's military junta, led to 12 arrests including that of General Oladipo Diya, the strongman's deputy.

Two other serving generals, five colonels, three majors and one civilian completed the lineup, while, according to unconfirmed reports, more soldiers might have been arrested in some Lagos army barracks overnight.

Generals Abdulkarim Adisa and Tajudeen Olanrewaju, though widely considered to be loyal to Abacha, were dropped from the new administration announced last week.

Abacha had dissolved the Federal Executive Council last month, reportedly to rid the government of ministers he found troubling

Yet Adisa, formerly the works and housing minister, has been openly advocating Abacha's return to power through elections planned for next year, while Olanrewaju led the sensitive communications ministry for more than two years.

The national chairman of the opposition coalition in Nigeria, Senator Abraham Adesanya, and other observers noted that most of the coup plot suspects, including Diya, are

from the Yoruba ethnic group, which is based in south-west Nigeria.

Yoruba is one of Nigeria's three main ethnic groups along with Hausa/Fulani in the north and Ibo in the east

Adesanya warned that the coup plot was a sign of bad things to come in Nigeria.

"If there is any evidence against them (the coup plot suspects), they should be charged in a normal court, but if they

are charged before a military tribunal, then there must be a right of appeal to the highest court in the land," he said in a telephone interview in Lagos

Prominent Lagos human rights activist and lawyer, Chief Gani Fawehinmi, called for full public disclosure of the affair

"The whole thing looks absurd and cloudy. We want the whole truth to be made open," he said. "We want an open trial and report of the investigation

The present regime came to power in November 1993, ousting the inept unelected civilian regime of Chief Ernest Shonekan which was put in place by the previous military ruler, General Ibrahim Babangida

That change came after Babangida annulled the presidential election held on June 12 1993, which was widely believed to have been won by Chief Moshood Abiola

Abiola is currently detained on treason charges following his self-declaration as president on the basis of that election.

They are currently serving various jail terms

published for everybody to see."

Fawehinmi, a staunch critic of the military, recalled the trial following an alleged coup plot in March 1995, after which former head of state General Olusegun Obasanjo and 43 military men and civilians, including journalists, were convicted in camera by a military tribunal.

They are currently serving various jail terms

Plot a coup

The present regime came to power in November 1993, ousting the inept unelected civilian regime of Chief Ernest Shonekan which was put in place by the previous military ruler, General Ibrahim Babangida

That change came after Babangida annulled the presidential election held on June 12 1993, which was widely believed to have been won by Chief Moshood Abiola

Abiola is currently detained on treason charges following his self-declaration as president on the basis of that election.

Calm follows news of failed Nigerian coup

(226)

Southern 23/12/97

LAGOS - Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria's two capital cities, were calm yesterday, more than 12 hours after the government announced it had arrested head of state General Sani Abacha's deputy, General Oladipo Diya, and 11 others over a failed coup plot

An *AFP* correspondent who toured the major streets of Lagos early yesterday said that the city was very calm with no visible reinforcement of security in the nation's economic capital

Workers, traders and commuters were going about their business as if nothing happened the previous day

In Abuja, the political capital, workers got ready to start the day as normal while some shops opened for business

News of the failed coup plot caused widespread astonishment, however, especially given the identity of the generals said to have been involved

Besides General Diya (53) two other generals who were considered loyalists of the regime of General Abacha and who were both ministers in the cabinet dissolved last month are listed among those involved in the plot

New cabinet

They are the Major-Generals Abdulkarim Adisa and Tajudeen Olanrewaju

Abacha had on Thursday sworn in a new 33-member cabinet which included 16 members of the previous 36-man administration

Of the 11 people arrested with Diya, only one is a civilian

No motives behind the plan or the precise circumstances surrounding it have been revealed

Officials said investigations into the plot were continuing

All the national newspapers yesterday morning carried front page news of the failed coup plot, listing the names of all those arrested for it

Official radio Nigeria yesterday carried chief of defence staff, General Abdulsalam Abubakar, announcing the failed coup plot and assuring Nigerians that the programme of transition to civilian rule, currently being implemented by the military regime, was still on course - *Sapa-AFP*

Nigeria's handover on schedule

(226)

BD 2/10/97

ABUJA — Nigeria's military leader Gen Sani Abacha pledged yesterday to hand over power to an elected civilian administration next year.

Abacha said in a broadcast to Nigeria's 120-million people that the political transition programme would end on October 1 next year with the entry into office of an "elected civilian administration".

The date had been proposed before, but Abacha's declara-

tion — made on the 37th anniversary of Nigeria's independence from the UK — suggests the military is sticking to its timetable.

However, political analysts noted Abacha failed to say whether he would run in the August 1 presidential election.

"As we enter the last year of this administration, we shall continue to count on your support and co-operation," he said.

Nigeria's armed forces seized

power from an interim civilian government in November 1993, five months after the generals annulled a presidential election that was supposed to end eight years of military rule.

But two years ago the military set October 1 next year as its deadline for restoring a civilian democracy at all levels of government, with presidential elections due on August 1.

Abacha said conditions had changed in Nigeria, Africa's

most populous country and its biggest petroleum producer.

"We have overcome the political crises which engulfed our nation," he said.

"It is important to reiterate that our policies in the social and political realms in the past four years have revolved around the process of establishing peace and stability in our country. We felt the need to put our economy on a firm footing," he said — Sapa-AFP.

Abacha pledges to hand over power

(226)

source 2/10/97

Military leader says a civilian administration will be elected next year

ABUJA, NIGERIA – Nigeria's military leader General Sani Abacha yesterday pledged to hand over power to an elected civilian administration in exactly 12 months, asserting that the "last year" of his rule had begun

In a nationwide broadcast speech, Abacha said "The political transition programme will, by the grace of God, terminate on October 1 1998 with the entry into office of an elected civilian administration"

Abacha's junta has announced the date before, but his declaration – made on the 37th anniversary of independence from Britain for Africa's most populous country – suggested the military was sticking by its timetable

Abacha (54) failed to say, however, whether he himself would run in a presidential election that is to be held on August 1 next year, following contradictory reports about the state of his health

Whether he will do so has been the subject of speculation in political and press circles for many months while the army, which had long remained silent on the issue, has in the past week expressed full support for him

"As we enter the last year of this administration, we shall continue to count on your support and cooperation," the general said in an address to Nigeria's estimated 120 million people

"Today, thanks to your resilience, your perseverance and our united resolve not to lose our sense of purpose, we have put the worst behind us, so that now we can truly look forward to the future with justifiable optimism," he said.

Abacha seized power in November 1993 from an unelected interim civilian government, five months after the military held and then annulled the outcome of a civilian presidential election

International observers had called it free and fair
"We have overcome the political crises which engulfed our nation and brought our beloved fatherland to the brink of anarchy and disintegration," said Abacha – Sapa-AFP