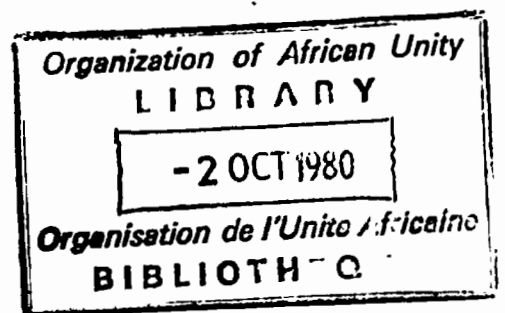


AFRICA

SEMI-WEEKLY INTERAFRICAN NEWS SURVEY



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S U M M A R Y
=====

GENERAL INFORMATION

Luxembourg : Concessions ease ACP talks	1
Luxembourg : Plea for financial aid	2
Washington : Bank says no to observers	2
Perth : Gold strike in Australia	2
London : World sugar shortage forecast	3
Paris : Nuclear carriers for France	3
Moscow : Moscow plea to end alliances	4
Paris : France in arms deal with Qatar	4
Hagfors : Soviets carry out N-test	4
Belgrade : Call for in-depth communications study	5
London : Progress on coffee export quotas	5

MIDDLE EAST

Undated : Iran-Iraq conflict enters fifth day	6
Undated : Plan for international force	7
Islamabad : Growing support for Islamic conference session	8
Washington : Fresh talks planned on mideast	9
Jerusalem : West Bank mayor arrested	9

OIL & ENERGY

Washington : Senate approves uranium sale	10
Beirut : Oil pumping to resume soon	10

NORTH AFRICA

Sudan :	
- Khartoum faces \$1,000 M. trade deficit	11
Sahara :	
- Polisario claims major victory	11
- Withdrawal demand reaffirmed	11

WEST AFRICA

Liberia :	
- Civilian rule pledge by minister	12
- property seized by government	12
Ghana :	
- Amnesty marks govt. anniversary	13
Nigeria :	
- Anti-pollution accord signed	13
- Lagos to seek tenders for gas project	14

EAST AFRICA

Ethiopia :	
- Addis voices fears over bases	15
- Problems of transnationals discussed	15
Kenya :	
- Protest over cross-border raids	15
Tanzania :	
- Nyerere is party choice again	16
- European firms win contracts	16
- 40 feared drowned	17
Uganda :	
- Parties threaten election boycott	17

S U M M A R Y (2)

=====

EAST AFRICA

- Uganda :
- Mercy team ends mission 18

CENTRAL AFRICA

- Angola :
- Angola makes constitutional changes 19
- Central Africa :
- Bokassa "prepared to face inquiry" 20
- Zaire :
- Zaire accused of torturing prisoners 21
- Zambia :
- Plea for halt to arms race 21
 - Miners stage "crime" protest 22
 - Man faces murder charges 22

SOUTHERN AFRICA

- Zimbabwe :
- Mugabe moves to keep out Gen. Walls 23
 - White farmer shot dead 23
 - U.S. aid "not enough" - Vance 24
 - Guerrillas arrive in township 24
- Namibia :
- SWAPO "key to peace in Namibia" - Stevens 25
 - 48 guerrillas killed in clashes 25
- Republic of South Africa :
- Ex-president dies aged 82 26
 - Carrington rejects mandatory sanctions 26
 - African bloc calls for council meeting 27
 - Time ripe for French initiative - Chirac 27

INDIAN OCEAN

- Comores :
- Kuwaiti experts called in 28
 - Ocean build up by superpowers 29

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CONCESSIONS EASE ACP TALKS

LUXEMBOURG, September 24 -The European Community's Development Commissioner, Claude Cheysson, soothed third world tempers here Tuesday with a number of concessions in various disputes between the EEC and the bloc of 59 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) nations who are economically linked with the EEC through the Lome-2 convention.

Mr. Cheysson said the forthcoming admission of Zimbabwe as the 60th member of the ACP group would have no adverse effect on the ACP export quotas to the EEC, mainly concerning sugar, meat and tobacco.

The EEC has proposed that Zimbabwe's export quotas be made up of unused parts of the existing quotas allotted to the ACP under the Lome-2 pact. The ACP nations have protested, saying Zimbabwe should have its own separate quotas, beyond the global total set by Lome-2.

Mr. Cheysson's Development Commission also declared its solidarity with the African ACP members for the drop in the price of cocoa and pledged that the EEC contribution to the modernisation of the African ACP countries would be the best way to fight South African apartheid.

The commission also called on both EEC and ACP countries to ratify Lome-2^{by} November 30 so that the convention could come into effect next January 1.

More amendments

With Mr. Cheysson's assurances, members of the joint EEC-ACP commission dropped most of the amendments which had been tabled by the discontented ACP nations for forwarding to today's meeting here of the EEC-ACP consultative assembly.

Initially 80 amendments and about 15 draft resolutions had been tabled in an atmosphere described by one third-world member as one of "disenchantment".

The disenchantment, in substance, could be imputed to the unforthcoming response that many third-world nations felt the EEC had made to their economic plight, observers said.

Among the individual complaints were that :

- The community had not condescended to consult the ACP over the admission of Greece to EEC membership in two months' time, despite the consequences this would have for trade with the ACP.

- The prices raw materials were commanding on world markets were decreasing while those of manufactured goods were rising, amid apparent indifference from the industrial countries.

- The European contribution to third-world hunger problems was less than satisfactory. (A.F.P.)

PLEA FOR FINANCIAL AID

LUXEMBOURG, September 24 - European assembly president Simone Veil today called for financial assistance and increased technical aid for the 60 African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states linked to the European Economic Community under the Lomé Convention.

Mrs. Veil, speaking at the opening session of the annual EEC-ACP consultative assembly, urged on all the associated states which had yet to ratify the second Lomé Convention to do so in the near future so that it could enter into effect next January.

"While the new international (economic) order is still only a project, the Lomé Convention is a reality", she said.

Her co-president during this assembly session, Cameroun National Assembly Chairman Tandeng Muna, speaking after Mrs. Veil, said that it was unfortunate that there were so few contacts between "neighbouring economic groups like the EEC and Comecon (the East European equivalent of the Common Market), between Western financial institutions and those in the East". (A.F.P.)

BANK SAYS NO TO OBSERVERS

WASHINGTON, September 25 - The World Bank's board of governors has passed a resolution effectively barring the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from having observer status at the bank's annual meeting.

A brief communique Wednesday said that participation by foreign observers at this year's meetings would be restricted to the list of those invited last year.

The United States and other Western nations had been fighting an attempt by Arab and other nations to admit the PLO to observer status. (A.F.P.)

GOLD STRIKE IN AUSTRALIA

PERTH, September 24 - Gold worth 60,000 Aust.dollars (about 70,000 U.S. dollars), has been recovered from a rich new strike near the desert town of Menzies, 600 kms north east of here.

Full time prospectors Alan and Bill Collier found 100 oz of gold in shallow surface workings.

The discovery is the latest of a series of big new gold strikes in Western Australia.

Only two weeks ago, nuggets valued at 125,000 Aust.dollars (about 146,000 U.S. dollars) were found near Leonora, 100 kms north of Menzies. (A.F.P.)

WORLD SUGAR SHORTAGE FORECAST

LONDON, September 25 - There will be a world shortage of sugar of 3,200,000 tons, compared with consumption, in 1980-81, first estimates by London brokers Woodhouse, Drake and Carey showed yesterday.

The figure compares with a gap of two to four million tons forecast by most of the other houses. But brokers E.D. and F. Man believed recently that the deficit could reach 6,000,000 tons.

Woodhouse estimated that world consumption could total 90,830,000 tons in 1980-81, but it stressed that an appreciable rise in prices could reduce the figure. It reckoned that production would be 87,630,000 tons, that is, more than last season, but not enough to compensate for increased demand in the developing countries and elsewhere.

The brokers gave as the main reason only a slight improvement in Soviet production (from 7,600,000 to 8,000,000 tons). Owing to rust disease in Cuba, the increase would be absorbed by the Soviet Union and its East European partners.

The brokers estimated that Soviet output would be 13,000,000 tons, raising the total for Eastern Europe to 17,800,000 tons, against production estimated at 12,300,000 tons.

In North America, the gap would be 5,500,000 tons, in Asia 4,870,000 tons and in Africa 500,000 tons. On the other hand, production should show a surplus of 7,330,000 tons in Central America, of 2,760,000 tons in Latin America, 2,600,000 in Oceania and 570,000 tons in Western Europe. (A.F.P.)

NUCLEAR CARRIERS FOR FRANCE

PARIS, September 23 - France is to build two 32,000 ton nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, with the first expected to enter service in 1991, it was announced today.

The French government decided some time ago to replace the navy's two turbine-powered carriers, the Clemenceau and the Foch, and had been considering two naval proposals : one for three 22,000t-on carriers, the other for the two larger ones.

After a presidential spokesman announced the decision at the close of a defence council meeting today, a naval source said that plans for the nuclear propulsion unit were almost complete though the design of the ships was still in a preliminary stage. (A.F.P.)

MOSCOW PLEA TO END ALLIANCES

MOSCOW, September 25 - The Soviet Union has proposed to the United Nations General Assembly the discussion of a draft resolution calling on states that belong to military alliances not to extend them and on non-member states not to join those alliances, Tass news agency reported.

The draft resolution - headed "on certain urgent measures to lessen the danger of war" - was sent yesterday to U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim by Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko.

An accompanying letter expressed Moscow's concern over the policy of "certain influential circles in world affairs, which openly seek strategic and military supremacy", the result being "a frantic arms race and the determination to obtain a unilateral military advantage". (A.F.P.)

FRANCE IN ARMS DEAL WITH QATAR

PARIS, September 25 - France is to sell the emirate of Qatar three fast patrol launches armed with 40 mm Exocet sea-to-sea missiles, the French Defence Ministry said today.

A senior official said the deal, under an agreement signed following the visit this spring by President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Defence Minister Yvon Bourges, also included the sale of two coastal defence units equipped with the same missiles.

The Exocet missile has a 35-nautical mile range and is claimed to be one of the most accurate guided weapons currently in operation.

France has also undertaken to train the Qatari crews of the new vessels. (A.F.P.)

SOVIETS CARRY OUT N-TEST

HAGFORS, September 25 - The Soviet Union today conducted an underground nuclear test, its 11th this year, Hagfors military observatory in Sweden reported.

Experts located the test at the Semipalatinsk firing range in Siberia.

The United States has carried out 10 test this year and France three. There were 53 tests last year : 28 Soviet, 15 American, nine French, and one British. (A.F.P.)

CALL FOR IN-DEPTH
COMMUNICATIONS STUDY

BELGRADE, September 25 - UNESCO director general Amadou Mahtar Mbow today called for an in-depth study of the problems of communication world-wide, including what third world countries see as a dominance of the western media over dissemination of news.

Addressing the 21st session here of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Mr. Mbow (of Senegal) also condemned the trial and conviction in East Germany of UNESCO official Percy Stulz on charges of spying.

On the communications issue, Mr. Mbow said that the report prepared by the UNESCO study commission on communications problems was "not a conclusion but rather a starting point".

The report, drafted under the chairmanship of former Irish Foreign Minister Sean Macbride, asks for development of third world news media, a call the general conference will be asked to endorse.

In practical terms, the director general added, the most important question to be resolved will be that of a system for financing the stepped up development of the international news flow. (A.F.P.)

PROGRESS ON COFFEE
EXPORT QUOTAS

LONDON, September 26 - Progress towards an agreement on the introduction of export quotas to stabilize world coffee prices was made here yesterday by the International Coffee Organization (ICO) after nine days of difficult discussions.

Delegates said that the producers were on the point of making a joint proposal on the level of the global quota and on sharing it. The global figure would be 55,100,000 60-kilo bags for the exporting member-countries of the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) and 500,000 bags for the non-members, making a total of 55,600,000 bags.

That figure is equal to the ICO's estimated import needs of the consumer countries in 1980-81.

The global figure would be reduced if world prices fell below a certain level still to be decided.

Informed sources said Brazil and Angola had agreed that they could not reach the totals they were due to receive under the ICA. Their joint deficit would be 4,700,000 bags, which could be shared among the other producers. (A.F.P.)

IRAN-IRAQ CONFLICT ENTERS
FIFTH DAY

UNDATED, September 26 - The Iraq-Iran conflict entered its fifth day today amid growing calls from world leaders for a swift end to hostilities.

The exact state of the fighting was difficult to assess with both sides denying the victory's claims of the other.

Yesterday Iraq said it had captured the Iranian port city of Khorramshahr but Iran denied this Iraq admitted today that its claim was "premature". The Japanese Foreign Ministry, citing its consulate in the city, said today that fierce fighting between the rival forces was continuing in the city.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi ambassador to Cuba said last night that two Iranian army divisions had surrendered to Iraqi forces at Shatt al-Arab, amid other signs of large losses and late indications of heavy action in the Iraq-Iran border war.

The Iranian news agency PARS released its largest casualty list to date, saying at least 149 people had been killed and 291 wounded in Iraqi bombing of the four largest cities in Khuzestan, in Southwestern Iran.

Enemy planes

And in Baghdad, the Iraqi armed forces general command said Iraqi forces had shot down a total of 36 Iranian air force planes yesterday, according to the Iraqi news agency JANA.

It said that 20 enemy planes had been downed over the Iraqi cities of Irbil, Kirkuk and Mosul, nine over Baghdad, Al-Kut and Tan, and seven over Basra and Shaiya.

But PARS yesterday reported that only 12 Iranian fighters had been lost, while claiming an additional 16 Iraqi MIG fighters had been downed during the day, bringing to 70 the number of Iraqi planes it says have been shot down since the hostilities began.

Iraqi ambassador to Cuba Arshad Tufik Ismail, in addition to telling newsmen in Havana of the alleged capture of the two Iranian divisions, said that Iraqi forces had recovered 29 tanks, 13 missile bases and 20 175 MM gun batteries "abandoned by enemy troops".

The ambassador, who said he was in constant communication with his government, added that nearly 200 civilians had been killed in bombardments in Iraq since the beginning of the current war.

In its casualty report yesterday, PARS said 50 persons had been killed and 140 wounded at Khorramshahr. It also reported 21 persons dead and 60 wounded at Masjed Soleyman, and 18 killed and 91 hurt at Ahvaz.

The Iranian Red Crescent (Iran's counterpart to the Red Cross) said that 60 persons had been killed at Abadan in bombing of the city's civilian hospital.

The city of Teheran was placed on maximum alert yesterday in what turned out to be an "exercise under real conditions", in the words of the Iranian Army High Command.

Shortly before the alert was ended, jets could be heard passing nearby, and explosions could be heard to the north and east of Teheran. It was the first alert in Teheran since the start of the war.

The Iraqi general command later announced in a communique that two Kuwaiti sailors were killed last night during an Iranian Air Force raid on the Iraqi naval base and port of Um-Qasr, during which a Greek ship and a Kuwaiti vessel, both anchored in the port, were damaged.

A fire broke out on the Greek ship but was contained, said the communique, quoted by the Iraqi news agency INA. It gave no details on the results of the reported attack on the Iraqi naval base.

Radio Teheran announced meanwhile that Iranian President Abolhassan Banisadr, who is supreme commander of the Iranian armed forces, had just returned to Teheran from a two-day visit to the front.

The radio said Mr. Banisadr had inspected the Khuzistan border region - the area where fighting has been heavy in Khorramshahr, Abadan and Ahvaz. (A.F.M.)

PLAN FOR INTERNATIONAL FORCE

UNDATED, September 26 - U.S. Secretary of State Edmund Muskie Thursday confirmed that consultations were under way between the United States and its allies on the possibility of sending an international naval force into the Gulf in case of a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz resulting from the current Iranian-Iraqi hostilities.

He also said, following three hours of talks with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in New York, that the United States and the Soviet Union both wanted to remain neutral in the Iraqi-Iranian conflict and believed a serious escalation of the hostilities between the two countries was "improbable".

Mr. Muskie stressed that no decision had been made on the international naval force - which sources said would be comprised of U.S., British and French ships - adding that "at the moment, the restrictions to shipping in the Gulf are not sufficient to generate a military response".

.../

The Secretary of State, who had also met on Thursday with Prince Saud al-Faisal, the Saudi Foreign Minister, said that the United States, its European allies, the Soviet Union and Gulf-area countries were in agreement on the "vital importance" of the Strait of Hormuz, the gateway to the Gulf.

But he added that both the United States and the Soviet Union were in a difficult position in the Iraqi-Iranian conflict, saying: "The Soviets and we both know that nobody stands to gain in this situation... we are both reluctant to take the initiative in getting an end to the fighting".

Waldheim calls for council meeting

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., September 25 - United Nations Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim tonight officially called for an urgent meeting of the U.N. Security Council to examine the Iranian-Iraqi conflict, which he called "an undoubted threat to international peace and security".

In a letter to council president Taieb Slim of Tunisia, Mr. Waldheim said that appeals to the two parties to stop fighting and settle the dispute through peaceful means have failed.

"Despite all of these efforts, the fighting has continued and intensified on land, on the sea and in the air", the letter said.

"Apart from the tragic loss of life involved, the material damage would appear to be very great", Mr. Waldheim said. "I therefore feel obliged... to suggest that the Security Council should consider this matter with the utmost urgency".

On Tuesday, the Security Council met informally at Mr. Waldheim's urging to discuss the conflict and issued an appeal for peace. (A.F.P.)

GROWING SUPPORT FOR ISLAMIC CONFERENCE SESSION

ISLAMABAD, September 25 - A Libyan initiative for an emergency session of the Islamic Foreign Ministers conference to end the conflict between Iran and Iraq gained momentum today when Pakistan gave its capacity as chairman of the 40-nation Moslem movement.

The Libyan move has to be supported by at least 29 Moslem states and observers in Islamabad believe that a majority of Moslem countries would now support it.

The call for the session would have to come from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Jeddah. Several Moslem countries are reportedly in touch with Iraq and Iran through diplomatic channels. (A.F.P.)

FRESH TALKS PLANNED ON MIDEAST

WASHINGTON, September 24 - Egypt and Israel will hold cabinet-level talks next week in New York, in preparation for the upcoming resumption of the Palestinian autonomy negotiations, a spokesman for the Egyptian embassy said here.

Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister Kamal Hassan Ali, now in Washington, is scheduled to go to New York early next week, where he should meet with Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, the spokesman said. It was not known if there would be any United States officials present.

In closed-session addresses to three U.S. Congressional committees Tuesday, Mr. Ali expressed his hope that the U.S. would pressure Israel into respecting the conditions for a global settlement in the Middle East, Egyptian sources said.

During the talks, before the Senate Foreign Relations committee and the Europe and the Middle East subcommittee of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs committee, Mr. Ali underlined the obstacles created by what he termed Israeli "intransigence", the sources said.

Mr. Ali stressed Israel's continued establishment of settlements in occupied territories, which he said "complicates the process of peace". He added that the Soviet Union was "the winner of this instability" in the region, demonstrated by the current Iranian-Iraqi fighting, the sources added. (A.F.P.)

WEST BANK MAYOR ARRESTED

JERUSALEM, September 24 - Israeli soldiers have arrested a West Bank mayor and two aides on orders from the military governor of the occupied Arab territory, Israeli officials said.

Haj Amin Nasser, the Mayor of Kalkilya, was arrested along with his deputy Ahmad Eida and his secretary Ghazi Hilal.

Subsequent searches in the area turned up copies of what Israeli military sources called a "subversive" book on Israeli military occupation recently published by the municipality. All the copies were confiscated by the army. (A.F.P.)

SENATE APPROVES URANIUM SALE

WASHINGTON, September 25 - The Senate narrowly approved Wednesday the sale of 38 tons of enriched uranium to India, in what was seen as a surprise victory for President Jimmy Carter.

The House of Representatives last week had overwhelmingly rejected the proposed transaction, vigorously lobbied for by the administration. But the Senate, which also would have had to oppose the sale to stop it, left the administration a clear path with today's 48 to 46 vote in favour.

The vote came as a surprise to observers, since House opponents of the sale claimed that the United States would be flouting the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty if it carried through with the deal, made in 1963 when the U.S. agreed to supply the Taipur power station for 30 years.

House opponents also said the U.S. sale was inconsistent with the administration's disapproval last week of Swiss enriched-uranium sales to Pakistan, which it said would help that country produce an atomic bomb.

India later welcomed the American Senate decision, expressing the hope that it "will contribute positively to the continued cooperation" between the two countries in the nuclear field.

A Foreign Office spokesman at a press conference also expressed the hope that the pending shipments would now be made without further delay following the Senate decision.

The spokesman said a fresh application for 19.8 tonnes of low enriched uranium for deliveries between March and September next year had been made recently and hoped that "timely action" would be taken by the U.S. administration on it.

He however ruled out India accepting the full scope safeguards on its atomic programmes, he said there was no change in the Indian position in the matter. (A.F.P.)

OIL PUMPING TO RESUME SOON

BEIRUT, September 25 - The Iraqi government will shortly resume the pumping of crude oil to the Tripoli refinery in Lebanon halted in March 1976, an official Lebanese source said today.

Iraq's decision was delivered to the Lebanese Foreign Ministry by Lebanon's ambassador to Iraq Pierre Ziadeh, the source said.

Iraq exports its oil from stations in the north by means of two Mediterranean pipelines, one between Kirkuk, Baniyas (Syria) and Tripoli, the other between Kirkuk and Ceyhan in Turkey. (A.F.P.)

Sudan

KHARTOUM FACES \$1,000 M.

TRADE DEFICIT

KHARTOUM, September 24 - Sudan's trade deficit this year is expected to top 1,000 million dollars, Finance and Economy Minister Badralidin Salaiman told a news conference here Tuesday.

This was a "challenge" which would be tackled by increasing production and exports and restricting consumption, he said.

Already the government had managed to cut the 34 per cent inflation rate, and would try to keep it at around 10 per cent. Sudan was paying out nearly 90 per cent (440 million) of its 500 million dollars export earnings this year for oil imports, he said. (A.F.P.)

Sahara

POLISARIO CLAIMS MAJOR VICTORY

ALGIERS, September 23 - Polisario Saharan nationalists killed several hundred Moroccan troops and captured dozens of others yesterday in a six-hour battle south of the Moroccan town of Tan Tan, a Polisario communique said today.

Several hundred Moroccans were also wounded in the "major battle" which took place at Ras el Khenfra, 80 kms (57 miles) south of Tan Tan, the communique said.

Saharan forces also captured armoured vehicles and large amounts of arms and ammunition after the operation, it added. The communique, issued by the information ministry of the self-proclaimed Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), said its forces had also shot down a Moroccan F5 fighter in the area on Sunday. (A.F.P.)

WITHDRAWAL DEMAND REAFFIRMED

ALGIERS, September 25 - The withdrawal of Moroccan troops from Western Sahara is essential for any move to self-determination of the Saharan people, the assistant secretary-general of the Saharan guerrilla movement Polisario, Bashir Mustapha Sayed, reiterated here yesterday.

Mr. Sayed said Polisario's recent stepped-up attacks to force Moroccan troops out of the territory coincided with Spanish military manoeuvres off the Canary Islands and unusual visits by French warships to Moroccan ports, he said.

The Saharan conflict could only be solved by direct negotiations between Morocco and Polisario under international supervision, Mr. Sayed said. (A.F.P.)

Liberia

CIVILIAN RULE PLEDGE BY MINISTER

LONDON, September 24 - Liberia's military rulers will hand over to a civilian government as soon as the country's economic and social situation has returned to "normal" Liberian Information Minister Gabriel Nimley said here today.

Mr. Nimley, on a one-week visit to Britain to explain political developments in the West African republic since the April military coup and assassination of President William Tolbert, said that "all the political parties of the opposition have been temporarily suspended" pending the introduction of a new constitution and reorganisation of the country's finances.

"The situation in the country has very much improved", he told AFP here. "The financial situation was in bankruptcy" at the time of the military coup.

Mr. Nimley said that the foreign press had "strongly exaggerated" certain developments in Liberia since the coup. Shortly after the coup the new rulers executed 13 ministers and senior officials of the previous government.

The Minister said that the Monrovia government's foreign policy was one of "non-alignment without interference in the policies of other countries". (A.F.P.)

PROPERTY SEIZED BY GOVERNMENT

MONROVIA, September 25 - Liberia's military government announced yesterday it had seized the property of 20 officials of the ousted William Tolbert regime who had fled abroad, including those of former vice-president Bennie Warner.

Others affected included the secretary-general of Tolbert's True Whig party, Clarence Simpson, and four ex-cabinet ministers.

The People's Redemption Council had given a number of former officials until September 16 to return to Liberia or face confiscation of their property, but only one responded to the appeal. (A.F.P.)

Ghana

AMNESTY MARKS GOVT. ANNIVERSARY

ACCRA, September 25 -Ghanaian President Hilla Limann has announced a wide-ranging amnesty to mark the first anniversary of his civilian government, but those jailed by the previous government, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), were excluded.

Under a presidential decree signed yesterday all under sentence of death who have already served at least one year in prison had terms commuted to life imprisonment. Those over 70-years-old in jail for more than three years will be released whatever their sentence.

Many other prisoners serving long terms have had their sentences cut. However the amnesty did not cover those jailed for violent crimes, armed riots, mutiny or sentenced by the AFRC.

The revolutionary council, headed by the now-retired Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, seized power only weeks before the June 1979 elections which paved the way for the return to civilian rule last October with the declared aim of "cleaning up" the country after seven years of military rule.

During its four months in power the AFRC executed eight senior officers, including three former heads of state. (A.F.P.)

Nigeria

ANTI-POLLUTION ACCORD SIGNED

LAGOS, September 23 - The United States and Nigeria, the second largest supplier of U.S. oil imports, have signed a scientific and technical agreement that will include measures to fight oil pollution in this West African state.

The agreement, signed here late yesterday, comes ahead of an official visit to Washington next month by Nigerian President Shehu Shagari. It included clauses covering environmental protection, fishing, oceanography and agriculture.

The signing came after talks between Nigerian officials and a 27-member U.S. delegation led by President Jimmy Carter's science and technology adviser Frank Press.

The talks followed a visit here in July of a delegation led by vice-president Walter Mondale, who had talks with his Nigerian counterpart Alex Ekwueme.

The new agreement included a memorandum of understanding on environmental protection, This covered a programme to fight water pollution, in particular in the sea, and the creation of administrative measures designed to protect the environment. (A.F.P.)

LAGOS TO SEEK TENDERS FOR GAS PROJECT

LAGOS, September 24 - The Nigerian government is expected to call for tenders within the next few days for the world's largest single unit liquefied natural gas (LNG) project following the reported withdrawal of a United States guaranteed gas purchase offer, according to reliable sources here.

Japanese, European and American groups are expected to lead the tenders for the 14,000 million dollar turnkey project.

The sources said that U.S. interests had recently withdrawn from extended negotiations on the massive LNG project, due to be sited at Bonny, near Port Harcourt, at the heart of eastern Nigeria's oilfields.

The Americans reportedly decided that recent Nigerian hikes in proposed prices for the gas made it uncompetitive with existing supplies from Canada and the Gulf of Mexico.

U.S. groups had been negotiating for an annual supply of 8,000 million cubic metres of LNG, half the estimated production once the plant comes on line some time after 1985.

Last November, four U.S. companies accepted in principle to sign a contract at a purchase price of 0.13 dollars per cubic metre, which was two cents below existing prices for Canadian and Mexican gas. European consortia stood on the sidelines hoping to reach an agreement covering total Nigerian LNG production, but subsequently signed a letter of intent for the purchase of the remaining 50 per cent for 20 years. Observers here expected the Europeans would now go for the total production.

Sea carriers

Under the terms of the letter of intent 8,000 million cubic metres would have been shared between Gaz de France, SNAM (Italy), Ruhrgas, BeB and Thyssengas (all of West Germany), Distrigas (Belgium), Gasunie (Netherlands) and Enagas (Spain).

One offshoot of the Bonny project will be the purchase of up to 14 special sea carriers, at an approximate cost of 200 million dollars each.

Last year's negotiations between Nigeria and the Americans took place on the basis of a price reference on January 1, 1979 set at 3.60 dollars per British Thermal Unit (BTU), equivalent to 28.31 cubic metres, although the European companies were given a lower price of 3.50 dollars per BTU the following July.

According to industry sources the Nigerians have since raised the price to 0.17 dollars per cubic metre arguing that LNG prices should follow increases applied to crude oil.

Observers here said that stalling by the U.S. companies on price negotiations had delayed the take-off of the Bonny project. (A.F.P.)

Ethiopia

ADDIS VOICES FEARS OVER BASES

ADDIS ABABA, September 25 - Ethiopian Justice Minister Getachew Kibret returned home today after briefing the leaders of France, West Germany, Italy, Sweden and Britain on Ethiopian opposition to the United States obtaining naval and air force facilities at the Somali port of Berbera.

Mr. Getachew, who delivered special messages to European leaders from head of state Mengistu Haile Mariam, said leaders of the five West European nations had promised to reply to the Ethiopian leader in writing.

Ethiopian Foreign Minister Feleke Gedle Giorgis returned from a similar mission to eastern Europe yesterday. (A.F.P.)

PROBLEMS OF TRANSNATIONALS DISCUSSED

ADDIS ABABA, September 24 - African nations need a comprehensive training programme to counter the operations of transnational corporations, a senior African economist has said here.

Marc Manirakiza, deputy executive secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), said the transnationals controlled production process from the planning stage through financing, quality, transportation, insurance, marketing, advertising and distribution.

Indigenous expertise was necessary if Africa's goals of self-reliance were to be achieved, he said. Mr. Manirakiza was speaking at a meeting for senior government officials from eight eastern and southern African states on the problems posed by transnationals. (A.F.P.)

Kenya

PROTEST OVER CROSS-BORDER RAIDS

NAIROBI, September 26 - Kenya has protested to Tanzania following "continued acts of lawlessness" inside Kenyan territory by members of the Tanzanian militia, the Kenyan News Agency (KNA) has reported.

The incidents, according to KNA, included raids on shops by militiamen using modern weapons, harrassment of tourists, and stock thefts.

"In recent months, Tanzanian nationals have been arrested in Kenya and charged with unlawfully entering our country, being in possession of firearms and ammunitions without certificates", Kenya said in a protest note quoted by KNA.

The Kenyan government "strongly deplored these incidents" and "called upon Tanzania to restrain her nationals from engaging in activities detrimental to good neighbourliness", the note said. (A.F.P.)

NYERERE IS PARTY CHOICE AGAIN

DAR-ES-SALAAM, September 25 - Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's president since independence in 1961, was assured here today of being re-elected without opposition next month to a fifth five-year term.

As expected, the 1,600 delegates to the national electoral conference of the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Revolutionary Party) chose Mr. Nyerere as the party's presidential candidate. Since the party is the only one in Tanzania, Mr. Nyerere is certain of re-election on October 26.

His running mate will once again be Aboud Jumbe, chairman of Zanzibar's Revolutionary Council since 1972. Mr. Jumbe will be the only candidate for that post and for vice-president of Tanzania, which was formed by the merger in 1964 of mainland Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

Well-informed sources noted that Mr. Nyerere had told party leaders that he hoped his coming term would be his last, and that they would find a successor when his mandate ends in 1985.

But observers noted that identical reports had circulated at the last presidential election in 1975, which did not prevent Mr. Nyerere from standing again this time.

Right to vote

On the other hand, the legislative elections, to be held on the same day as the presidential balloting are expected to bring many changes in the composition of the national assembly.

As in the last elections the party decided that two candidates would stand in each constituency, giving voters a chance to choose between outgoing assemblymen standing for reelection and a new generation of politicians. About seven million have registered for the elections.

It will be the first time since 1964 that Zanzibar residents have participated in an election.

The 1,600 delegates to the party conference include members of the National Executive Council, members of the outgoing National Assembly, those of the Zanzibar House of Representatives and the chairmen and secretaries of the Revolutionary Party in each district of Tanzania.

In July, before the dissolution of the assembly, its members recommended unanimously that Mr. Nyerere and Mr. Jumbe be the party's sole candidates. (A.F.P.)

EUROPEAN FIRMS WIN CONTRACTS

DAR-ES-SALAAM, September 25 - The Tanzania electric supply (Tanesco) has awarded four contracts totalling 68.6 million dollars to European firms to undertake three major electrical projects in Tanzania, the official news agency Shihata said. The projects are transmission lines from Kidatu to Mufindi (35.1 million dollars), Mufindi to Mbeya (22.9 million dollars) and Arusha to Moshi (0.6 million dollars). (A.F.P.)

Tanzania

40 FEARED DROWNED

DAR-ES-SALAAM, September 25 - Up to 40 passengers and crew may have drowned when their ferry hit a rock in the Indian Ocean and sank, according to reports here.

The Tanzanian news agency Shihata yesterday gave the death toll as 20 and did not mention survivors but other sources, which confirmed that 20 bodies had been found, said twice as many may have died.

The same sources said there were three survivors when the ferry sank in coastal waters off Lindi, on its way from Kilwa Masoko to Pande, Southern Tanzania. (A.F.P.)

Uganda -

PARTIES THREATEN ELECTION BOYCOTT

KAMPALA, September 25 - Two of Uganda's four political parties today threatened to boycott the December general elections, the first in 18 years, unless the interim government fulfills six conditions they consider essential for the elections to be fair.

Officials of the Democratic Party (DP) and Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM), which have refused to take part in sessions of the National Consultative Council (interim parliament) following last week's appointment of a council chairman sympathetic to the Uganda People's Congress of former President Milton Obote, are demanding strict implementation of all decisions previously taken by an all-party committee.

These include the use of a single ballot box in each polling station and the use of foreign observers (Britain, Canada, India, Nigeria, Australia and the Netherlands) for the electoral period, beginning with voter registration.

The UPM and DP are the main opponents of the UPC in the proposed elections, which have been called in the hope of bringing political stability back to the country after the eight year rule of Idi Amin. The fourth and smallest party, the conservative party is understood to be considering joining the front against the UPC, which has a strong supporter in the chairman of the ruling military commission.

At the press conference party officials warned that "unless our conditions are met, the two political parties shall not be party to the sham general elections".

The parties are demanding the nullification of the proceedings in the National Consultative Council since the new substantive chairman was elected last week while DP and UPM council members were at a meeting.

They also want an end to alleged UPC "manipulation" of state organs, and the release of all political prisoners including former President Godfrey Binaisa. (A.F.P.)

MERCY TEAM ENDS MISSION

NAIROBI, September 23 - The detachment of 41 French airmen and soldiers sent to Uganda last month to help famine relief operations in the drought-stricken Karamoja region was due to leave Nairobi for home later today after completing its task.

The operation was concluded at the weekend and the two Puma helicopters used for ferrying supplies to humanitarian organisations working among the Karamojong have been broken down ready for airfreighting back to France.

Lieutenant-colonel Alain Pfister, commander of the combined team of aircrew, paratroops and mechanics, told AFP that he considered the emergency to be over. There was a "noticeable improvement" in the situation in Karamoja, he said.

During the four weeks of the operation the French military team, based in Soroti, 350 kilometres (220 miles) north-east of Kampala, notched up 200 flying hours and shipped 173 tons of food and medicine into the region.

Isolated villages

The helicopters flew relief stores to several isolated villages inaccessible to overland transport as well as to the main bases used by relief organisations in north and south Karamoja.

The combination of French airlifts and resumed United Nations road convoys has beaten back the threatened famine.

The operation, launched on August 22, got off to a difficult start, particularly in Kaabong, in northern Karamoja where villagers fought over the few grains of corn which had spilt on the floor of the helicopter. By the time the month was up the same villagers were asking not for corn but for kerosene, a Puma pilot said.

Another pilot told of a little girl he found at one of the distribution centres, a living skeleton. "Each time we landed I want to see her, took her on one side and gave her food. She put on three or four kilos (seven or eight pounds) in the month", he said.

The arrival of the French contingent was greeted with mixed feelings, but their departure was regretted by all the foreigners involved in relief operations in Karamoja.

However observers here said that the fear of new disturbances in Uganda, where the first general elections for 18 years have just been postponed until December, decided the organisers against extending the operation beyond its original one-month schedule. (A.F.P.)

Angola

ANGOLA MAKES CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

LUANDA, September 26 - Angola's ruling party, by amending the country's constitution this week, appears to be trying to introduce democratic institutions at all levels without weakening its own grip on Angolan political life.

The changes call for the election of 18 provincial assemblies - with between 55 and 85 members each, depending on population - and then, in November, balloting for a 206-member national assembly.

The assembly will become the "supreme organ of state power" in place of the revolutionary council that has served as the national legislature since independence from Portugal in 1976. President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, however, remains leader of the ruling Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, armed forces commander-in-chief and "symbol of national unity".

The provincial assemblies will also have supreme powers, according to the law, at their level.

All Angolans 18 years and older are eligible to vote and be elected, except those deprived of their civil rights.

Puppet groups

Barred from election are Angolans "who were active members of factionalist, puppet groups" such as Jonas Savimbi's UNITA, Holden Roberto's FNLA and the Cabinda Liberation Front, all of which have been carrying on guerrilla action against the central government. Also barred are those who have "participated in criminal actions against the people and have not been rehabilitated".

Under the new law, candidates need not be members of the ruling party, but it is emphasized that they must be "the most active politically and the most experienced".

Candidates for the provincial assemblies and the national assembly are chosen by committees, but they must answer all questions posed by citizens at public meetings and their candidacies must be approved by a majority of the people in their districts.

This is also the case for candidates chosen by the party-sponsored mass organizations -for women, youth, labor, and so forth.

The assemblies are to begin work 30 days after they are constituted.

The entire elective process is supposed to be completed before the special party congress that is to be held December 4-10. (A.F.P.)

BOKASSA "PREPARED TO FACE INQUIRY"

PARIS, September 23 - Deposed Centrafrican Emperor Bokassa, now under guard in Ivory Coast, is prepared to return home and face an international commission of enquiry into a massacre of schoolchildren in Bangui before his overthrow last year, according to a telephoned interview with the French satirical weekly *Canard Enchaîné* published here today.

The *Canard*, in the second instalment of a telephone conversation with Mr. Bokassa recorded on September 9, quoted the former Emperor as saying "I want to go home, to my country, to my native village, to look after my children, concentrate on farming".

Mr. Bokassa blamed his police forces for the massacre of the schoolchildren, after they demonstrated against the compulsory purchase of new uniforms. "People were put into prison and they were overcrowded. So there were 17 deaths ... since Giscard (French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing) was out to get me it was said - 'he (Bokassa) almost certainly took part in the massacre of the children'."

(This was the finding of a commission made up of leading African figures who investigated the killings).

Symbolic damages

Mr. Bokassa said : "I cannot be tried if I have not killed... it can only take place in my own country, not in France, not anywhere else".

In the first instalment last week the *Canard* published statements by the ex-emperor about diamonds he said he had given to the French president and two members of his family. In this week's edition he said that he had refused to sign a document presented to him by two of Mr. Giscard d'Estaing's cousins stating that he had never given them diamonds.

The two men, François and Jacques Giscard d'Estaing, have previously won symbolic damages from the *Canard Enchaîné* for earlier allegations about gifts of diamonds.

(Meanwhile Mr. Bokassa's successor (and predecessor) as leader of the Central African Republic, President David Dacko, who is on a private visit to France, said after a meeting with Mr. Giscard d'Estaing last night that he regretted "publicity given to the former emperor by French journalists". He added that the trial of Bokassa would be held in his absence in Bangui in November. (A.F.P.).

Zaire

ZAIRE ACCUSED OF TORTURING PRISONERS

NEW YORK, September 25 - Dozens of political prisoners have been tortured, sometimes to death, in Zaire over the past year, Amnesty International said here yesterday.

The international human rights organisation said the prisoners were subjected to electrical torture and hung by their feet and beaten. Among them were students arrested during demonstrations, teachers, workers who had gone on strike and people accused of belonging to banned political parties.

According to ex-prisoners, three of six men who were arrested last September during a strike at the national oil company died after several weeks of torture. Fifteen students arrested last December were beaten and then shot dead, Amnesty said.

According to doctors who examined 80 prisoners freed over the past 16 months, 60 had been tortured, the Nobel prize-winning human rights group said.

The Amnesty statement said other prisoners had been tied to poles and beaten daily for three or four hours. Women prisoners were raped, sometimes in front of their husbands, to extract confessions, it added. (A.F.P.)

Zambia

PLEA FOR HALT TO ARMS RACE

LUSAKA, September 25 - Hungarian President Pal Losonczi, who is visiting Zambia, expressed concern last night over the growing global arms race and called for urgent measures before the situation got out of hand:

The Hungarian leader, who arrived yesterday in Lusaka on a three-day state visit, said Zambia and Hungary should work together in trying to find a solution to global tension.

Today, Mr. Losonczi was flying to Livingstone south of here to see the Victoria Falls and return to Lusaka for a state dinner in his donor.

Before he arrived here, his African tour had taken him to Ethiopia, Tanzania and Mozambique. (A.F.P.)

MINERS STAGE "CRIME" PROTEST

LUSAKA, September 23 - About 150 expatriate miners at Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines on the Copperbelt have downed tools to protest the rising crime rate.

The miners and their wives met yesterday in Kameza township to demand urgent police protection while more than 500 Zambian housewives demonstrated for the same reason outside the office of the district governor.

The expatriates' protest was sparked off by the wounding of two white miners by armed bandits on Sunday.

They were injured by gunshots when gunmen raided their house at dawn on Sunday, but were released from Konkola Mine hospital after treatment.

According to the expatriates, crime in the district, which is about 500 kilometres northwest of here, has reached alarming proportions. They charged police had failed to protect them.

The miners said in the past few weeks several of their houses had been raided and property worth thousands of dollars stolen and warned that they would stop reporting for night shifts unless police and the mining company provided protection.

Some threatened to terminate their contracts with the mines and return to their home countries.

Government and mining company officials were expected to hold talks with police amid fears that the expatriates could resign. (A.F.P.)

MAN FACES MURDER CHARGES

LUSAKA, September 24 - A British construction worker appeared in the high court here yesterday on charges of murdering his Zambian wife and four-year-old daughter.

James Christopher Moss, 31, a foreman with Burton construction in the western province town of Mongu, has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

He is accused of murdering his wife Astridah and his daughter Thalita last November 26. He was arrested after a postmortem on the bodies. (A.F.P.)

MUGABE MOVES TO KEEP OUT GEN. WALLS

SALISBURY, September 25 - The Zimbabwean government is taking steps to stop armed forces commander Lieutenant General Peter Walls returning to the country from his current holiday in Britain, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe said today.

Mr. Mugabe told the Senate that the government was to publish an amendment tomorrow to the emergency power regulations which could be used to prevent Zimbabwean citizens from returning home.

The amendment would "affect General Walls", he said, but added that the government did not intend to act arbitrarily in applying the new rule.

The action against Gen. Walls follows government anger over statements he made in foreign television interviews revealing that he asked the British government to scrap the results of the February elections which brought Mr. Mugabe and his party to power.

Gen. Walls and his wife are on a motoring tour of Britain and were expected to return home towards the end of next month. (A.F.P.)

WHITE FARMER SHOT DEAD

SALISBURY, September 25 - A white farmer was shot dead today at his Goromonzi farm 16 miles (25 km) from here, official sources said.

During the past few days the Goromonzi area has been the scene of several violent incidents, including two attacks on the local police station, and earlier today commanders of former nationalist guerrillas now billeted in two local farms were rounding up some of their own armed men and ordering them back to their camps.

Goromonzi residents said the victim was Christopher Johnson, who was killed while working his land at about 4.30 p.m. (1430 GMT).

Mr. Johnson's farm adjoins one of the farms occupied by former guerrillas from Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army). The farms were bought early this year by Mr. Mugabe's ZANUPF (Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front) party.

Farmers at Goromonzi claim that the former insurgents are mounting a terror campaign in the area, including armed attacks on white homesteads.

Police report an increasing number of violent incidents, including a rocket and small arms attack last night on the home of a mine manager. The manager, Peter Fletcher, said today that he and his wife Hilary narrowly escaped when a rocket exploded in the bedroom next to theirs. (A.F.P.)

U.S. AID "NOT ENOUGH" - VANCE

WASHINGTON, September 24 - The 30 million dollars which the Carter administration has budgeted for financial aid to Zimbabwe for 1980-81 is much too little to help the newly-independent African nation recover from years of civil war, former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance said here Tuesday.

He told the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs sub-committee on Africa that the aid should be increased to 200 to 300 million dollars over the next three years.

The sub-committee chairman, New York Democrat Stephen Solarz, said he had just introduced legislation to spend 200 million dollars over the next three years. Former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union Averell Harriman, who is also appearing before the sub-committee, joined Mr. Vance in his call for more aid.

Mr. Vance said Zimbabwean Prime Minister Robert Mugabe has taken "a moderate line" towards private business and foreign investments.

He had also resisted Soviet influence, but "the best chance of the Soviets for a second chance in Zimbabwe would be the failure in the west to support the course on which Zimbabwe has embarked", he said.

If the Mugabe government failed, Mr. Vance warned "that would certainly be very much against our interest and the interests of the west". (A.F.P.)

GUERRILLAS ARRIVE IN TOWNSHIP

SALISBURY, September 24 - The first of 17,000 Zimbabwean former guerrillas who are being moved from the old ceasefire assembly points in remote bush areas have arrived in Salisbury's Chitungwiza township.

The men are an advance party helping workmen to prepare the housing estate set aside by the government to provide the former insurgents with better accommodation before the start of the seasonal rains.

Government sources say the move of up to 17,000 men into Chitungwiza is expected to be complete by the beginning of next month.

A similar scheme is being undertaken at a township outside the country's second city of Bulawayo.

It is expected that a total of more than 20,000 guerrillas will be accommodated under the plan.

The ceasefire assembly points currently have about 32,000 men living in the makeshift camps, where they have spent the past nine months. (A.F.P.)

SWAPO "KEY TO PEACE IN NAMIBIA" - STEVENS

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., September 25 - True self-determination in Namibia can only be achieved through the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), the sole authentic representative of the Namibian people, Organization of African Unity chairman Siaka Stevens told the U.N. General Assembly yesterday.

The Sierra Leone president said Africans and the entire international community rejected any attempts to circumvent SWAPO. He warned that African states would not hesitate to call on the Security Council to impose comprehensive and mandatory sanctions on South Africa, including an oil embargo, in their battle for South African-ruled Namibia's independence.

He also said he would ask U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim to explore ways the U.N. could help raise the 62 million dollars needed by the OAU to set up a neutral peace-keeping force for Chad.

Mr. Stevens also hoped a pledging conference might be held to aid African refugees, who he said comprised half of the world's total refugee population.

He added that the spectre of famine still hung over not only the sub-Saharan Sahel countries, but Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Uganda as well. (A.F.P.)

48 GUERRILLAS KILLED IN CLASHES

WINDHOEK, September 25 - South-African led troops in Namibia have killed 48 black nationalist guerrillas in the last nine days in the northern war zone, a military spokesman announced here today.

The spokesman for the South West Africa (Namibia) territory force, which is fighting alongside the South African Army, said that the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) had lost 164 guerrillas killed since the first of September.

The latest 48 were reported killed in at least four different engagements between Security forces and small groups of guerrillas along the border with Angola, where SWAPO guerrillas are based in their war to end the South African administration of Namibia. (A.F.P.)

EX-PRESIDENT DIES AGED 82

CAPE TOWN, September 24 - Former South African President Jim Fouché died in hospital here Tuesday from a lung infection and heart trouble. He was 82.

A native of the Orange Free State, in the heart of Afrikaner territory, he entered politics in 1941, and became the administrator of his home province 10 years later before joining the government of the late Hendrik Verwoerd, credited as the chief architect of South Africa's apartheid system.

He was successively Minister of Defence, Agriculture, and Lands and Water under Mr. Verwoerd and his successor John Vorster.

He was elected to the titular post of president in 1968 and retired from politics in 1975. (A.F.P.)

CARRINGTON REJECTS MANDATORY SANCTIONS

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., September 24 - Britain's Conservative government remains opposed to mandatory sanctions against South Africa as a way of bringing about the demise of apartheid, British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington said here Tuesday.

"If change is to come peacefully in South Africa, it will have to be a step-by-step process", he told the U.N. General Assembly. "We will not achieve peaceful change by increasing South Africa's isolation, nor by ostracism, nor by threats".

Lord Carrington said his government nevertheless considered apartheid "to be morally indefensible and politically unworkable".

He added: "We cannot know how fast change will come in South Africa, but there are voices inside the country calling for change and we should not ignore them".

But Lord Carrington, whose country has a huge trade and economic stake in South Africa, said that in fighting apartheid, the United Nations should confine itself to "continuing to remind South Africa that apartheid is a system repugnant to all the members of the U.N. and incompatible with the ideals of the organization and of the international community as a whole". (A.F.P.)

AFRICAN BLOC CALLS FOR COUNCIL MEETING

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., September 24 - The African group at the United Nations called Tuesday for an urgent meeting of the Security Council to discuss the situation in South Africa.

The chairman of the group, George Gelaga-King of Sierra Leone, made the request in line with a resolution at last July's Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit which called for a council meeting on September 25 to discuss sanctions against Pretoria, including an oil embargo, if the regime failed to change its apartheid policies and end racial oppression by then.

The OAU call followed the crackdown by South Africa after unrest in connection with the nationwide schools protest boycott against racially-biased education.

The exact date of the council meeting will be worked out by current council chairman Taieb Slim of Tunisia and the other Council members. (A.F.P.)

TIME RIPE FOR FRENCH INITIATIVE - CHIRAC

PARIS, September 23 - With barely six months to go to France's presidential elections the political heirs of the late Charles de Gaulle, led by Mayor of Paris Jacques Chirac, are showing considerable interest in developments in Southern Africa, and particularly in Namibia.

The latest edition of the Rally for the Republic (RPR) party's newsletter climaxed a week of Gaullist discussion of southern African questions with an article on Namibia where, it said, the "last colonial-type war" was being fought.

The article followed statements by Mr. Chirac, a likely contender in next year's presidential elections against Valery Giscard d'Estaing, calling for a peace conference on Namibia to be held in France.

According to the newsletter Mr. Chirac had spoken to delegates from the RPR's youth wing on "France's lack of an African policy".

At the end of last week the mayor of Paris told journalists that he believed the time had come for France to propose the calling of Namibian peace talks in Paris which could be "the first step towards peace in Southern Africa".

Mr. Chirac said that France's African policy should demonstrate "greater determination, firmness, generosity", adding that the time was ripe for a French initiative that would be accepted by all parties involved in the Namibian problem.

This week's newsletter took up Mr. Chirac's stand that the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), other unspecified Namibian political groups, the five so-called frontline states (Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia) as well as the five Western nations in the United Nations "contact group" (Canada, France, West Germany, the United States and Britain) could all take part in such a conference along with South Africa.

However, he stressed the need to build up an appropriate atmosphere, which for Pretoria might mean making a number of concessions such as signing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and freeing SWAPO prisoners. (A.F.P.)

INDIAN OCEAN

Comores

KUWAITI EXPERTS CALLED IN

MORONI, September 24 - Kuwait will send experts to the Comores islands to examine problems facing the social and economic development of this Indian Ocean islamic republic, President Ahmed Abdallah Abderemane said here.

The move was agreed during a two-day visit to Kuwait at the weekend during which President Abdallah had talks with Emir Sheikh Jaber al Ahmad al Sabah.

President Abdallah, who returned here Monday, said the two countries also signed a cultural convention covering the development of Arab and Islamic culture in the two countries.

He expressed satisfaction at Kuwaiti development fund involvement in the construction of the port of Mutsamudu on Anjouan island and in other projects. (A.F.P.)

OCEAN BUILD UP BY SUPERPOWERS

LONDON, September 23 - The major powers have embarked on a progressive military build-up in the Indian Ocean, but the United States still retains naval superiority over the Soviet Union in the region, the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) said today.

According to the IISS the U.S. has a 25-vessel task force in the Indian Ocean, including 20 warships, two of them aircraft carriers. The Soviet Indian Ocean fleet consists of 27 ships, but 15 of these are support or supply vessels. According to some reports the Soviet carrier Minsk has now joined the fleet.

Apart from the "big two", Britain's Royal Navy had 10 ships in the region at the beginning of the European summer, France had 15 and earlier this year two destroyers were sailing on the ocean under the West German ensign.

On land the IISS estimated that the Soviet Union could deploy a full combat division in the Gulf region within 12 hours, while the United States relied mainly on its Rapid Deployment Force (RDF). Sufficient equipment for 10,000 men was stocked at the U.S. base on the island of Diego Garcia and could be used by marines airlifted from either the U.S. or American bases in Europe.

Base facilities

The main Soviet base in the area is Aden, which can handle aircraft up to the specifications of the Ilyushin 38 bomber, and the Soviet navy also has base facilities in Mozambique, According to a recent report in the Financial Times newspaper the Kremlin doubled its strike power in the Indian Ocean between October last year and last March.

The U.S. has just signed an agreement with Somalia on use of the former Soviet air and naval base at Berbera, but its main bridgehead is the old British base on Diego Garcia which has just been modernised to take larger aircraft. U.S. forces also have the use of berthing facilities in Oman and Mombasa, Kenya.

France has a 5,000-strong garrison at Djibouti.

However the Americans can be reckoned to have dropped a few points in the Indian Ocean chess game with the loss of base facilities in Iran, while the Soviet Union has gained a new hold in Afghanistan. (A.F.P.)

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