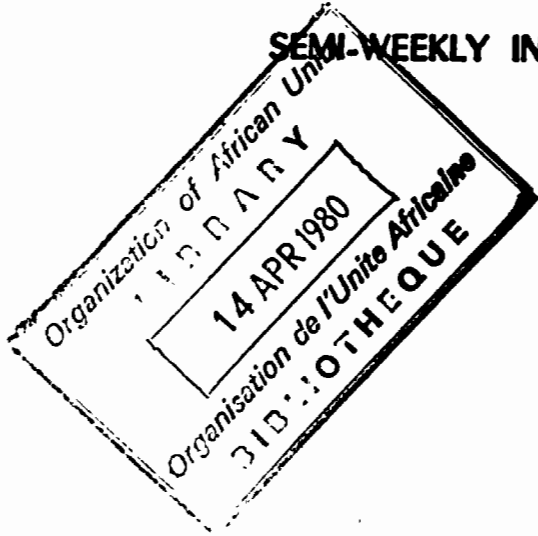


AFRICA

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DEVELOPMENT INTEGRATION

GENEVA, March 27 - The Council of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has passed a resolution recommending integration of the problems of colonial or foreign-dominated peoples in the new development strategy, it was learned here Wednesday.

The Council - whose deliberations ended during the night - passed the resolution by 63 votes to 13, with 14 abstentions.

Israel voted against. It explained that it was against any form of aid which could apply to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Diplomats noted that three countries - Austria, New Zealand and Norway - had changed their stance. New Zealand and Norway - which voted against in June - abstained this time, while France continued to vote against.

Another motion asking the UNCTAD secretariat to organize meetings on cooperation among developing countries was passed by 60 votes to 23, with eight abstentions.

Group B (the industrialized countries) voted against, believing that they ought to await the results of meetings arranged since last year's UNCTAD conference in Manila. All the other items on the agenda were remitted to the next Council, scheduled for September. They concerned action to be taken on the Manila resolutions.

The major current problems in the so-called North-South Dialogue were not broached at the meeting. There was not even a question of the "global negotiations" due to revive the discussions between rich and poor countries following the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on economic cooperation.

No delegation showed interest in the part which UNCTAD - the main forum in the last few years for debates on development problems - could play in reviving the North-South Dialogue. It is true that, up to now, UNCTAD's work has been inconclusive, observers said. (A.F.P.)

GERONIMO'S SON

FLORENCE, Arizona, March 27 - The adoptive son of the Apache Chief Geronimo died here on Tuesday in a home for the elderly.

Geronimo Altamirano said shortly before his death that he was 113 years old, which would have made him Arizona's oldest citizen.

He said Apaches made off with him when he was a child, and he was raised by the famous Indian Chief, who died in 1909. He spoke only the Apache dialect and a little Spanish. (A.F.P.)

CATHOLICISM ; RAPID
GROWTH, DARK SHADOWS

ROME, March 27 - Eleven years after Paul Six, Pope John Paul Two is to visit six African countries next month to pay homage - in his own words - to a continent of 52 million Catholics where the Church, celebrating the centenary of the first missionaries' arrival there, has been experiencing a rapid boom.

Sharing his visit between Anglophone countries (Kenya and Ghana) and French-Speaking nations (Zaire, Congo, Ivory Coast and Upper Volta), John Paul Two will be on his fifth trip abroad since his pontificate started 18 months ago. His earlier voyages took him to Mexico, Poland, Ireland and the United States, and to Turkey.

Since the 1960s, the era of Paul Six's visit, the continent has seen most of its countries become independent. And the young churches there, helped by the opening of the Vatican Two Council, have shown a tremendous vitality. Representing some 12 per cent of the total population, the 52 million African Catholics should, according to UNESCO, swell by a further two million before the year 2,000. A country such as Zaire, with its 11 million faithful, is already 43 per cent Catholic.

Parallel with this growth is the ratio of Africa's Catholics within the Catholic Church overall. At the start of this century they were only 1 per cent. In 1975 they comprised 7.5 per cent and in 20 years should account for 18 per cent.

Rapid Africanisation of the clergy has been a corollary to political independence in Black Africa: out of nearly 16,000 priests exercising their ministry in Africa, just over one-third are local clergy. The Bishopric itself is 70 per cent African : out of 353 ecclesiastical dioceses 246 have a black Bishop at their head.

Race with Islam

This transformation from a "colonial" church to a national church has been vital for catholicism, engaged since the start of the century in a race with Islam to take the place of dwindling Animism.

Black Africa is also represented at the sacred college by nine Cardinals, including Bernardin Gantin, Archbishop of Cotonou and Chairman of the Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission, Hyacinthe Thiandoum, Archbishop of Dakar, and Paul Zoungrana, Archbishop of Ouagadougou. This group of African Cardinals, and particularly those from French-speaking countries, played a decisive role in the election of Karol Wojtyla to the Throne of Saint Peter.

African Christianity

With 22 African countries maintaining an Embassy at the Vatican, Pope Paul Six was always working to strengthen links between the Vatican and the churches of Africa. In 1967 he sent a message "Africae Terrarum" to his Bishops, the content of which he repeated during his visit to Uganda in July-August 1969 : "You are your own missionaries. You can and must have an African Christianity", he said.

But there are also dark shadows affecting the situation of the Catholic Church on the continent where almost everywhere it has to adapt to the ruling regimes and struggle to maintain its independence.

Some leaders, such as the Archbishop of Conakry, Raymond-Marie Tchidimbo, imprisoned for eight years in Guinean prisons, have paid dearly for loyalty to their faith.

The Church is also seeing its schools and hospitals nationalised, its organisations dismantled, its newspapers and radio muffled or its missionaries expelled.

It also faces problems of falling missionary numbers, a lack of African clergy, competition from Protestantism and sects, dechristianisation and the resurgence of paganism. (A.F.P.)

POPE'S PROGRAMME

VATICAN CITY, March 26 - The following is Pope John Paul Two's programme for his visit to Africa May 2 - 12, as released by a Vatican spokesman today :

May 2 : Pope leaves Rome for Kinshasa, capital of Zaire

May 2 to 6 : Pope in Zaire, with a visit to Brazzaville, the Congolese capital

May 6 : Pope arrives in the Kenyan capital Nairobi for a stay of two and-a-half days

May 8 to 10 : Pope will be in Ghana and will spend the day of May 10 in Ouagadougou, the capital of Upper Volta, leaving that same evening for Abidjan, the Ivory Coast capital.

May 10 to 12 : Pope will be in Ivory Coast, returning to Rome May 12.

At his weekly general audience today, the Pope said : "I hope with all my heart this visit will develop the firmness of the Christian faith in the population of this continent and will also have an impact on authentic human progress in the service of brotherhood and peace". (A.F.P.)

28% MORE AID

BONN, March 26 - West Germany spent 3,300 million dollars last year for aid to developing countries, according to figures published today by the Economic Cooperation Ministry.

This sum represented 0.43 per cent of gross national product (GNP) and marked an increase of 28 per cent in aid over 1978, when the West German Government earmarked 2,585 million dollars (0.37 per cent of GNP) for development assistance.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Ministry has confirmed that the United States contemplates a 1,000 million mark (530 million dollar) loan to help finance the deficits in West Germany's budget and balance of payments.

A spokesman said today that Bonn and Washington were discussing the proposed loan, but its terms were not yet agreed. West Germany arranged last week to borrow approximately six times as much from Saudi Arabia. (A.F.P.)

ROYAL RISES

LONDON, March 27 - Princess Anne will get a 30 per cent pay rise from the Government this year, taking her Civil List salary up from 65,400 pounds sterling (about 150,000 dollars) to 85,000 pounds (190,000 dollars).

A Treasury spokesman told the House of Commons on Wednesday that the increase was to cover a deficit of several thousand pounds incurred last year. He explained that it was "more expensive to run a separate residence (her Gatcombe Park estate in Western England) than to live in Buckingham Palace".

Queen Elizabeth's Civil List payment goes up by 19 per cent to 2,716,300 pounds and Princess Margaret's by 14.7 per cent to 82,000 pounds. Prince Charles does not receive a Civil List payment, as his expenses are covered by revenue from the Duchy of Cornwall. (A.F.P.)

RIGHTS : OAU HOLDUP

ADDIS ABABA, March 26 - An Organization of African Unity-sponsored meeting of plenipotentiaries to study a draft report on an African charter on human rights was postponed for the second time here yesterday for lack of a quorum.

The meeting, scheduled to open Monday, was postponed again when the meeting failed to muster a quorum of 33. Only 21 delegates were present for the opening and the OAU had hoped more would arrive yesterday for it to proceed.

Sources said the postponement was indefinite and might not be rescheduled until the OAU Council convened in Freetown (Sierra Leone) later this year. There were grumblings that copies of the draft had not been circulated among the members in advance in any case. (A.F.P.)

MALARIA ALARM

ATLANTA, Georgia, March 26 - Malaria is reappearing alarmingly in the world's tropical regions and infiltrating into temperate zones, according to Dr. Schultz of the National Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

In an interview, Dr. Schultz said that programs for the control of malaria were becoming more and more ineffective and the disease-carrying mosquitoes were becoming increasingly resistant to insecticides.

Malaria was rampant in more than a hundred countries and one fourth of the world's population was exposed to the disease.

Dr. Schultz said the United States had experienced three waves of malaria attacks : on the return of American soldiers from World War II and at the end of the wars in Korea and Vietnam.

Vietnamese refugees living in the United States could constitute the fourth wave, Dr. Schultz said. A total of 616 cases of malaria were reported in 1978, 67 per cent more than in 1977.

(A.F.P.)

THE WATER TRADE

TOKYO, March 27 - A company will be set up in Japan on April 2 to export fresh water to Arab countries in oil tankers which up to now have been empty each time they return to the Middle East.

One of Japan's biggest commercial groups, Mitsui and Co., today announced that it would establish a company called Yakushima Water Resources with the country's second-largest steel corporation, Nippon Kokan, and two smaller concerns on Yakushima Island in the extreme south of Japan.

Mitsui and Nippon Kokan will hold 40 per cent and 15 per cent respectively of the eight million yen capital (32,000 U.S. dollars).

A Mitsui spokesman told AFP today that the water would be sold in the Middle East at 70 yen (about 28 U.S. cents) a ton free on board (FOB), including transport costs and purification on arrival. According to Mitsui, the Japanese water will be competitive in the Arab desert countries, where it costs about 600 yen (2.5 dollars) to desalinate a ton of sea water. (A.F.P.)

DEVELOPMENT LOAN

ABIDJAN, March 26 - The United States has approved a loan totalling 868,000 dollars to the African Development Bank to finance pre-investment studies, technical training activities and institutional development. (A.F.P.)

COCOA : AFRICAN GAUNTLET

YAMOUSSOUKRO, Ivory Coast, March 26 - The cocoa-producing countries threw down the gauntlet yesterday to the consuming nations agreeing at their summit here to set and maintain their own minimum prices and to gut the International Cocoa Agreement.

The final communique of the two-day summit consummated the rupture that had been brewing for months between consumers and producers. It cast a dark shadow over this week's last-ditch negotiations in London to try to renew the agreement, which expires next Monday.

The Heads of States of Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Gabon and Cameroun attended the summit of the Cocoa Producers Alliance at the invitation of Ivory Coast President Felix Houphouet-Boigny and in his home town. Ivory Coast is the world's leading producer.

Their final communique said that they wanted "to extend" the international agreement. But they added that they wanted it divested of its economic clauses - notably a price-support intervention level they have argued is too low - and wanted to collect the 220 million dollars held for such intervention under the agreement. There has never been a price-support action under the four years of the outgoing agreement.

Without these economic clauses, the agreement would be, as Ivory Coast Agriculture Minister Denis Bra Kanon said after the summit, "a carcass". And he made clear that was how the African producers wanted it. "We Africans do not want to be accused of having broken the accord", he said. "We want to keep it as a means of discussion".

But he added : "We want no more of these economic clauses and we want to manage our own money". (A.F.P.)

FOOD DEFICIT MOUNTING

ROME, March 28 - World food security is still as precarious as before the world crisis at the beginning of the 1970's, Edouard Saouma, Director-General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), declared here yesterday.

Opening the meeting of FAO's committee on food security, Mr. Saouma said : "The food deficit of the developing countries, which exceeds 80,000,000 tonnes of cereals per year, is mounting unceasingly". Their import bill for cereals alone had gone up by more than 20 per cent per year. It reached about 17,000 million dollars in 1979, which represented one-third of their export earnings from agricultural produce. (A.F.P.)

SEA FAILURE

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., March 28 - The U.N. conference on the law of the sea has failed to agree on an official working paper outlining proposals for an international treaty.

The working paper, setting out the first official proposals ever made since the conference got off the ground six years ago, was to have been thrashed out in a public debate at the close of the New York session next week.

The debate has now been postponed to the conference's second session in Geneva this summer.

According to goals set out last summer, this ninth session of the law of the sea conference was to have ended this summer with the presentation of an international treaty dealing with territorial waters and economic zones of oceanside countries, the circumstances under which other countries can fish in those areas, and the setting up of an international seabed authority for mining matters. (A.F.P.)

SUGAR DEFICIT

LONDON, March 26 - World production of sugar will record a deficit of about 5.4 million tonnes in 1979-80 despite a record crop in the European Economic Community (EEC), London brokers Woodhouse Drake and Carey estimate. (A.F.P.)

OIL & ENERGY

THE RIG ACCIDENTS

PARIS, March 28 - Following the major accident at the Alexander Kielland North Sea rig which overturned last night with more than 200 persons on board, here is a list of other similar disasters in recent years :

- April 16, 1976 : The Ocean Express oil rig sinks off the Gulf of Mexico, killing 13 persons
- April 22, 1977 : 15,000 to 20,000 tons of oil gush into the North Sea during a change of a safety valve in the Bravo rig of the Ekofisk field off Stavanger, Norway. The 112 men on board are immediately evacuated. U.S. expert Red Adair brings the situation under control.
- During 1979, six accidents took place, mainly off the coast of Louisiana in the United States. The most serious was the blowup of the Ixtoc One oil well in the Gulf of Mexico on June 3. No casualties were reported, but crude was spewed into the sea in a giant spill that lasted 8 months. (A.F.P.)

N-FUTURE LOOKS DIM

WASHINGTON, March 28- The future of nuclear-fueled electric generating stations in the United States looks dim. The public's confidence still has not been restored one year after the accident at the Three Mile Island power plant in Pennsylvania.

"It's a dying industry", a Wall Street expert commented recently.

A nuclear industry representative admitted: "We're fighting for our lives".

Nobody believes it is still possible for nuclear energy to cover 36 per cent of the nation's need for electricity by the end of the century, as President Jimmy Carter called for.

The 72 nuclear power plants now in service supply only 12 per cent of the country's electricity. It would be unrealistic to try to triple that in 20 years, experts say, since it takes on average 12 years to build a plant.

The March 28, 1979 mishap in which the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor nearly melted into the earth, stirred up a strong current of public distrust, though a majority of people still say they favour nuclear energy. (A.F.P.)

500 M. DOLLAR SUIT

PARSIPPANY, New Jersey, March 26 - The company that owns the Three Mile Island nuclear plant in Pennsylvania announced on Tuesday that it was filing a 500-million-dollar suit against the manufacturers of the reactor that was involved last spring in the nation's worst commercial nuclear accident.

General Public Utilities (GPU) said that it was charging the manufacturers, Babcock and Wilcox, with failure to adequately train the personnel in charge of the reactor and with providing information that misled the technicians.

GPU said that since a similar accident had taken place at the Toledo Edison plant in Ohio in another Babcock and Wilcox reactor, the manufacturing company must have known that it was passing on inadequate information.

James Cunningham, president of the holding company that owns Babcock and Wilcox, immediately disclaimed all responsibility of the company in the accident and said: "We plan to vigorously defend our position".

GPU President William Kuhns said that the 500-million-dollar claim covered only damage suffered so far and that the "very substantial" damages still to come would be the object of a further claim. (A.F.P.)

KUWAIT SLASHES

THE SUPPLY

KUWAIT, March 26 - Kuwait has concluded a new contract with British Petroleum (BP) under which oil supply to the company will be reduced from 450,000 to 150,000 per day, official sources said here.

The new contract is for a 30-month period, instead of for five years as before, the sources said, with the price now following market fluctuations.

The sources said BP had also undertaken to supply Kuwaiti crude only to those countries stipulated in the contract, excluding such countries as Israel, South Africa and Rhodesia, which figure on the Arab Boycott Bureau blacklist.

Kuwait is at present negotiating similar contracts with Shell and Gulf, its other two major customers, the sources said.

(According to the Kuwaiti News Agency, Kuwait is to reduce its oil output by a quarter to one and a half million barrels a day from April 1. The agency quoted Oil Minister Sheikh Ali Alkhalifa Alsabah). (A.F.P.)

BRITAIN UPS TAX

LONDON, March 26 - The petroleum revenue tax on North Sea oil profits is to be raised from 60 to 70 per cent, British Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir Geoffrey Howe said in his annual budget speech to the House of Commons today.

This would add 535 million pounds to Government revenue during the 1980-81 financial year, the Chancellor said. (A.F.P.)

ABOVE 40, SAYS MOINFAR

ALGIERS, March 26 - The price of a barrel of oil is certain to go above 40 dollars a barrel, Iranian Oil Minister Ali Akbar Moinfar has told the El Moudjahid paper, without giving a time scale.

Asked by the paper's Teheran correspondent whether this was a decision or a forecast, he said : "It is still a forecast... it is not yet a decision, but it is a conviction".

He said that if Iran had not immediately halved its oil output of six million barrels a day after the revolution against the Shah, there would have been no oil left in 30 years.

Mr. Moinfar also said that Iran's domestic petrol consumption of 850 litres a year per person would have to be reduced. (A.F.P.)

WARNING FOR W. EUROPE

BERLIN, March 27 - Western Europe will be unable to cover its oil needs by the year 2000, the Research Director of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) predicted here today.

OPEC official Ahmed Said, of Algeria, told the German atomic energy forum that this estimate assumed that Western European gross national product increased three to 3.5 per cent annually. The total energy requirement of those countries was now equivalent to 1,100 million tons of petroleum. Consumption would increase to the equivalent of 1,800 million tons by 1985 and to 2,800 million by 2000. Oil would satisfy 50 per cent of this need in 1985 and 45 per cent in 2000. (A.F.P.)

HALF LIFT

TOKYO, March 28 - The Japanese Government decided today to cut elevator operation at all Government offices by 50 per cent to promote energy saving. The Government will also suspend the use of official vehicles for carrying ranking officials from home to office. (A.F.P.)

SOVIET OFFERS SPARES...

LONDON, March 28 - The Soviet Union has offered to supply Iran with oil industry spare parts which the Iranians cannot obtain from the West as a result of the American boycott following the hostages seizure at the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, the Financial Times wrote today.

According to the paper, such deliveries will depend on the resumption of Iranian natural gas exports to the Soviet Union. Negotiations on this were broken off two weeks ago, because the Soviet Union refused to pay the higher prices demanded by Iran.

"Any Soviet supply of spares would give Moscow its long-feared initial hold on Iran's oil fields", the Financial Times said. (A.F.P.)

MIDDLE EAST

EXTRADITION STUDY

PARIS, March 27 - The French lawyers who represented Iran in its bid to extradite the deposed Shah from Panama are now preparing a new case to seek his extradition from Egypt, one of the attorneys said here today.

Francois Cheron said the legal team had begun to study Egyptian law to familiarize themselves with the necessary procedures for a move to extradite the ex-Shah from Egypt, where he arrived Monday. (A.F.P.)

FREEZE PLAN OUT

CAIRO, March 26 - U.S. President Jimmy Carter's special emissary to the Middle East, Sol Linowitz, confirmed here Tuesday that Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin had rejected a U.S. proposal to freeze Jewish settlement activities in occupied Arab territories until May 26.

That date is the deadline set under the Camp David agreements for an Egyptian-Israeli agreement on Palestinian administrative autonomy in the Jordan River West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

(Meanwhile, reports from Hebron on the Jordan West Bank said the Israeli Military Governor, General Beniyamin Ben Eliezer, had reprimanded Mayor Fahmed Kawasme for having compared Israeli occupation with Nazism and for having asked for a boycott of Jewish settlements.

(The Mayor reportedly spoke before about 200 Palestinians following an Israeli Government decision to establish two Jewish schools in the Arab city). (A.F.P.)

LIBYA "FULLY PREPARED"

BEIRUT, March 26 - Libya is ready to provide Lebanon with air support "against Israeli aggression", the Libyan Chargé d'Affaires here, Mabruk Khalifa Al Ayyane, confirmed in a statement to the Lebanese news agency Al Suhufia today.

"Libya is fully prepared to support Lebanon's air defenses", the statement said. "It desires, moreover, the stability and security of this brother nation and expresses its anxiety over the recent events in South Lebanon".

The statement follows a recent visit to Libya by Lebanese Member of Parliament Fouad Lahoud, who chairs the parliamentary defence committee.

Mr. Lahoud announced on his return that Libya was prepared to offer air defence support to Lebanon. (A.F.P.)

MILITARY, ECONOMIC

WASHINGTON, March 26 - A congressional committee approved on Tuesday a total of almost 2,200 million dollars worth of military and economic aid to Israel.

The sum voted by the House of Representatives foreign affairs committee was about 10 per cent higher than the amount requested by the Carter Administration.

The aid included 1,400 million dollars in credits to buy U.S. arms (of which 500 million dollars would not have to be repaid) and 785 million dollars in economic aid.

The grants to Israel will become final only after approval of the overall foreign aid budget for fiscal 1981, which begins next October. (A.F.P.)

FULL STATUS FOR PLO

NEW DELHI, March 26 - India has decided to accord full diplomatic status to the office of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) already functioning here, Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao said today.

Mr. Rao told Parliament that PLO leader Yasser Arafat had also been invited to pay "an official friendly visit" to India, beginning on Friday.

He expressed the hope that Mr. Arafat's visit would "symbolise not merely Indo-Palestinian friendship but also Indo-Arab solidarity". India had consistently supported the Palestinian cause in the United Nations and other international forums, Mr. Rao added. "Granting full diplomatic status to the PLO, therefore, is but another logical step", he said. (A.F.P.)

NORTH AFRICA

General Information

"SCATTERBRAIN" KADHAFI

CAIRO, March 26 - Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi was "scatter-brained, irresponsible and illogical", Egyptian President Anwar Sadat wrote in a letter to Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

The letter published in the daily Al Ahram today was a reply to a note from Dr. Castro, as chairman of the non-aligned movement, expressing Colonel Kadhafi's concern "about the extension of military imperialism" on his country's border with Egypt.

President Sadat said Col. Kadhafi was "resorting to terrorism and allowing major foreign (pro-Soviet) troop concentrations in Libya." He also accused Col. Kadhafi of organising terrorist operations in the Tunisian mining town of Gafsa, and in Morocco, Chad, Uganda and several other countries. (A.F.P.)

AIR HARASSMENT

PARIS, March 27 - Libya has admitted that two of its Air Force Mirage-111's should not have gone after a French military plane on Sunday, an authoritative source at the French Foreign Office said today.

The unarmed Breguet Atlantic plane was making a reconnaissance flight in international airspace off the Libyan coast when the two Mirages reportedly harassed it. Relations between the two countries, soured after violent anti-French demonstrations in Libya over the Gafsa affair, had been improving in recent weeks. (A.F.P.)

General Information

GAFSA : 15 GET

DEATH SENTENCE

TUNIS, March 27 - Fifteen people were sentenced to death by the State Security Court here today for their part in the command attack on the Tunisian Army at Gafsa in the west of the country on January 27.

They included Ezzedin Sherif and Ahmed Mergheni, accused of master-minding the attack at the mining town in which more than 40 people, including three attackers, died and 111 were wounded.

Two were sentenced to death in their absence.

Another 10 were sentenced to forced labour for life, five of them in their absence. Five were sentenced to 20 years' forced labour and three to five years' forced labour.

Two were sentenced to five years' imprisonment, one to two years' imprisonment, two to six months' imprisonment and one was given a six-month suspended prison sentence.

Twenty of a total 52 before the court accused of involvement in the attack - one is in hospital - were acquitted.

The prosecution had demanded the death penalty for all those who took a direct part in the attack and the "greatest severity" for their accomplices.

State Prosecutor Abdel Aziz did not specify how many of the accused he wanted sentenced to death. But 34 were liable for the death penalty on a charge of attempting to overthrow the regime of President Habib Bourguiba.

Tunisia has accused Libya of being behind the attack, describing it as an attempt to destabilise Tunisia. (A.F.P.)

Tunisia

CHINESE SUPPORT

TUNIS, March 26 - Chinese Vice-Premier Chen Muhua today described her talks with Tunisian officials as "fruitful" and pledged Chinese support for the defense of Tunisia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mrs. Chen, who arrived here last week for talks, told the Tunisian news agency TAP that she was satisfied with the results of the trip and said Peking and Tunis held similar views on the matters discussed.

"We feel alot of sympathy with Tunisia and we give it all our support in its fight for the defense of its national independence, sovereignty and the integrity of its territory", the Chinese official said. (A.F.P.)

Sahara

ARMOR FROM FRANCE

RABAT, March 27 - Morocco has ordered about 100 light armoured vehicles from France and expects delivery before 1982, an informed source said here today.

The six-wheeled reconnaissance vehicles, known as the AMX-10-RC, are equipped with a 105 mm cannon and a high performance laser device for controlling its firing. Two vehicles are expected, or have already arrived, at Meknes in Northern Morocco, the source said.

The vehicle can travel 80 kms (48 miles) per hour on roads and an average of 40 kms (24 miles) per hour on varied terrain. Its cruising range is 800 kms (480 miles) and can be operated for 18 hours during combat.

It also has light-intensifying equipment and can operate during the night as well as the day. It was adopted in 1979 by the French Army.

The report comes as King Hassan Two of Morocco was continuing a visit to France, with the question of the Polisario Front Saharan guerrillas high of the agenda of talks.

Yesterday, the King told reporters he did not rule out a negotiated end to the Western Sahara conflict, but this could only be on "certain conditions". A dialogue with neighbouring Algeria, which backs the Saharan guerrillas, "is coming, but conditions are not yet ripe", he said. (A.F.P.)

MISSILES FROM U.S.

WASHINGTON, March 28 - The United States will supply Morocco with "Maverick" air-ground missiles to arm the F-5 planes due to be delivered in a few months, a State Department source said here Thursday.

The official, asking not to be named, said the sophisticated weaponry would probably not be used, because of its high price, in the Western Sahara conflict pitting Morocco against the Polisario Liberation Front. The missiles, costing 50,000 dollars a piece, are for anti-tank and anti-radar attacks. (A.F.P.)

Sudan

TOP PROJECTS

KHARTOUM, March 27 - Saudi Arabia is to offer Sudan 200 million dollars to help execute "top priority projects", the Arabic daily newspaper Al Ayam said here today.

It said the offer was originally 300 million dollars, and that the first 100 million dollars was paid and used to boost Sudan's balance of payments. (A.F.P.)

INFLATION PROBLEM

DAKAR, March 26 - Ministers from the three West African states that plan to build two dams on the Senegal River held a special meeting here amid reports of inflationary increases in construction costs and delay in obtaining promised Arab financial aid.

The ministers from Senegal, Mali and Mauritania - the membership of the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River - issued no statement after the meeting.

Nearly four months ago, the cornerstone of the Diama Dam was laid in Senegal near the mouth of the river. It was reported then that the project was going ahead after the organization and funding sources had agreed to scale it down to a dam alone and defer a 90-kilometer (55 mile) dike and huge reservoir.

The entire Senegal River project, including the Manantali Dam in Mali, was estimated in December to cost 600 million dollars.

Now, however, it is estimated that inflation has pushed the cost up to between 800 million and 850 million dollars, of which 550 million has been pledged.

If the money pledged were available now, construction could begin on the Diama Dam. But it is understood in financial circles that some sources of funds - especially Arab - have refused to make the money available until the entire sum is raised, in an attempt to ensure that the whole project is built.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Development Bank are furnishing more than 250 million dollars. Other financing will come from Europe, notably from France and West Germany. (A.F.P.)

TOURE - CABRAL

LISBON, March 26 - Guinean President Ahmed Sekou Touré will visit Guinea-Bissau next month, marking the normalization of relations between the two states six years after Guinea-Bissau's independence from Portugal, the Portuguese news agency ANOP reported Tuesday.

Guinea was the principal base for the PAIGC guerrillas fighting against Portuguese rule in Guinea-Bissau, but after it became independent Mr. Sekou Touré refused to go there because of a dispute over maritime frontiers.

Last December, however, Guinea-Bissau President Luis Cabral visited Conakry and began the process of normalization.

Mr. Sekou Touré will be in Bissau April 4-7. (A.F.P.)

SAHARANS BACK TOLBERT

MONROVIA, March 26 - The Polisario Liberation Front which is fighting for an independent state of Western Sahara has declared its support for President William Tolbert following "recent attempts to destabilise the Liberian Government" by the Liberian opposition Progressive Peoples Party (PPP), official sources said here today.

The special message to Mr. Tolbert, who is current Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), from Polisario Secretary-General Mohamed Abdelaziz, was delivered by the Foreign Minister of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic declared by Polisario, Ibrahim Hakim.

The message condemned recent PPP activity as directed "not only against the Tolbert Administration... but against Africa as whole", the sources said. It added that the PPP aim was to divert from "the excellent and successful role" the OAU Chairman was playing in an important year for Africa.

The Saharan envoy praised President Tolbert for "the level of democracy he has developed in Liberia", commended him for "encouraging dialogue with the people" and described the presidential building as "a palace of the people", the sources added.

The PPP, which describes itself as an African Socialist party, called on March 7 for a general strike to force President Tolbert's resignation. The call was followed by a police and army attack on PPP headquarters and numerous arrests, including the party's main leaders.

The strike call was not followed but there were demonstrations throughout Liberia and a police station in the capital was attacked by a crowd of hundreds on March 15. (A.F.P.)

Sierra Leone

ARMED RAIDERS

FREETOWN, March 26 - Police have arrested 11 people in connection with armed raids on educational institutions and other property here during the past two months.

Acting Commissioner of Police Eric Musa said at a press conference that a man "previously in effective police employ" was among the 11 suspects.

Another of the suspects had jumped bail while on trial for robbery. In all the raids "imitation police uniforms and berets, arms and steel cutters" were used.

The matter was due for a court hearing shortly, police said, and if the charge was armed robbery the accused might face death by hanging or by firing squad. (A.F.P.)

Nigeria

CHOLERA KILLS 200

LAGOS, March 26 - Two hundred people have died in a renewed outbreak of cholera in Eastern Nigeria's Imo State, it was reported here.

Another 500 people have also been stricken with the disease, according to the State's Government-owned newspaper Nigerian Statesman, which reported that eight people died in one family in one day.

It said travelling "quack" doctors were cashing in on the outbreak, moving to affected areas and charging 50 kobo (about one U.S. dollar) to "immunize" people.

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry's mobile film unit there had intensified its campaign of educating local people on precautions to take against the disease. (A.F.P.)

Ghana

GOLD BOOST STUDY

ACCRA, March 26 - A Government commission began work here Tuesday to study ways to boost Ghana's flagging gold production.

Ghana - formerly the Gold Coast - has in recent years dropped from third to fifth position as a world gold producer.

The five-member committee has been asked to probe why gold output has fallen, and which mines could be reopened.

Ghana's gold production dropped by about 30 per cent between 1976 and 1979. (A.F.P.)

EAST AFRICA

General Information

INTERVENTION DENIAL

WASHINGTON, March 28 - The Pentagon has denied reports from Ethiopia that an American intervention force was to be dispatched to the Somali port of Berbera, but sources added that U.S. personnel were nevertheless expected to be posted there soon.

The sources said that between 500 and 1,000 U.S. civilians and military were expected to arrive soon in Somalia in connection with American plans to use the Soviet-built base and airport at Berbera. But Pentagon spokesman Tom Ross said there was no question of a U.S. intervention force.

Somalia, like Kenya and Oman, recently agreed to grant facilities to the U.S. armed forces in case of a conflict in the Indian Ocean region, and the port of Berbera will be a particularly useful support base for American naval operations there. (A.F.P.)

AMERICAN "THREAT"

ADDIS ABABA, March 27 - The official Ethiopian News Agency, quoting informed and reliable sources, last night accused the United States of sending an intervention force of 10,000 troops to the Northern Somali port of Berbera.

It quoted its sources as saying the troops were heading there to endanger peace and security in the Red Sea and were a particular threat to Socialist Ethiopia.

"The mission of the force now sailing towards the Somali port of Berbera is to try to strangle progressive forces in the region as part of the global effort of international imperialism headed by the U.S.", its sources said.

The agency recalled a recent statement by the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry over the U.S. search for new military facilities in the region, warning that Addis Ababa would not view these developments "lightly".

Somalia, along with Oman and Kenya, are three countries which Washington has said have offered it the use of military facilities, although Mogadishu in the past has strenuously denied this. (A.F.P.)

NEW, UNPROVOKED RAIDS...

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., March 27 - Somalia protested to U.N. Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim last night against "new unprovoked Ethiopian air raids against Somalia".

In a letter to Mr. Waldheim, Somali representative Ahmed Mohamed Adan said recorded conversations of the plane's pilots were in Spanish, "indicating clearly" that they were Cuban military personnel "whose presence in Ethiopia is a threat to peace in our region".

Somalia reserved its right to use legitimate defence against such aggression, Mr. Adan said.

(According to the Liberian news agency LINA, Somalia has asked the Organisation of African Unity to press Ethiopia to stop its raids on Somali territory. LINA said OAU Chairman William Tolbert, President of Liberia, had expressed his concern about the matter to Nigerian President Shehu Shagari, who chairs the OAU mediation committee on the Somali-Ethiopian conflict.

(The Liberian leader told Mr. Shagari that he was "gravely concerned" about the frequency of the attacks as reported by the Somali Government, the agency said, adding that Mr. Tolbert had sent messages to Ethiopian Head of State Mengistu Haile Mariam and Somali leader Mohamed Siad Barre asking them to "exercise restraint so as to avoid a resumption of armed confrontation"). (A.F.P.)

"DIVISION" WARNING

NAIROBI, March 27 - Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi warned Wednesday that he would not hesitate to take "appropriate" disciplinary action against a party member, civil servant or Member of Parliament found working against the interests of the nation and the people.

Addressing a special delegates' conference of the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) here, he pointed out that he did not believe in issuing threats or in the system in which threats or warnings occupied much prominence. But he said his lenient approach should not be misunderstood.

President Moi stressed that he would not tolerate statements or activities by anyone, however senior, which divided people instead of uniting them in nation-building efforts.

The party chief said the country was going through real hardship which could not be overcome through short cuts. His Government was trying hard to overcome these problems, which were caused by powerful international economic forces such as steep increases in oil prices.

He said that, with the support of friendly countries, the present food shortages would be overcome. Kenya is currently short of maize flour - the staple for most Kenyans - wheat flour, rice and electricity. (A.F.P.)

ROBBER TO HANG

NAIROBI, March 27 - An assailant who wounded a man while robbing him of his car and property valued at more than 10,000 dollars has been sentenced to hang by Mombasa magistrate Derek Schofield.

George Stephen Kaitany had been charged with others not before the court of wounding Tony Pape in Kenya's Coast Province during the robbery.

Earlier this month, a magistrate in Kenya's Lake Victoria port of Kisumu sentenced six robbers to death after an 11-year-old girl had been shot and wounded during a robbery.

Two days ago, Attorney General Charles Njonjo told Parliament here that he had authorised police officers to shoot to kill violent robbery suspects.

Mr. Njonjo told the House : "We do not want people threatening our lives and we do not like to live in fear and have our homes protected like prisons because of insecurity. The police have, therefore, been authorised by me to shoot to kill... These thugs could kill you if they had the first chance". (A.F.P.)

Kenya

W. GERMAN CREDITS

BONN, March 27 - West Germany is to grant credits totaling 110 million marks (about 27 million pounds) to Kenya for 1980, it was announced here today.

The decision, announced by the Federal Economic Cooperation Ministry, followed a two-day visit here by Kenyan Economic Planning Minister Zachary Onyonka.

Bonn's aid will go mainly towards financing projects in Kenya's agriculture and industrial sectors, according to Economic Cooperation Minister Rainer Offergeld. Some 15 million marks (nearly four million pounds) will be used to buy machines and equipment for irrigation. (A.F.P.)

Tanzania

THANKS TO CUBA

DAR-ES-SALAAM, March 27 - Tanzanian Education Minister Tabitha Siwale today thanked the Cuban Government for its assistance when she opened the third scientific and technical cooperation meeting between the two countries.

Mrs. Siwale said Cuba and Tanzania had made progress together in education, health, culture, agriculture and trade. (A.F.P.)

Uganda

WELCOME FOR INDIANS

NEW DELHI, March 28 - The new Ugandan Government will welcome back all its nationals of Indian origin who were expelled during Idi Amin's rule, Foreign Minister Narasimha Rao said today.

He said India had been informed by the Ugandan Government that the prospective returnees would be treated on a par with other nationals in Uganda. (A.F.P.)

Ethiopia

ARMY STEALING FOOD...

LONDON, March 26 - A British peer has photographs and documents showing that European Economic Community (EEC) food shipments to famine victims in Eritrea are being stolen by the Ethiopian Army, the Daily Telegraph reported today.

The Conservative newspaper said Lord Avebury had received proof that the food aid, "to which Britain is a major contributor, had not only failed to reach the people it was supposed to help but had actually fallen into the hands of the Ethiopian Army". (A.F.P.)

Zaire

SCHOOLS SHUTDOWN

KINSHASA, March 27 - The Government shut down all primary and secondary schools in the Zairese capital Wednesday in response to a strike by teachers protesting against inflation, higher bus fares and low pay.

According to official sources, the teachers are opposed to Government checks instituted to weed out more than 3,000 bogus school employees recently discovered on the payroll.

The shutdown will last until the end of the Easter holidays, in the middle of next month. (A.F.P.)

Central African Republic

EXCEPTIONAL SUPPORT

PARIS, March 28 - French help for the Central African Republic will concentrate on rural development, telecommunications and health, according to a communique issued here at the end of an official working visit by Centrafrican President David Dacko.

His three-day stay was his first in France since coming to power last year in a French-backed coup against Emperor Bokassa.

The communique said President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing had promised "exceptional support", especially for urgent development tasks.

Financial aid already supplied for transport would continue. Main new projects would include relaunching cotton, coffee and foodstuffs output, mineral prospecting, normalisation of postal links, and construction of a communications satellite land station, the communique said.

Scholarships for 1980, hospital modernisation and extension of Bangui's telephone system were planned, and there would be an increase in the number of technical aides and experts seconded for education, training and management.

France would back moves to get international finance, in particular for the cotton programme, under which a doubling of production in two years is planned.

An enlarged working session chaired by the two Presidents closed the visit Thursday. Reliable sources reported that a financial recovery plan for Centrafrica was examined and that "great hopes" were being placed in a meeting in Bangui scheduled for June bringing together Arab, Japanese and West European investors, the European Development Fund and the African Development Bank.

Mr. Dacko, the communique noted, said France's help was enabling his country to "re-establish a human and liberal republic and commit itself to the path of rebuilding democratic institutions" (A.F.P.)

ELEPHANT PROTECTION

BANGUI, March 26 - Poachers responsible for slaughtering an estimated 6,000 elephants a year in the Central African Empire will face heavy prison sentences in future under new laws just introduced to try and protect the species.

The Government has cracked down on the systematic killing of the giant beasts, which has included females and young, in the ruthless hunt for ivory.

All killing of elephant has now been banned, together with the "collection, commercialisation, import, export and transit" of ivory.

And specialist traders have been given two weeks in which to declare their existing ivory stocks.

The country is also to join the Washington convention on international trade for wild species of flora and fauna threatened with extinction.

Wildlife experts here say poachers are operating in organised bands with locally-made rifles, primarily in the north-east and east of the country.

Competing for the ivory in the same regions are several groups of heavily-armed deserters from the Sudanese and Chadian Armies who fled with their weapons.

Men, equipment lacking

The same sources say the country's armed forces and police are incapable of controlling the poachers in these areas because of lack of men and equipment.

(Last weekend in Luxembourg, the International League for Animal Rights decided to boycott anything made of ivory. They revealed that Africa's elephant herds, notably in Central African Republic and Zaire, had been decimated by poachers who used pesticides to poison waterholes and brought agonising death to the elephant and "thousands of other animals".

(The League estimated that in 18 months 200 tons of ivory had been imported into France and Belgium - representing the massacre of nearly 20,000 elephants, among whom were many young beasts.

(During the congress, League President Georges Heuse of Belgium awarded the Commander of the Order of Nature posthumously to British naturalist Joy Adamson, who was murdered last January in a reserve in Kenya. Habib Bourguiba Junior, the son of the Tunisian President, was made Chancellor of the order for his wildlife preservation work). (A.F.P.)

Angola

PORTUGUESE INTERFERENCE...

MADRID, March 28 - Angola may break diplomatic relations with Portugal because of "interference" in Angolan affairs, visiting Trade Minister Lopo de Nascimento warned in this Spanish capital today.

He accused Lisbon of maintaining contacts with the Angolan rebel movement UNITA (National Union for Total Angolan Independence), and of using its Government communication facilities in such contacts.

Mr. de Nascimento, a former prime minister, said in an interview published by the independent newspaper El Pais that Luanda's attitude was one of waiting, "but the maintenance of relations depends more on Lisbon's attitude than on ours".

He said : "The Portuguese Government is operating a policy towards our country which involves interference in our internal affairs. Its attitude makes us think it has no interest in maintaining its relations with Angola".

Angola could start to import from Spain what it currently imports from Portugal, and export to Spain those goods it now exports to Portugal, he said, adding : "It is we who sign the cheques and not the leaders of UNITA organisation".

Mr. de Nascimento is currently on an official visit to Madrid heading a big economic delegation. (A.F.P.)

Chad

SHAGARI : "GREAT SETBACK"

LAGOS, March 28 - Renewed hostilities in Chad are a "great setback" to the steady progress made towards restoration of normalcy since a Transitional National Union Government was set up four months ago, Nigerian President Shehu Shagari said here Thursday in an appeal for an end to the fighting.

He said the fierce fighting raging in Ndjamená since last Saturday, "claiming hundreds of innocent lives and making thousands of homeless refugees, has already reached such intensity that there now exists the real danger of a generalised civil war".

Nigeria's good offices were again at the disposal of the Chadian people to enable them to settle their differences, President Shagari said, adding that he had instructed External Affairs Minister Ishaya Audu to go to Ndjamená to establish contact with all the parties to the conflict. He appealed for an immediate ceasefire and urged Chadians to reaffirm their commitment to the strict application of the provisions of last August's Lagos agreement "as the only way to real peace and the lasting solution to the Chadian drama".
(A.F.P.)

Chad

SADAT IS READY

CAIRO, March 28 - Egyptian President Anwar Sadat said today he was ready to mediate between Chad's warring parties "if all parties concerned call for us".

He told newsmen he was "not worried at all" at the role played by Libya in the events in Chad except that it was "very damaging for peace and for the situation in the area and in Africa". (A.F.P.)

RED CROSS PLEA

FOR CIVILIANS

NDJAMENA, March 28 - The International Red Cross has officially asked the two major combattants fighting in the Chadian capital here for a ceasefire so that civilians trapped in the combat zones can be evacuated.

Red Cross leader Olivier Russbach told Agence France-Presse that both President Goukouni Weddeye and his opponent Defence Minister Hissene Habre had been asked.

Such a truce could last 48 hours, he added, enabling the civilians to be taken to camps already set up behind the frontline running north-south which now divides the capital. The camps are ready to accommodate hundreds of refugees.

Meanwhile informed sources today said a Red Cross team had gone to Kousseri town in Northern Cameroun, opposite Ndjamenana on the far side of the Chari River, to examine facilities for refugees there with Cameroun authorities.

Local authorities estimate the number of refugees there at 30,000 - far more than the town can cope with. Hygiene and accommodation are in particular posing problems.

Neutral zone

Meanwhile the Geneva headquarters of the International Red Cross Committee said it had also asked that the two sides declare the central hospital and adjacent buildings in Ndjamenana a neutral zone.

Most of the wounded civilians and soldiers were in the hospital, it said.

The Red Cross said fighting had come several times so close to the hospital that surgeons had been forced to interrupt operations.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees meanwhile said today that 30,000 Chadian refugees had poured into Cameroun in the last few days. They had joined some 10,000 who were already there before the latest fighting broke out. (A.F.P.)

TALKS IN MOZAMBIQUE

MAPUTO, March 26 - Mozambican President Samora Machel yesterday met the first delegation from the Zimbabwe Government to visit Maputo, as well as envoys from Zambia and Botswana, it was announced today.

The Zimbabwean Ministers were Ernest Kadungure (Transport and Energy) and Sydney Sekeremayi (Lands and Rural Development). The object of their visit was not announced.

It was understood that President Machel's discussions with the Zambian and Botswanan emissaries dealt with the meeting that is to begin Monday in Lusaka to set up a "counter-constellation of states". This grouping is to oppose South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha's envisaged "constellation of Southern African states".

Expected to attend the meeting, hosted by Zambia, are Tanzania, Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho and Swaziland. There also may be observers from Robert Mugabe's Government, which will rule Rhodesia when it becomes independent as Zimbabwe on April 18. (A.F.P.)

Zimbabwe-Rhodesia

S.A. NOT INVITED

SALISBURY, March 28 - Premier Robert Mugabe has invited 96 countries, but not South Africa, to the April 18 independence celebrations when Rhodesia will become the new independent state of Zimbabwe.

The countries include the Soviet Union. No reason has been given by Mr. Mugabe for not inviting his southern neighbour, which has a diplomatic mission in Salisbury.

Mr. Mugabe's invitations were channelled through British Governor Lord Soames. They include all 42 Commonwealth countries, and Organisation of African Unity countries together with international bodies such as the United Nations, the European Economic Community and Commonwealth Secretary-General Shridath Ramphal.

Officials sources said the invitation list also included several countries in the Americas and Asia. Personal invitations had been sent to the heads of the five front-line states in Africa.

Representatives and delegations would be the guests of the Zimbabwe Government between April 16 and 20, the sources said.

They added that Lord Soames was only issuing the invitations and was not involved in deciding to whom they should be sent,

(Rhodesia's only diplomatic post at present is in South Africa, where Air Vice Marshal Harold Hawkins is the diplomatic representative). (A.F.P.)

END OF THE
CALL-UP

SALISBURY, March 26 - Rhodesia ended national service and military call-up of civilians Monday after decades of part-time military service.

A Ministry of Combined Operations statement said the decision followed intensive talks with farming, mining and industrial organisations.

One-year national service for men in the 18 to 25 age bracket has been stopped immediately, although those serving will have to complete their 12 months in uniform, the Ministry statement said.

"Commitments for all other age groups will only be implemented where such service is considered essential and may take the form either of standby or actual call-up", it said.

From April 1, emergency national service for men up to the age of 38 who have completed their one year-full-time service would be a maximum of 30 days of standby or call-up.

Service or standby for men in the 38 to 49 age bracket would be a maximum of 15 days up until September this year, after which they would not be required to serve.

"All men of 50 years of age are to be stood down unconditionally with no further service commitment", the statement said.

The changes would not prevent men volunteering, the statement said, adding that a probe was being conducted into ways service could be given without financial loss to volunteers.

Changes to military service follow similar moves for the police reserve.

Joint training

Observers see the effect of the changes as meaning that military call-up will fall away completely if there is not a national crisis and that in future all military commitments will be shouldered by the regular forces.

A new National Army is currently being formed by elements of the regular forces and former nationalist guerrillas.

Joint training schemes have been started to form the nucleus of the national force and the programme is expected to be stepped up in the next few weeks.

The size of the National Army has not been officially announced, but military sources say it is unlikely to exceed 30,000. The new Government of Robert Mugabe faces the problem of scaling down the number of armed men in the country, estimated to number 100,000 or more. (A.F.P.)

Zimbabwe-Rhodesia

BRITISH INSTRUCTORS

LONDON, March 26 - Britain will provide a British military training team for Zimbabwe to help to integrate the country's forces, Foreign Office spokesman Lord Trefgarne announced yesterday.

Lord Trefgarne, who was speaking in the House of Lords, also said that the Government was considering awarding the Rhodesia Medal to mark the recent service of British troops, but added that no decision had yet been taken. (A.F.P.)

ANGLICAN WILL

FLEE MARXISM

SALISBURY, March 26 - Anglican Father Arthur Lewis, head of the arch-conservative Rhodesian Christian Group, said today that he would emigrate to South Africa because he refused to live in "a Marxist-dominated state".

The British-born cleric said in a letter to the group's members that he would join the Christian League in South Africa, where he intends to settle, "and continue the Christian battle from there".

He linked his decision to last month's general election victory by Robert Mugabe, many of whose political theories have Marxist origins. Rhodesia becomes independent Zimbabwe under Mr. Mugabe's prime ministership on April 18.

"The failure of so many of our hopes means that the Rhodesia Christian Group cannot carry on in the future in the same way as in the past", he said. The group, through its newsletter and frequent statements by Mr. Lewis, consistently opposed majority rule for Rhodesia. (A.F.P.)

THE NEW FLAG

SALISBURY, March 26 - Prime Minister Robert Mugabe has approved the Zimbabwe flag that Prince Charles will raise at midnight on April 17 to mark the country's independence from Britain, official sources said today.

The new flag has a white triangle at the hoist bordered by a black stripe, the sources said. There are seven horizontal stripes : two each of green, gold and red and a center stripe of black.

Emblazoned on the flag is a red star in the center of which is the Zimbabwe bird emblem facing the mast, the sources said. The Zimbabwe bird motif is found carved in stone at the Zimbabwe ruins near Fort Victoria, which are believed to have been built hundreds of years ago and from which the new state will take its name. (A.F.P.)

POLICE CLOSE

"ZANU". HOTEL

SALISBURY, March 26 - Police today closed down one of Salisbury's most popular hotels among blacks, claiming it was a center for violent crimes committed by supporters of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's political party.

Police raided the Mushandira Pamwe Hotel, making several arrests, and served an order on the owner, Solomon Tavengwa, closing it until further notice. Mr. Tavengwa is a known supporter of Mr. Mugabe and the hotel - always a focus of Rhodesian black nationalist activity - has become a particular haunt for officials and supporters of his Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU).

Investigations had shown that several persons arrested in incidents at the hotel over the past five weeks were ZANU members, a police spokesman said. He said that a black woman believed to support a rival party was abducted yesterday and taken to the hotel for "interrogation".

"She escaped from her captors by jumping out of a second-floor window, fracturing her pelvis and both legs", the spokesman said.

In another incident, an off-duty policeman was taken from one of the hotel's bars to a room where he was assaulted and robbed the spokesman said.

Mr. Mugabe warned in a radio and television broadcast last night that police were being authorized to stamp out politically inspired violence. The closure order was issued under the emergency powers legislation enacted by the old white regime during the guerrilla war. (A.F.P.)

A SOVIET EMBASSY

LUSAKA, March 26 - The Soviet Union is to establish diplomatic relations with independent Zimbabwe at ambassadorial level, Soviet Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Leonid Ilychev announced here today.

He told a news conference on arrival here that his country would continue to give help to the new Government of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

The Soviet envoy with his five-man delegation is to have discussions here with Zambian Government officials on bilateral and international issues.

The talks will include the situation in Southern Africa. The Soviet delegation will also have talks with leaders of the Namibian nationalist movement, the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the outlawed African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa. (A.F.P.)

SORRY, MRS. HOVE

CANBERRA, March 26 - Australian Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock has apologised to the new Zimbabwe Government of Robert Mugabe for the harassment in Australia of the children of one of Mr. Mugabe's senior Ministers.

A Foreign Affairs Department spokesman told AFP today that Mr. Peacock had sent a message yesterday to Salisbury expressing his "sincere regrets" at the incident.

Mrs. Sheila Hove, whose husband Richard is Public Service Minister in Mr. Mugabe's Cabinet, flew out of Sydney yesterday with her three children after only a fortnight in Australia because of threats against her children.

She told Australian officials she believed the telephoned threats were made by white Rhodesians living in Australia.

Mrs. Hove arrived on March 9 with her three children aged nine, seven, and four, and was studying business administration at a Sydney college under a Commonwealth Secretariat scholarship. (A.F.P.)

"NO" TO ISRAEL

TEL AVIV, March 28 - Israel has tried three times recently to establish diplomatic relations with Zimbabwe, but failed, Israeli Radio's political correspondent said here today.

According to the radio, Bishop Abel Muzorewa - Rhodesian Prime Minister before the February elections - had indicated to Israel that links could be set up but that he preferred to await the elections. The poll propelled Robert Mugabe to power, however, and he has rejected Israel's proposals.

(Except for Swaziland and Lesotho, countries in Black Africa broke diplomatic relations with Israel at the time of the October 1973 war. Many of them, however, maintain commercial and cooperation links). (A.F.P.)

Republic of South Africa

UNION RECOGNITION

JOHANNESBURG, March 26 - The South African subsidiary of the Swedish AB-SKF company has become the fourth firm in this country to sign an agreement recognising an African trade union, it was learnt here today.

SKF Engineering of South Africa signed its accord with the Engineering and Allied Workers' Union, an African organisation affiliated to the Federation of South African Trade Unions, which is not recognised by the Government. (A.F.P.)

MAFEKING TRANSFER

CAPE TOWN, March 26 - Mafeking, an historical town in the Northern Cape, is to become part of Bophutatswana, a neighbouring territory that was officially given its independence by South Africa in 1977, President Marais Viljoen announced here today.

He was speaking at a state banquet in honour of visiting President Lucas Mangope of Bophutatswana.

South Africa is the only country which has recognised Bophutatswana, which consists of eight large blocks of land and several smaller areas, spread over three South African provinces.

President Viljoen said a committee would investigate compensation for the white residents of Mafeking, who number about 7,000.

Mafeking won world fame during the Boer War, when an eight-month siege by the Boers ended in May 1900 with British forces relieving Sir Robert Baden-Powell and his garrison. (A.F.P.)

Namibia

EUROPEAN INITIATIVE...

WINDHEOK, March 26 - The European Community might launch an initiative on the future of Namibia if current United Nations efforts reach a deadlock, a prominent Dutch member of the European Parliament said here Tuesday night.

The MP, Hans Nord, is one of a three-man "semi-official" fact-finding mission from the European Parliament which arrived here Monday and leaves today for South Africa, as part of a two-week visit.

Mr. Nord, a Liberal Party member of the Dutch coalition Government, said the generally-held belief in Western Europe was that no election in Namibia could reflect the true will of the people without the participation of the South-West African People's Organization (SWAPO), which is engaged in a guerrilla war with South African forces. (A.F.P.)

10 GUERRILLAS DIE

WINDHOEK, March 27 - South African soldiers killed ten nationalist guerrillas in Northern Namibia in the past week, a military spokesman announced here today.

He said the guerrillas belonged to the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), which is fighting Pretoria's forces in Northern Namibia from bases in Angola and South-West Zambia.

According to the South African military, 42 guerrillas have been killed this month, and 195 this year. South Africa has lost 24 men. (A.F.P.)

Namibia

SOVIET PROMISE

LUSAKA, March 27 - Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Leonid Ilitchev promised here today that the Soviet Union would support Zambia in repelling South African military raids into the country's Western Province.

Mr. Ilitchev, leading a five-man delegation to African front-line states, said the Soviet Union would not sit idly by while South Africa continued to attack Zambia's Western Province on the border with Namibia.

He said the Namibian nationalist movement SWAPO (South-West Africa People's Organisation) was "the legitimate representative of the Namibian people and the Soviet Union will continue to support the movement".

The Minister's comments coincided with reports here that South African troops had occupied parts of Western Province hunting Namibian guerrillas until Monday, when they pulled out of the area through the Katima Mulilo border post with Namibia.

Ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP), Secretary-General Mainza Chona said he saw them cross into Namibia when he personally visited the Sesheke district. (A.F.P.)

Botswana

RAILWAY TAKEOVER

GABORONE, March 28 - Botswana is about to take charge of its railway system, until now administered by Rhodesia, Public Works Minister Peter Msusi told the National Assembly here Thursday.

The lines link Botswana to South Africa, Rhodesia and Zambia. The changeover would cost an estimated 24.6 million dollars, the Minister said.

Local engine drivers were currently training in Malawi, 40 technicians were on courses in Kenya, and 18 Botswanans had complete training and were working on the Botswana section of Rhodesia Railways, Mr. Msusi said. (A.F.P.)

Mozambique

WOMEN'S PROBLEMS

MAPUTO, March 27 - Mozambique's women today started a five-day conference to debate social problems affecting them, including premature marriage, rape of minors, divorce, and the "lobolo" tradition - that of future husbands paying gifts in cash or kind to their future wife's father. (A.F.P.)

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