

AFRICA NEWS

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LIBERIA

TOLBERT IN TROUBLE

[AN] Leaders of Liberia's political opposition have been forced into hiding by a government crackdown following the rioting that broke out over the April 13 weekend in the capital of Monrovia.

At least 29 persons were killed and several hundred were injured in the violence that spread through the Liberian capital after police tried to break up a demonstration against the proposed increase in the price of rice, one of the country's staple foods. The protesters, some 2,000 strong, picked up a larger following after government forces blocked their march on the Executive mansion. Large crowds then dispersed through the city, burning selected targets and ransacking and looting others.

The demonstration on Friday was organized by a dissident group known as the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL), whose leader, Gabriel Matthews, is believed by some sources to have been killed or apprehended by the government. Other prominent opposition figures, including Togba h Nah Tipoteh of the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA), Amos Sawyer of SUSUUKU, and Albert Porte, a veteran journalist, were also unaccounted for a week after the original protest.

According to some observers, the government helped to set the stage for the weekend uprising by making an issue of its ban on public demonstrations. PAL was denied clearance for its rally by the Justice Department, and the state-owned radio subsequently issued repeated warnings that any demonstration would be met with force.

Under pressure from rice farmers who complain of losing money on their crop, the Agriculture Ministry has proposed raising the price of a 100 lb. bag of rice from \$22 to \$35, a 60% increase. With this incentive, agricultural officials argue, rice farm-

ing can be expanded and the goal of self-sufficiency in the staple crop can be attained.

The government, however, has yet to give final approval to the measure.

Millions of dollars worth of damage was done to downtown Monrovia during the recent weekend uprising. Protesters burned and ransacked Lebanese and other foreign-owned businesses including airline offices. Crowds also set fire to businesses owned by the Tolbert family, one of Liberia's wealthiest and partially destroyed the "OAU village" being constructed for the African heads of state meeting this summer.

By most accounts the weekend violence reflects the growing strength of the political opposition and a mood of profound discontent among most Liberians. Said one student: "It was the result of several years of repressive measures by the Tolbert regime; something had to spark it off, and the proposed price increase on rice was the thing that did it."

Students at the University of Liberia went on strike following the recent violence and have called for Tolbert's resignation. Rumors of a general strike, meanwhile, are widespread in the capital, and troops from neighboring Guinea (Conakry) have been flown in to help Tolbert quell the unrest.

U.S.-ZIMBABWE ADMINISTRATION 'WOBBLY' ON RHODESIA

WASHINGTON [AN] U.S. officials expect to be confronted with a major congressional effort to recognize Rhodesia's election victors in late May, and the first skirmish may begin this week. There is a slim chance that conservatives will attach a rider lifting Rhodesian sanctions to the State Department's authorization bill, which the House will be considering.

It is more likely, however, that the major

push to lift sanctions will not occur until after a new Rhodesian government is installed at the end of May, and after President Carter makes a decision whether he considers the election free and fair.

The President's determination on the fairness of the Rhodesian elections is certain to be an ambiguous process, beset with conflicting reports and perspectives giving ample scope to divergent interpretations. Critics of the internal settlement, the Patriotic Front, independent African states, and others maintain that there is no way the elections could be fair, given the constitutional provisions which ensure continued white privilege, and given the exclusion of the Patriotic Front itself from the options offered to the electorate.

The elaborate security precautions taken by the Rhodesians are also subject to quite contradictory interpretations. Often portrayed as measures necessary to prevent guerrillas from interfering with the exercise of democratic rights by willing citizens, the mobilization of virtually the entire white male population for military duty, in a country already ninety per cent under martial law, is seen on the other side as part of a massive process of intimidation of the African population. Initial reports indicate that heavy voting has been concentrated in the urban areas, on white farms and in "protected villages," where the white military presence is particularly strong.

Voters turning out in the first two days of the election were officially estimated at some 41 per cent of the total electorate. Whites, coloureds, Asians and Africans voted from April 17 to 21, but whites had also voted separately for their own representatives on April 10. Since there was no official voter registration of Africans prior to the election, percentage estimates of the turnout, which were expected to exceed fifty per cent, were reportedly

based on rough estimates of the total eligible population, said to number some 2.9 million.

The election has also been accompanied by a new escalation of ongoing raids by Rhodesian forces on neighboring African countries. Particularly notable were several raids on refugee and allegedly guerrilla camps in Zambia, two attacks on the Zambian capital Lusaka, destroying several buildings occupied by Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU officials from Francistown, Botswana, and destruction of the ferry linking Botswana and Zambia.

When President Carter rules on how "free and fair" the Rhodesian elections were, therefore, a determination called for by the Case-Javits amendment Congress passed last year, he will also be staking out a position on the widening military confrontation in southern Africa.

On the Rhodesian issue, the administration's basic failure can be found in officials' early belief that they could play both ends against the middle in Rhodesia, and their current discovery that there is no middle. Recently an administration official closely involved in Rhodesian diplomacy told a private gathering that if some way could be found to increase the viability of the internal settlement, it could be acceptable. He said that basically what was wrong with the internal settlement was that it just wouldn't work. More simply put, the administration has now taken the position that if the election ends the war, fine; and if it doesn't, the administration will restate that the war must be ended.

Because policy is now defined as ending the war, arguments that the best way of ending the war is to increase the muscle of Rhodesia's new government have gained increased acceptability in the Congress.

Other foreign policy concerns have also con-



PRINCIPALS IN LAST WEEKEND'S LAW DAY activities at North Carolina Central University included (from left) U.S. Attorney H.M. Michaux, Jr.; Michael Morgan of New Bern, president of the NCCU Student Bar Association; U.S. Solicitor General Wade McCree; and Harry E. Groves, dean of the NCCU School of Law. McCree's awards banquet address included a discussion of the role of the lawyer in government and society.

tributed to administration wobbliness on Rhodesia. Two key fights confronting the administration are appropriations for the Panama Canal treaties and ratification of SALT II. One political analyst described "a macho strain" at play in the Congress, a perceived weakness of American will and diminished respect for American authority. Panama and SALT are influenced by these concerns, and so is Rhodesia.

But Rhodesia is far less important in the administration's view, so some pro-Africa groups are despairing of the administration's will to stand and fight for a settlement on the basis of the Anglo-American proposals. In any case, the Anglo component of the Anglo-American effort appears to be vanishing. Britain's Conservative Party is expected to win next month's elections where, and the party leader, Margaret Thatcher, is expected to be the new prime minister. Mrs.

Thatcher is critical of the Anglo-American proposals, and her party's platform includes a plank indicating plans to recognize Rhodesia's election victors.

Collapse of U.S. will to fight for its Rhodesia policy has implications for relations with independent Africa. One powerful motive for U.S. involvement with the issues of southern Africa centers on U.S. concern to rebuild its relationships with independent Africa because of vital resources and raw materials. Already front-line African states, which have been largely supportive of Anglo-American efforts in Rhodesia, have been voicing increased suspicions of U.S. motives and fears that the U.S. is backing Rhodesia.

If Britain abandons the Anglo-American proposals, the U.S. will be confronted with a decision as to whether it wants to take the side of independent African nations of that of Rhodesia. And in-

dependent Africa believes that the only choice left will be more support for the guerrillas, a position

which the U.S. has always rejected. Charles Cobb, AN contributing editor.

South African

Continued from front

Principles, taking stand against apartheid, is necessary.

"The plan for implementation of the principles is to have each firm work toward elimination of racial segregation, not only in their plant facilities and with the housing and educational opportunities for their own employees, but also to include the black population outside the work plant as well", Sullivan said.

"I am looking forward to the next report in September of Arthur D. Little, at which time we will be far more stringent in determining in which categories the companies shall be placed. This is possible now that criteria have been established for the objective measurement

of the progress each company is making. The removal of the barriers of the apartheid system is my ultimate objective. I know that American companies cannot do it by themselves, that is why I am especially pleased with the breakthrough announced recently that nine South African Companies have joined together to work toward compliance with the Sullivan Principles."

"There is no doubt in my mind, however, that this American business initiative can be a major factor in changing the system and will help stir the conscience and encourage the hope that the desperately needed changes can come without violent bloody racial warfare."

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