

AFRICA NEWS

A Weekly Digest
of
African Affairs

ZIMBABWE Bold Moves From Mugabe

SALISBURY [AN] Zimbabwe is still readjusting to the political changes made by Robert Mugabe in his Cabinet reshuffle on January 10.

One key test for the shake-up will come in the reaction of the minority Patriotic Front party. The Front's Central Committee may decide that it has no alternative but to accept the government demotion of party leader Joshua Nkomo, a move that secures for Prime Minister Mugabe's party total control of the country's security, police and military forces. Patriotic Front leaders may, on the other hand, fight the decision and scuttle the coalition government.

The reshuffle marks the emergence of a more assertive, confident style from Mugabe. By dismissing Edward Tekere, the in-temperate former minister of manpower and planning, and demoting Nkomo, Mugabe is now exhibiting boldness where previously he has governed with caution.

The Cabinet changes were a political gamble for Mugabe. After Tekere was acquitted December 8 of the murder of a white farmer, many observers believed Mugabe would not move against him, for fear of alienating the manpower ministers' untested following. Mugabe said he fired Tekere because the long time ZANU stalwart needed a rest after the trial.

Many have insisted that Tekere's outspokenness caused Mugabe to let him go. In December, for instance, Tekere said during a television appearance that the nation's white civil servants must leave the country, precisely the kind of confrontational style that Mugabe tries to avoid.

Other sources, however, maintain that the real reason was Tekere's failure to tackle his job, organizing the ministry and dealing with a vital national issue.

Tekere has publicly agreed with his dismissal, saying he will be content to concentrate on his work in the ruling ZANU-PF. He retains the post of secretary-general, the party's third-ranking office.

Even more of a political gamble was Mugabe's decision to deprive Nkomo of control of the police and move him to the Ministry of Public Service. Nkomo has spoken out publicly against the move, saying he and Mugabe had negotiated a sharing of security power within the coalition.

Prime Minister Mugabe says he made the shift because Nkomo was being blamed for the continued harsh and unpopular performance of the formerly white-controlled police. Mugabe added that it would take a long time to change the police and that he didn't want Nkomo to be criticized for their shortcomings.

Other than Nkomo's remark that he saw "no way of accepting this," the key response from the PF so far has been the initial Central Committee statement. It says: "The Patriotic Front Central Committee will take its decision having considered seriously the full range of government activities over the past month, which are clearly designed to destroy the Patriotic Front. The committee will take the action it considers in the best interest of the nation."

The Patriotic Front is particularly unhappy with ZANU-PF's control of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, which has resulted in restricted coverage of the activities of the opposition parties. The PF has stated that it fears the government's recently-created Mass Media Trust will exercise the same kind of control over the nation's daily

newspaper. The PF (formerly ZAPU) was also upset over the arrest of ten of its senior party members in November, two of whom still remain in custody although no charges have been preferred.

If Nkomo and his party refuse to go along with the new Cabinet reshuffle, it would end the coalition between ZAPU and the prime minister's ZANU-PF party. But there is little that Nkomo or his organization stand to gain from pulling out of the government. Despite the presence of some 12,000 ZIPRA guerrillas (who are known to be pressing for some kind of militant party stand), PF's maximum support is about twenty per cent of the population, roughly corresponding to the size of the Ndebele ethnic group.

As minister of public service, Nkomo will have responsibility of promoting blacks in Zimbabwe's primarily white civil service, and he will be in a position to appoint Ndebeles. Many observers have noted that up until now Ndebeles have been apparently excluded from senior civil service posts.

In addition to the controversial changes in his Cabinet, Mugabe has also made some administrative changes. He created two new ministries, an energy post to consolidate the government's policies on energy resources, and a women's ministry to concentrate on improving standards for Zimbabwe's women.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

[AN] The ghost of former dictator Francisco Macias Nguema, overthrown in August 1979 and executed after a trial that September, has not yet been exorcised from the small country he dominated for the eleven years following independence in 1968.

Under Macias the economy suffered massive setbacks, with lumber exports of the mainland Rio Muni and the cocoa from the island of Fernando Po virtually reduced to nothing. Practically all health services, trade, and the government administration itself had come to a halt, and nearly a quarter of the 300,000 Equatorians fled into exile in Cameroon, Gabon or Spain.

Hopes were high when Macias Nguema was overthrown, though there was initial skepticism of the new head of state, Teodoro Obiang, himself a relative of Macias and chief of his national guard. Now, some seventeen months after the coup, it is clear that while Nguema and the excesses of his regime have been eliminated, recovery is slow.

The new head of state quickly re-established close relations with the former colonial power, Spain, and cancelled a fishing contract with the Soviet Union that had been one of the few ongoing economic activities under Nguema. Spanish aid, which has included military advisers and nearly 3,000 civilian personnel,

has made possible restoration of basic services, while a small detachment of Moroccan troops has provided security for the regime. (In return for this aid, Equatorial Guinea last year suspended recognition of POLISARIO's Saharan Republic.) Reports from the

Africa, Human Rights, And Reagan

By Bayard Rustin
A. Philip Randolph Institute

It is thirty years since Africa began to emerge from the shadows of European colonialism. The overwhelming majority of African states have had national independence for nearly two decades. Enough time has passed for drawing up a balance sheet on Africa and the state of African democracy.

And a brief survey of the extent of human rights and freedoms on that large continent reveals a disturbing state of affairs. By the reckoning of Freedom House, a respected monitor of human rights throughout the world and an organization on whose board I serve, of the 46 nations in Africa, only three are assessed to be free. Seventeen are judged by Freedom House as partly free, and 26 are rated "not free." "The most recent annual report of Amnesty International, a human rights organization which monitors the treatment of political prisoners, is a virtual catalogue of tortures and atrocities in Africa.

The world is well aware of the carnage committed in the Central African Republic by the deposed tyrant and self-styled "emperor" Bokassa and in Uganda by deposed dictator Idi Amin. But the Amnesty report singles out many other African states for flagrant human rights violations. The Cuban-backed Leninist regime in Angola continues to ruthlessly suppress dissidents and to execute political opponents.

Ethiopia, another Soviet and Cuban-backed regime, has had a succession of "Red Terror" campaigns against political opponents. These campaigns have involved, according to Amnesty International, "political arrests, mass killings, the exposure in public of the bodies of those summarily executed, and systematic torture." According to informed estimates, by early 1979, the Ethiopian regime held over 8,000 political prisoners. And as a consequence of unrelenting warfare between Ethiopia and Somalia, 1.3 million refugees have fled Ethiopia, creating a refugee problem rivaled only by Cambodia's.

South Africa, meanwhile continues to imprison black political leaders, many of whom have died in police custody, and to make use of "banning orders" to exile democratic political opponents to isolated parts of that country. Additionally, there appears to be little lessening of the racist policy of apartheid, although that policy is now opposed by significant portions of the white population as well as by blacks and other non-whites.

In North Africa, the Tunisian government of Habib Bourguiba has been engaged in a relentless campaign of harassment and imprisonment against independent trade union leaders.

The list of victims of African regimes of both the left and the right mounts daily. Yet the discussion of the state of human rights in Africa receives scant attention in the Western press, and was ignored by Reagan in his campaign.

Moreover, Reagan's victory has been greeted with skepticism by many Africans. For this reason the new administration must act with regard to Africa in an intelligent and comprehensive manner. It is crucial that a Reagan Africa policy promote democratic and anti-racist principles, while protecting America's vital interests. And it is equally crucial that it be a policy which seeks to pressure governments into abolishing torture of political prisoners and prohibiting the execution of political opponents.

The road toward such a policy lies in a strategy which is opposed to apartheid and which simultaneously highlights and opposes the alarming escalation of the Soviet and Cuban presence on that continent.

Such a policy would have the endorsement not only of many of Africa's political leaders, but it would also enjoy the support of broad segments of African society.

The question of democracy and human rights in Africa, however, must not be left to governments alone. It is equally the responsibility of those who have struggled for civil rights in this country. I hesitate to issue the call for a new campaign. Such declarations, if unsupported by organizational commitment, ring hollow and are without lasting significance.

However, the time is more than ripe for American blacks and other civil rights advocates to begin a discussion of how to help those Africans who are committed to democratic ideals and social justice.

In the wake of the controversies surrounding the resignation of Andrew Young as United Nations Ambassador, a number of black leaders voiced the opinion that it was time for blacks to play a leading role in shaping American foreign policy. The question of African human rights and the presence of Cuban forces in Africa present the opportunity for playing such a leading role.



Looking For Clues

Don Laken, a professional tracker from Philadelphia, follows one of the two German Shepherds that he has been using for the past nine weeks as they search an abandoned house in Atlanta in hopes of finding clues in the investigation that is currently looking into the disappearance and/or slayings of sixteen black youths. Laken is assisting a special task force that is heading the investigation.

UPI Photo

capital Malabo say, however, that basic staples, including food, are still in very short supply. Cocoa production, once more than 40,000 tons a year, may reach 9,000 tons for 1980 after an earlier low of 5,000 tons annually in Nguema's

final years. Logging on the mainland may be back up to normal levels within two or three years.

President Obiang is hoping that the economic outlook may improve with the discovery of oil in Guinean waters. His government has signed explora-

tion agreements with France's ELF and Spain's Hispanoil, and it is also negotiating with American companies.

Though the closest ties have been established with Spain, a trip by Obiang to France in November resulted in pledges to step.

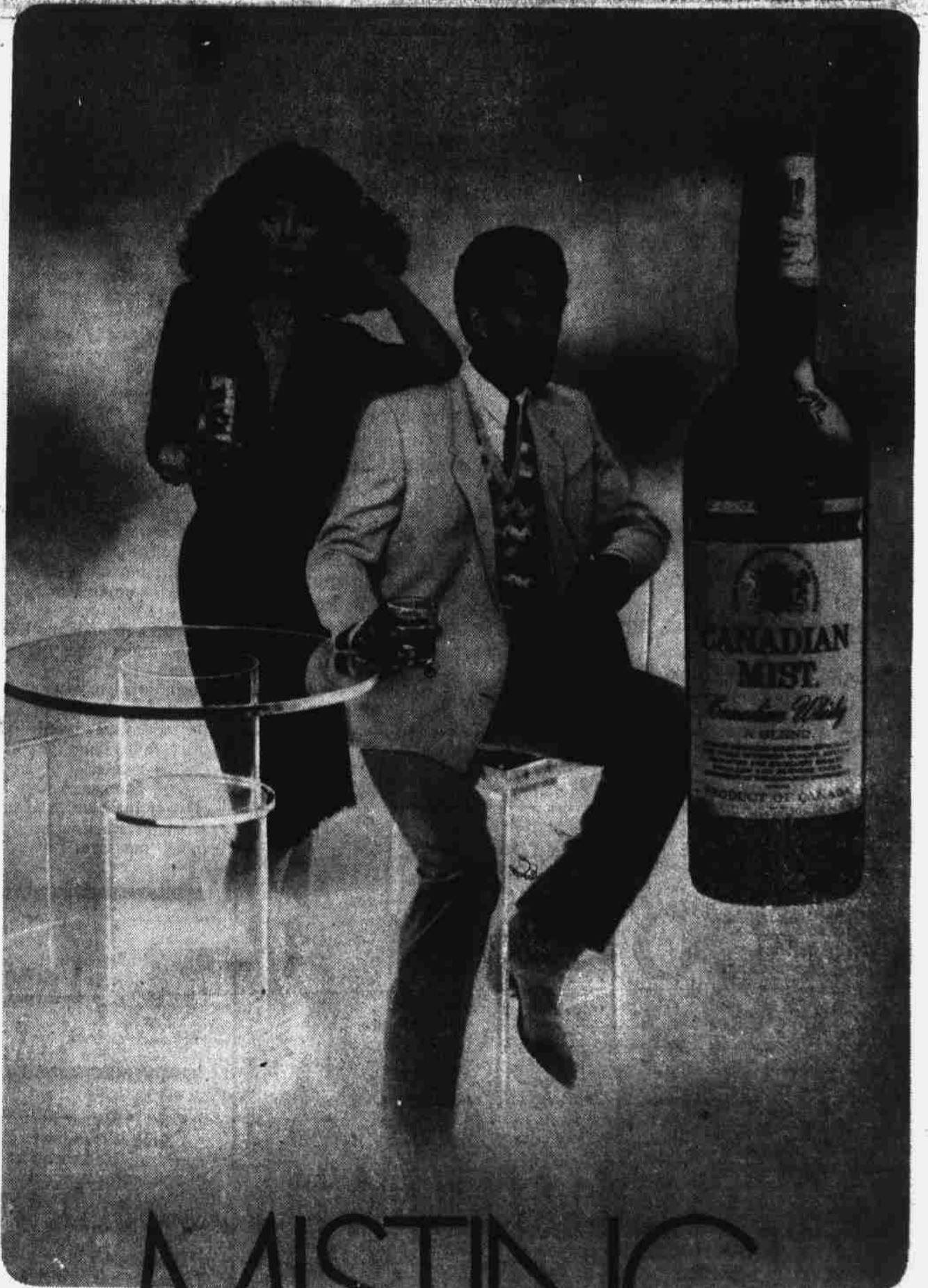
up relations between the two countries, while additional financial support has come from the International Monetary Fund and the European Economic Community. China also has a technical aid mission of several hundred and has completed such projects as rebuilding the central telephone exchange.

The changes could potentially establish Equatorial Guinea as a country with no more than the normal quota of problems for a small, underdeveloped and dependent land. But it appears that the government has yet to establish confidence among some sectors of the population. Low wages and corruption still prevail. Only a few of Nguema's associates were implicated in his trial, and Obiang is closely protected by Moroccan bodyguards.

The new government did release political prisoners, and, as Obiang reiterated on his visit to France, it has "issued a general appeal for all the refugees, in Spain, Gabon, Cameroon or Nigeria, to come home." The president went on to claim, in an interview with *Le Continent*, a new Paris-based daily focused on Africa, that all had returned except those staying overseas "for personal reasons, of study or work."

More realistic estimates put the number of returnees at only a few thousand, however, as most seem to be awaiting improvement in economic prospects or an alleviation of political doubts. *Le Continent* asked President Obiang about his plans for political normalization and restoration of democracy, and put the same question to, Eya Nchama, who has been in exile in Europe since 1970 and leads the National Alliance for Democratic Reconstruction (ANRD), one of the most persistent of the groups that has opposed Nguema. Their (Continued on Page 16)

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