

# AFRICA NEWS

A Weekly Digest Of  
African Affairs

## SOUTH AFRICA Rough Welcome For Koornhof

Platoons of specially-trained riot police were sent into the black township of Soweto outside Johannesburg late last week to restore order after several days of violent incidents. Some of the protests centered on the granting of honorary citizenship by the Soweto city council to a white government official. And sabotage of commuter railway lines was timed to increase the potential crowd available for anti-government demonstrations. A special correspondent reports:

SOWETO [AN] At four in the morning, on October 16, mechanically-timed dynamite charges exploded at a main train station in Soweto, cutting the principle railway line, damaging signal systems and halting all train service from the township for black workers during much of the morning commuter hours.

Police say literature of the banned African National Congress (ANC) was discovered when eight other bombs were defused.

The origin of the current protests is complex: There is widespread dissatisfaction with the decision of the government-established Soweto Community Council to raise rents, and the school boycott against inferior black education has prompted the government to close schools all over the country. It was also the week that marks the third anniversary of the government's banning of large numbers of black consciousness organizations and leaders, and, finally, there was the visit of a top government Cabinet minister to Soweto.

Minister of Cooperation and Development, Piet Koornhof, had come for a ceremony in which he was to receive an award — the Freedom of the City — from Mayor David Thebehali on behalf of the council. Had Minister Koornhof and his entourage driven into the township, they would have passed through chanting crowds protesting his arrival. But the government delegation flew in instead by defense force helicopter and was quickly escorted into the council chambers.

The singing, banner-waving demonstrators protesting the award began converging on the Soweto Council grounds early in the morning. The size of the gathering was no doubt swelled by the halt to commuter service dealt by the sabotage blast, and by the time Koornhof's helicopter touched down in late afternoon, police had baton-charged and tear-gassed a few thousand people several times.

As soon as the Soweto and Pretoria officials entered the council chambers, police made what was clearly intended as their final effort to disperse the demonstrators, and the ceremonies were continually punctuated by the faint barking of police dogs and the shots of teargas canisters.

When the assembled dignitaries began dabbling their eyes from the teargas fumes wafting in to the council chambers, Koornhof felt compelled to remark on the events taking place outside. "I plead to the children of Soweto," he said. "Listen to your parents. Have respect for your parents and not for these wolves who are leading you astray. Respect authority. It's God's will."

Piet Koornhof, nicknamed "Piet Promises" by those cynical of his commitment to improving the lot of South Africa's black majority, used the awards ceremony to promise

new legislation to "remove unnecessary, irritating measures and hurtful discrimination." His speech was broadcast on loudspeakers outside, but was hardly heard through the commotion of armed camouflage-clad police chasing demonstrators off the field. After the ceremony, when the government helicopter had disappeared in a cloud of dust and teargas, bound for a formal banquet, a group of young and old black residents explained their resentment over the award from Mayor Thebehali to Minister Koornhof.

"It's a pity Koornhof has been given citizenship by a man who happens to have none," so both of them are like mad people," said a man who had stayed home from work in protest. "And as far as we are concerned, Koornhof is just trying to brighten up a nobody like Thebehali, who happens to be in the machinery of this regime."

## U.S./AFRICA

'You Can't Eat Guns'

Although events in the Middle East have dominated the headlines — and preoccupied U.S. policy makers — the House Subcommittee on Africa and the Congressional Black Caucus have persisted with the efforts to focus attention on the African continent.

This year the Africa subcommittee has held hearings on wide-ranging topics including aid to Zimbabwe and the reprogramming of military aid to Somalia, Angola, Liberia and South Africa.

The Congressional Black Caucus spearheaded the drive to maintain sanctions against Zimbabwe/Rhodesia, and, at the recent annual CBC weekend, the group reaffirmed its commitment to what it called a constructive Africa policy.

Representative William Gray (D-Pa.) serves on the House Africa Subcommittee and chairs the CBC brain trust on foreign affairs. Gray headed the Liberia commission appointed by President Carter to analyze and assess U.S./Liberia relations in the wake of April's coup, and he accompanied Vice President Mondale on his recent diplomatic and trade mission to Liberia.

Congressman Gray spoke recently with Africa News about this and other topics, among his comments:

On Africa policy in general: The Congressional Black Caucus seeks to do several things: 1) put this country firmly on the side of majority rule, 2) support human rights, and 3) work for increased assistance to the developing nations of Africa.

On military assistance to Africa: Does the CBC support military assistance as the preferable way to provide aid to African countries? No we do not.

The best aid that we can give to countries is aid that will meet the needs of their people. You can't eat bombs, you can't eat bullets, you can't eat tanks.

But in most cases military assistance in Africa is very nominal.

For every three dollars put into 'human needs' programs only one dollar is spent on military aid. And I think that maintaining that direction will stand us in good stead with the peoples of Africa. . . . We've turned the corner in U.S. Africa policy, and that is very important to the people of America and to the West — not only in terms of the moral grounds of building bridges between people of the world but also on plain self-interest grounds.

On relations with Liberia: I suspect we will continue [aid as before] as we see the need based on what

the people of Liberia want to have done in their country. We don't go in a dictate to them — this is what we think you ought to do and this is what we are going to do. That's neo-colonialism.

I'm optimistic that a revolution took place in April which obviously was popularly supported.

I am optimistic also because most of the Liberian leadership has its roots intertwined very closely with us. Master Sgt. Doe was trained by American universities. This is typical of many of the new leaders who felt the old regime had been oppressive, had misused the people's money and had not really served them. Now the question is whether this new government will be able to meet the expectations of the people of Liberia and how quickly they will be able to do.

On aid for Zimbabwe: We have already made commitments. The question is whether this is sufficient to meet their

needs. I think it is becoming clear to the members of the subcommittee on Africa that it is not enough. . . . But I would desperately hope that we would try to provide substantial amounts of aid needed to help the miracle of what has happened in Zimbabwe be successful.

If the new government of Zimbabwe is able to successfully deal with all the problems of its people, black and white, and is able to work out a government where all can participate freely and fairly, I think that that will be a major accomplishment which will ripple throughout southern Africa and have a profound impact on the neighboring nations.

On Nigeria's new U.S.-style constitution: I think that's a healthy, positive direction. . . . Nations of the world are developing their identity and I think that is the important issue in Africa — and that's where American foreign policy must be. It

must be about the business of helping the peoples of Africa do what they want to do and develop what governments they feel are best for them in their contexts.

On recognition of Angola: I don't see it happening any time in the near future but I think it is rather foolish to ignore

that government.

On policy toward South Africa: The CBC feels very strongly that if necessary we ought to totally [divest] and break all diplomatic relations with South Africa.

On the U.S. public's view of Africa policy: It's tragic that most people just don't understand the role of foreign policy in their

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lives. Foreign policy means jobs, not jobs abroad, but jobs at home. Because most of our foreign assistance is in goods and services that are produced here in the United States. . . . And every time we develop a market where we are exporting a billion dollars worth of goods and services somewhere

in the world, we are creating anywhere from 20,000 to 40,000 jobs here at home.

SIERRA LEONE  
Unexpected Opposition  
[AN] Sierra Leone  
President Siaka Stevens' trip to the United States late last month to address the United Nations  
(Continued on Page 16)

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