

Africa's 'Elder,' President Moi of Kenya, works for peace

by Linda de Hoyos

"For their survival, Africans must be united, since their well-being was not on the agenda of major world powers," Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi told a crowd of thousands of his countrymen in Limuru, Kenya, on April 2. As reported by the Kenyan Broadcasting Corp., President Moi declared that, "in the current world order, major powers relegated African issues to the periphery." President Moi noted that with the collapse of communism as a central ideology, the welfare of Africa had been rendered irrelevant. He wondered why some African leaders were "fond of shedding blood instead of working for the welfare of their people."

In the last several months, President Moi has led a quiet campaign to bring peace to warring neighboring countries, and also to ensure stability in his Kenya. In part, this effort is in keeping with a tradition that goes back to independence, Samson Chemai, Kenya's Ambassador to the United States, explained to *EIR*. Kenya was a part of the Non-Aligned Movement, although it was closer to the West because of its capitalist economic system. "Kenya has always provided support to peace efforts, and to parts of the world where there is turmoil. The first U.S. airlift to Somalia was done out of Kenya, and the Japanese airlift to Rwanda was done out of Kenya. Kenya has always provided troops for peacekeeping forces in Europe and in parts of Africa."

But peace is taking on an ever-greater urgency. Since the end of the Cold War, the British Commonwealth and allied nations' policy of producing "failed states" in Africa, like a row of dominoes, has resulted in Kenya's being surrounded by a "sea of troubles" which constantly spills over the borders. Kenya has five neighbors; with the exception of Tanzania to the south, all are at war.

To the northeast is Somalia, one of the first dominoes to go in the post-Cold War policy for Africa, and where civil war and lawlessness have prevented the formation of any government at all for a decade.

To the northwest is southern Sudan, where the British-instigated war of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of John Garang against the Sudan government gained eager support from British and other Western forces, after the downfall of Garang's earlier communist sponsor, Ethiopian President Haile Meriam Mengistu.

To the north is Ethiopia, a country that was in civil war for years, and now is at war with Eritrea. In this case, insurgencies

also spill across the border into Kenya, wreaking havoc among Kenyan towns.

To the west is Uganda, where war abroad and insurgencies within are the order of the day, all putting pressure on Kenya.

Although the conflicts take place in other countries, the wars bring dislocation to Kenya. Kenya has lost markets, for one, explained Ambassador Chemai. Uganda and Tanzania are Kenya's largest trading partners, and the three countries are joined in the East African Community. However, insurgency and destabilization, pressure from refugees in the region, and the channeling of funds into military and security, dents the markets in those trading partners. Further, southern Sudan, Burundi, and Rwanda were all major markets for Kenyan manufactured goods, but this trade has been largely shut down by war.

Hundreds of thousands of refugees

The wars in the region have brought hundreds of thousands of refugees to Kenya. Today, Kenya hosts nearly 200,000 refugees: 150,000 from Somalia, who have lived there since 1991-92; nearly 40,000 from Sudan; 5,000 from Ethiopia; and 1,000 from other countries. Although refugees are officially restricted to camps, tens of thousands live in cities and towns. Kenyan officials believe that up to 100,000 Somalis live in Kenyan urban areas. The most serious problem, however, is "that the refugees bring guns, heavy guns." That is, they bring the conflict to Kenyan territory. The most extreme example of the type of problems that can be caused is the influx of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees into eastern Zaire in 1994, which ultimately became the pretext for the invasion of Zaire by Rwanda and Uganda in 1996-97.

Kenya is not unique. These types of extreme pressures on nations have become the daily fare of governments throughout Africa. Just as Kenya has been virtually cut off from "donor" funds, there is little help from Western powers in solving the problems. Western powers are either disinterested, as President Moi puts it, or are malevolent, directly fomenting wars — through their political sponsorship of warlords and by arming such warlords through their mercenary operations, as in the case of the SPLA, the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone, or Jonas Savimbi's UNITA in Angola. It is becoming clear that peace can only be achieved if

African leaders bring it about. This was the point of discussion between President Moi and Namibia President Sam Nujoma in Windhoek, Namibia, on March 31.

The two leaders issued a communiqué after a thorough review of the conflicts in the continent—in Congo, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, southern Sudan, and Ethiopia—and indicated the following:

On the Democratic Republic of Congo, they expressed support for a cease-fire and deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force to the country, “but further stressed the sanctity of sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the D.R.C. and renewed their call for the immediate withdrawal of all uninvited foreign forces.” This is in contrast to the peace “calls,” for example, of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice, who has made no distinction between the invading forces of Uganda and Rwanda, and the forces invited by President Laurent Kabila to defend the sovereignty of Congo against that invasion—Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia.

On Angola, the two heads of state declared their support for the Angolan government, and called upon the international community to pressure Savimbi and UNITA to implement the Lusaka accords for a power-sharing government and an end to the fighting.

On Ethiopia and Eritrea, they called upon the countries to carry out the framework for agreement worked out by the Organization of African Unity. On the conflicts in Somalia, Burundi, and Lesotho, they “noted that the ongoing conflict could destabilize the African continent, and cause untold human suffering, misery, and wanton destruction of social, economic infrastructures.”

Somali negotiations

President Moi has also taken an active role in working to bring peace to Kenya’s immediate neighbors. On April 1, after three months of secret talks at the Mount Kenya Safari Club, it was announced that the leaders of the various warring factions in Somalia had worked out a power-sharing agreement to end their conflicts. The talks were held secretly, and involved heads of state in the region who quietly flew in and out during various points in the talks to meet with the assembled Somali representatives. Since 1990, President Moi has always kept his doors open to all the Somalian leaders, who view him as an elder statesman in the region. The Somali warlords involved in the new agreement include Ali Mahdi Mohamed, Osman Ato, Mohammed Ibrahim Egal of Somaliland, Hussein Mohamad Aideed, and Mohammed Siad Hersi, the last being the son of the late Somali President Siad Barre.

Upon announcing the agreement, the European Commission’s Duarte Decarvalho told the press that “the desperation arising from the ravages of the current famine and exhaustion by the fighting militias played a hand in helping to bring reason to the warlords.” Under the accord, all militia will be amalgamated into one Somali army, and the militia leaders unanimously agreed to nominate as interim President Hussein

Ali Ahmed, current governor of Mogadishu. By all accounts, the Somali agreement is serious. The survival, however, of even an interim government will depend upon the extent to which a plan for the reconstruction of this war-devastated country is put in place and implemented; without that, the simple desperation of the Somali people—where gun battles rage over allocation of relief food—will continue to fuel the war.

Aside from the disintegration of Somalia, the threat now is that if Garang persists in waging war in southern Sudan, this region also will disintegrate. Kenya is the chairman of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace initiative for southern Sudan and for negotiations between the Sudan government and Garang’s SPLA. Talks due to begin on April 20 have been postponed by the Sudan government, because of the SPLA’s refusal to relinquish the bodies of four relief workers kidnapped and killed in SPLA-controlled territory.

The war in southern Sudan has created security problems for Kenya, said Ambassador Chemai. In March, the Kenyan government took full control of the Lokichoggio airport, which sits on the border with Sudan. The airport was used as the center for the United Nations Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) for delivery of famine relief to southern Sudan. But it has also been used for delivery of weapons to Garang through such non-OLS groups as Norwegian People’s Aid and others. In March, President Moi visited the border town and ordered a security tightening to ensure that arms were not going in or out of the country via the airport. Lokichoggio was registering more flights than many international airports, said one Kenyan source. The government is also checking into the activities of the Belgian Air Force in Lokichoggio. “There is no government that can allow a foreign army to operate from its soil,” said President Moi.

At the same time, President Moi has offered Kenya as a venue for discussions between the Congo President Kabila and Congolese factions warring against his government. In a joint communiqué issued after Kabila’s visit to Nairobi on April 5, the two Presidents agreed on the urgency of restoring peace to the Congo “to enable the people of that country to pursue development activities.” The two Presidents also agreed that national debate in the Congo should “include the process of ascending to power through popular election and a new constitutional dispensation, and formulation of laws to govern the formation and operation of political parties.”

No help from ‘donors’

In the last month, President Moi has also taken steps to maintain the stability of his own country. On April 3, he reappointed as his Vice President, George Saitoti, current Planning and Development Minister, who had served as Vice President for eight years before he was dropped before the 1997 national elections. The lack of a Vice President, under constitutional provisions which prohibit Moi from taking on another term, was causing disquiet throughout Kenya. Saitoti’s ap-

pointment was endorsed by leaders of the ruling KANU party, and also by Anglican Archbishop David Gitari and Catholic Archbishop Ndingi Mwana a’Nzeki, both of whom have been active leaders for constitutional reform in Kenya.

The country is now in the process of a constitutional review, which will begin at the district level, move upward, and pass onward to a constitutional commission, before presentation of the draft to the Parliament by the Attorney General. Thus, Moi hopes to ensure the continuing stability of Kenya, where strife among ethnic communities is not unknown, and also ensure a transition of leadership down the road.

Kenya is a negative proof of the policy for war coming against Africa from London and its complicit channels in Washington and Paris. A multi-party democracy, an island of stability in an embattled continent and region, Kenya has been completely cut off from monies from Western capitals since 1992. As the Paris Club of “donors” pours \$2.2 billion into Uganda, whose President Museveni is the primary London warlord in the region, funds to Kenya were cut off when the International Monetary Fund and the Anglo-American Commonwealth Club declared war on the Moi government. The cut-off was based on the sign of “disapproval” from the IMF. The IMF demands include “good governance,” “clean up corruption,” “speed up the privatization campaign.” What is its aim? “We don’t like to speculate,” answered Ambassador Chemai.

Netanyahu threatens war on Syria, Lebanon

by Dean Andromidas

The government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has launched a series of military provocations in southern Lebanon that could lead to war between Israel and Syria.

In the latest provocation, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) extended Israel’s self-defined security zone in southern Lebanon by occupying the village of Arnoun in early April. The pretext for the occupation was that the Lebanese guerrilla movement, Hezbollah, had used the village to stage attacks on IDF personnel over the preceding weeks. The Israelis then deployed a regiment of their local puppet forces, the so-called South Lebanese Army, into the village.

That this was only a pretext to raise tensions in the region was underscored by the fact that the occupation sabotaged a mediation effort by the United States to have the Lebanese government deploy its paramilitary Gendarmerie into the village.

According to an article by military journalist Ze’ev Schiff in the Israeli daily *Ha’aretz*, the “move took [the U.S.] by surprise and disrupted an effort that had the support of the Lebanese government.” Although the Lebanese government has refused to deploy its own army in the area, as Israel has demanded, for fear that it would appear to be protecting Israel and suppressing its own citizens, the deployment of its paramilitary Gendarmerie would have been a small breakthrough and could have defused the crisis.

Netanyahu’s provocations in southern Lebanon began shortly after the announcement that new Israeli elections will be held on May 17. After the relatively moderate Yitzhak Mordechai resigned as Netanyahu’s Defense Minister, to become the new Center Party’s candidate for Prime Minister, Netanyahu was able to consolidate the most hawkish and fanatical security team to be seen in Israel in decades. Among these fanatics are Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon, unaffectionately known as the “Butcher of Lebanon,” and Defense Minister Moshe Arens, who in the early 1980s rescued Netanyahu from obscurity as a furniture salesman and turned him into Israel’s version of Benito Mussolini. Also in this cabal is deputy Mossad chief Gen. Averim Levine, the very hawkish former Northern Commander.

Many Israeli political observers fear that Netanyahu might launch a major war in Lebanon as an election ploy. Sharon and Arens were the architects of the disastrous 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The goals of that earlier war are the same as the one in the making: to overthrow

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