



# PART III

## *Advocating for a free and independent press and democratic governance*

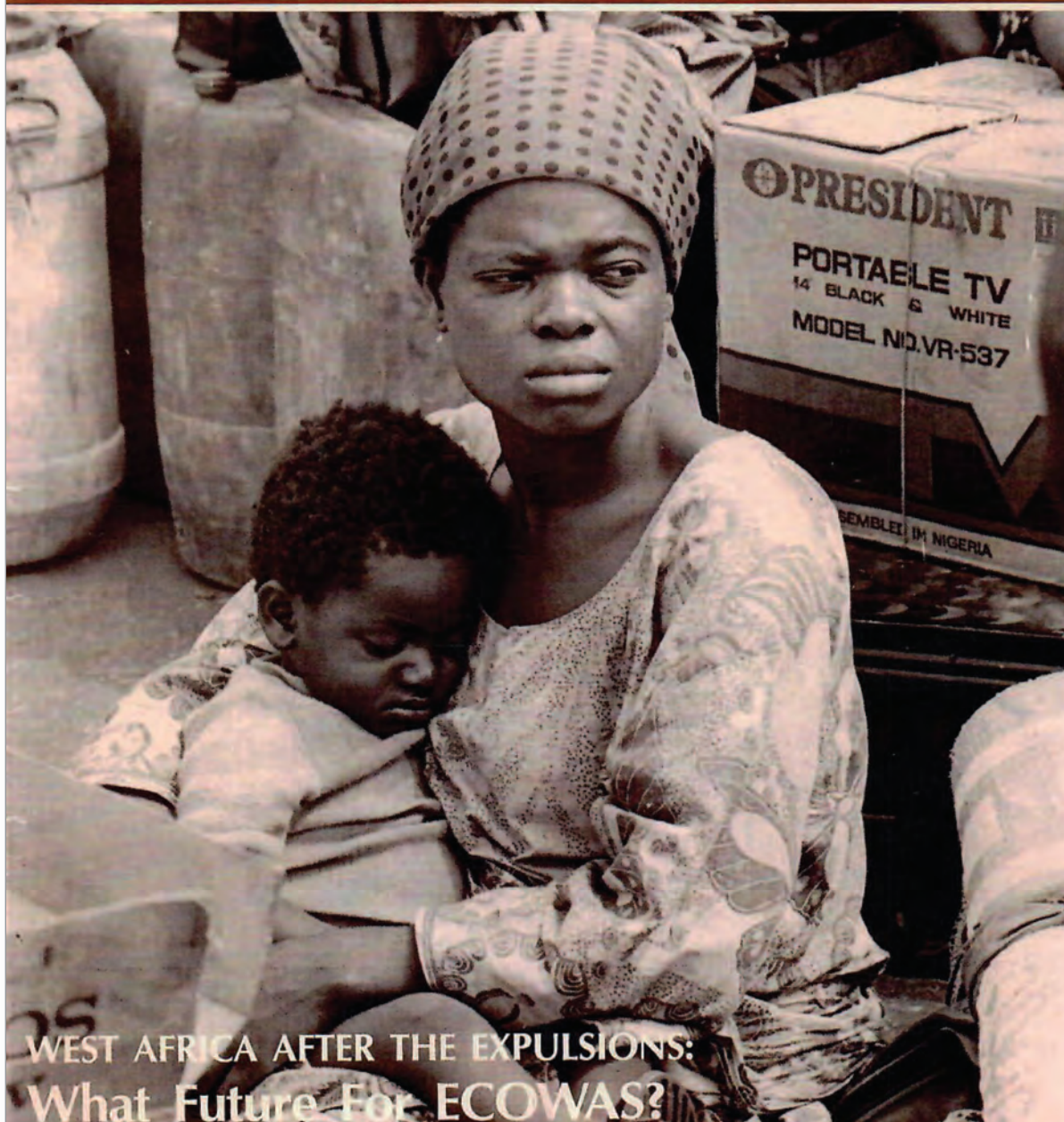


AMERICA'S LEADING MAGAZINE ON AFRICA

# AFRICA REPORT

JULY-AUGUST 1985

FOUR DOLLARS



WEST AFRICA AFTER THE EXPULSIONS:  
What Future For ECOWAS?

# The West African Beat

Western press coverage of the Third World is often limited to the sensational and the tragic. While American journalists complain of being frustrated by technical and political constraints, their African counterparts maintain that the Western media should focus more attention on the challenges of African economic development.

BY NICHOLAS N. GOUÉDE

On April 17, 1984, the four-month-old military government of Nigeria issued a tough new law granting itself the power to close down newspapers and radio and television stations that were deemed to be acting in a manner detrimental to the interests of the government.

It also assumed the power to imprison journalists for giving too much publicity to anti-government speeches of politicians who had fled abroad and for making inaccurate reports that exposed government officials to ridicule. The regime subsequently jailed five journalists and intimidated many others, both foreigners and Nigerians.

Six months later, Thomas Sankara, President of Burkina Faso, was in New York City to address the 39th UN General Assembly. During his visit, he expressed dismay to a group of black journalists that the current economic adjustment efforts by West African nations would probably not be fairly reported to American readers. He urged the journalists to do everything in their power to see that the news media pays attention to African problems. "If you do not," Sankara said, "you are part of the conspiracy as well."

These two incidents illustrate the tensions and paradoxes implicit in the relationship between the foreign media

*A native of Ivory Coast, Nicholas N. Gouede is a graduate of the Columbia University School of Journalism. He was a Dag Hammarskjöld Fellow covering the 1981 UN General Assembly for Radio Ivory Coast International.*

and West African nations. On the one hand, a free press as it exists in the United States is virtually unknown in West Africa and other Third World countries, where governments constantly hinder the reporting of both local and foreign journalists. The harassment prevents newsmen from writing freely about African issues. On the other hand, West African nations feel ill-served by the foreign media, which they say distorts the story of their growth and development or fails to report it at all.

Both African journalists and many American reporters who specialize in African affairs point to the overwhelming dominance of American and Western European media in West Africa and the way it distorts African issues. American news reports are focused on the failures of West African nations, they say, rather than on important socio-economic events.

"Where is the Western media's coverage of the largest hydroelectric scheme to have been launched in Angola since independence?" demands Cesaire Pooda, a journalist for *Le Carrefour Africain*, a weekly based in Ouagadougou. The Western media focuses on droughts and famine, while ignoring or paying little attention to the daily struggles of West African nations to overcome poverty, hunger, and illiteracy. Pooda complained, noting that stories reaching American readers usually portray African countries in bleak or desperate circumstances.

For at least a decade, African and other Third World nations have been

voicing these complaints and challenging the West's monopoly over world news. They have called for a "new world information order," which would end the dominance of the Western press over news flowing in and out of Africa and the rest of the Third World. In reality, the debate over the order is a North-South issue, a fundamental question of how the South can solve its development problems and how, with assistance from the North, it can manage its information resources to aid in this struggle.

The primary forum for debate over the new order has been the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). But proposals made in UNESCO have incensed the Western media, which believes that the UN agency wants to impose a code of conduct on journalists and bring the media under government control.

African journalists say that the supposed custodians of press freedom, such as the U.S. and British governments, have imposed restrictions on journalists during crises such as the Grenada and Falkland operations that conflict with their own standards of press freedom, defended in the UNESCO forum. They maintain that these examples illustrate that no nation is immune from the temptation to muzzle the press.

## Through a Western Lens

The American press does more than convey information to the American public. It also funnels the news and values of the Western world back to West

Africa and other regions of the developing world. Stories on the region are sent from correspondents to American news centers, where they are edited before being returned to West African readers and listeners. Thus, West Africa often learns of news about itself or other African nations from Western cities such as New York, London, and Paris. Not only is this clearly inefficient, but it means news is refracted through a Western "lens"—a lens that may, for example, transform a courageous "freedom fighter" into a clandestine "terrorist."

Complaints about distortion are based not only on the choice of story topics and on editing in Western newsrooms, but also on the frequent failure to provide the background necessary to explain the significance of the events. While the coup that brought Maj.-Gen. Muhammadu Buhari to power in Nigeria received some attention in the news media, the nature of the coverage seemed woefully inadequate for a story that was to affect tens of thousands of people.

"A coup is usually covered in bloody detail, but coverage of the conditions creating the coup is surprisingly sparse," said Lawrence Ukwu, the UN correspondent for the News Agency of Nigeria. Because the daily news diet of most mainstream American papers lacks "non-breaking" background stories, American readers are ill-prepared to receive information concerning a crisis when it does erupt.

Critics bemoan not only the distorted substance of coverage, but also the limited amount of news that reaches the U.S. The abbreviated picture presented to American readers distorts the significance of events by suggesting that little of importance happens in Africa. While news of Latin America and Western Europe periodically finds its way to the front pages, West African news is buried deep within the paper.

The problem starts with the lack of resources devoted to coverage of Africa. John Darnton, deputy foreign editor of *The New York Times*, says the rising cost of maintaining journalists overseas has shrunk the pool of American newspapers generating their news from Africa. "It costs over \$200,000 a year to keep a correspondent in Africa," Darnton says. The *Times* has only four

correspondents covering Africa—not many for coverage of an entire continent, but more than any other U.S. newspaper. Darnton said that rising costs have also reduced the space allotted to foreign news of any kind, news that competes for space with national and local stories.

Darnton, who traveled throughout Africa as a correspondent for *The New York Times*, also pointed to the difficulties arising from the state of the African communications systems. While the telecommunications infrastructure is taken for granted as an essential component of the sophisticated information systems in the U.S., in most African countries it is not adequate to sustain even essential services.

In many areas of sub-Saharan Africa, there is no system at all. High-speed technology is expensive to install and, in any case, transport and communications lines are inadequate to maintain it, Darnton said. While some countries have made impressive progress, many others will need extensive foreign assistance to establish telephone lines, telex services, and direct broadcast satellites.

Another serious difficulty is that American editors are often ignorant about African affairs or are simply uninterested. In this respect, they differ from French and British editors, whose countries had colonial ties with Africa, and whose reporters serve longer stints on the continent. The American news

media generally prefers that its reporters serve short terms abroad, fearing that longer stays would result in reporters becoming too emotionally involved in the areas they cover.

This revolving door policy contributes to superficial coverage. American reporters do not acquire the necessary expertise and perception to improve their understanding of political and cultural events, which are often rooted in the bitter times of colonial rule or even farther back in history. American editors also are ignorant of the historical context of news from Africa. Critics argue that increasing the number of journalists in Africa will not improve coverage as long as editors are selecting stories about nations whose names they do not even know.

### The Paradox

The problem, however, cannot be blamed entirely on the American media. African governments usually pay lip service to the fundamental concept of press freedom, sometimes through constitutional guarantees. But about 90 percent of African governments deny basic press freedoms, according to a ranking official of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). This situation is related in part to the fact that governments run most newspapers as well as radio and television stations.

West African governments also exert control over foreign correspondents



Mobil broadcasting unit, Sierra Leone: "Many West African journalists advocate government-run national news agencies"

Margaret A. Novick



**Liberian television: "While the telecommunications infrastructure is taken for granted in the West, in most African countries it is not adequate to sustain even essential services"**

Joseph Margolis

through denial of transmitting facilities, difficulties in covering rural areas, or even in some cases police detention. Some countries like Guinea or Benin formerly banned foreign correspondents on principle, and reporters have been refused visas to others.

If they succeed in entering a country, reporters then risk being thrown out for writing unfavorable stories about the government. An OAU official estimated that over 100 foreign journalists have been expelled from African countries during the last decade. This denial of press freedom occurred even in Nigeria, a country that was regarded as the best example of modern democracy in Africa, and where an independent critical press has flourished over the years. The military government that seized power at the close of 1983 took strong measures against the press, with the result that journalists now speak candidly from within Nigeria only without by-lines.

Certainly, a paradox does exist. West African nations and other developing countries that call for a freer flow of information invariably restrict that flow through limitations on the freedom of both local and foreign journalists.

What is the outlook for improving American and other Western media coverage of Africa in the next decade? Nate Polowetzky, a foreign correspondent for 12 years and now the foreign editor of Associated Press, said the nature of

foreign news is changing. "I believe that most journalists assigned overseas nowadays are better prepared than in the past," Polowetzky said. "No correspondent goes abroad for the AP without absolute fluency in the language of the country to which he has been assigned."

Edward Butler, deputy foreign editor of AP, said that American press coverage of the Third World—at least coverage by the wire services—is not as inadequate as it is made out to be. "Africa's drought and famine has been one of AP's most dramatic continuing stories for more than a decade," he said. He acknowledges that there have been deficiencies, but insists that coverage is improving. AP has recently expanded its bureaus to eight major African cities. The world's largest news agency has also increased its staff by hiring local stringers, and is now filing more stories on Africa—about 228 in 1984, as compared to 101 in 1983.

In addition, the nature of the stories has been changing, he said. "We cover all aspects of life in Africa, providing the necessary background about such issues as agricultural projects, literacy campaigns, birth control, and climatic conditions. Not only is the correspondent expected to report on a regional meeting of the West African Economic Community, but he's got to tell how decisions agreed upon affect the lives of coffee or cocoa farmers in Ghana or the Ivory Coast, for example."

Even if Western wire services improve their coverage, as Polowetzky and Butler insist is happening, the news flow may still be unbalanced. The development of more sophisticated communications infrastructures, including the establishment or improvement of independent or national news agencies in Africa, is also required. Through the generation of news by Africans themselves, reporting the views of all sides, the present coverage can be improved.

Many West African journalists advocate government-run national news agencies, since the private sector in many African nations lacks the necessary resources to establish news outlets, or is prohibited from doing so on ideological grounds.

American journalists, however, are concerned that national news agencies will become the sole source of news and will limit their coverage to merely relaying government propaganda. In general, Americans oppose the principle that the press should be used as another tool, along with health care services, agricultural agencies, and educational systems, to further the goals of national development and to bring about socioeconomic change.

The relations between Western journalists and Third World nations embody strong contradictions. Inspired by models of reporting that have helped bring down governments, American reporters often seek out stories of social inequity. Many believe that the concept of "developmental journalism" implicitly furthers the aims of the ruling class. Some maintain that in a one-party state, the press becomes an arm of government and a vehicle for stifling legitimate opposition.

They also fear that government-run news agencies would eventually subject all media representatives to the dictates of national press coverage policies and that cooperation in furthering development goals would be enforced by censorship of stories critical of governments.

Frank Brown, associate editor of *Black Enterprise*, an American monthly magazine, has called for the black American press to be more receptive to the development needs and problems of African peoples. The American media

"should be committed to doing analytical stories about the continent that has and continues to see so much suffering, much of which is due to the policy of the U.S. and other Western countries," Brown said.

"It is extremely important to have a vigilant black American press that will take upon itself the responsibility to present fair information about what is happening to their brothers and sisters in Africa, in the same way that we see the Jewish press covering Israel or other ethnic groups covering countries of their heritage," he said.

While such proposals for improving the news flow are being advanced, Pat Orvis, formerly UN correspondent for the now-defunct Chicago Sun-Times News Service and currently a UN-based columnist focusing on developing countries, disagrees with American editors who claim that Americans are not interested in news about Africa because they cannot connect it to their daily lives. "By allowing American readers to see Africans as fellow human beings across the Atlantic, their interest in the story [is] enlivened," said Orvis, who speaks from a decade of experience in covering Third World development.

She suggested that coverage could be improved if newspapers and magazines created a daily or weekly section for news of West Africa and other developing countries, much as they do now for business, fashion, and food news. This would allow papers to break out of the routine of daily hard news coverage and provide the necessary analysis on socio-economic issues.

American journalists and their editors and publishers share a duty to their readers to go beyond the daily news from Africa and the rest of the Third World. They should educate themselves. Monique Rubens, an American freelance writer based in New York, who covers the UN for Gemini News Service and *West Africa*, a London-based weekly, said "West African nations and their political systems need to be understood, not solely against a measure of the present political and social system of the U.S., as many news media and correspondents tend to do, but against the perspective of the historical evolution of these countries." □

The need for better coverage can no longer be ignored. African journalists are justified in asserting that the Western press in general and the American press in particular have been for the most part indifferent to their development struggles. Their charges are substantially correct: Western reporters are guilty of what they call "instantaneous journalism," and a desire to titillate their readers, listeners, and viewers with quirky or sensational anecdotes that do not reflect the wider reality of a developing nation.

For the most part, newspeople in the West have not been aggressive in showing that they are interested in the problems of Africa. Western journalists should not stop advocating the benefits of a free press in keeping the African nation informed about itself and the world informed about the African nation. They should join in finding ways and means to evaluate the wisdom of government policy and publicize the needs of African people to Western readers.

On the other hand, West African nations should see that placing barriers in the way of Western coverage results in the loss of a valuable perspective, just as the West suffers by not having an African or Third World perspective on world events transmitted through the news media. Contrary to their often-held belief, control of the press does not create political stability in the long-run. Conversely, a free press provides the forum for national debate on development issues.

African leaders must realize that news should not consist only of stories that glorify their policies or themselves. They should regard telecommunications as a complement to other investments and an essential component in the development process which can raise productivity and efficiency in other sectors and enhance the quality of life. They should be encouraged to recognize how their own repressive press policies not only keep Western journalists from telling their story, but also hinder the growth of a healthy indigenous press which could compete with Western news media, adding a new dimension to reports from this important part of the world. □

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Source: "The West African Beat," by  
Nicholas N. Gouede, in Africa Report,  
July-August 1985. New York.

NARR: For many years now, Third World countries and industrialized nations have frequently been at odds over their views of journalism and freedom of the press. Developing countries often felt ill-served by the foreign news media. They sometimes claim foreign writers distort the story of Africa's growth and development or fail to report it at all.

Developed nations, on the other hand, often see Third World governments as hindering the reporting of both local and foreign journalists. Members of the news media in industrialized countries say a free press as it exists in the United States or Great Britain, for example, is virtually unknown in Africa and other parts of the Third World. They say Third World governments constantly hinder the reporting of both local and foreign journalists.

Today we present the views of an African newsman on this controversy. He is Nicholas N. Gouede, a citizen of Ivory Coast and a graduate of the Columbia University School of Journalism the United States. He won a highly prestigious award, the Dag Hammarskjold Fellowship, for his coverage of the 1981 United Nations General Assembly for Radio Ivory Coast International.

The article on which today's session is based was written for the July 1985 edition of the American magazine of African affairs, Africa Report. This magazine is published six times each year by the African-American Institute of New York City.

Its editors alert their American readers to the central point of Mr. Gouede's article, titled "The West African Beat," when they insert this text into the sub-title of the article: "Western press coverage of the Third World is often limited to the sensational and the tragic. While American journalists complain of being frustrated by technical and political constraints imposed on them in Africa, their African counterparts maintain that the Western media should focus more attention on the challenges of African economic development."

Mr. Gouede begins his article with some illustrations of the

limitations imposed on the press by several African governments:

VOICE #2            "On April 17, 1984, the four month old military government of Nigeria issued a tough new law. It granted itself the power to close down newspapers and radio and television stations it deemed to be acting in a manner detrimental to the interests of the government. The Nigerian government also assumed the power to imprison journalists for giving too much publicity to anti-government speeches by politicians who had fled abroad. Journalists could also be imprisoned for making inaccurate reports that exposed government officials to ridicule. The regime subsequently jailed five journalists and intimidated many others, both foreigners and Nigerians.

"Six months later, Thomas Sankara, President of Burkina Faso, was in New York City to address the UN General Assembly. During his visit, he expressed his dismay to a group of black journalists. He told them that the current economic adjustment efforts by West African nations would probably not be fairly reported to American readers. He urged the journalists to do everything in their power to see that the news media pay attention to African problems. 'If you do not,' Mr. Sankara said. 'you are part of the conspiracy as well.'"

NARR:                Mr. Gouede selects these two incidents to illustrate the tensions and paradoxes implicit in the relationship between the foreign media and West African nations. Both African journalists and many American reporters who specialize in African affairs point to the overwhelming dominance of American and Western European media in West Africa. They, like many other Africans, think the Western media distort the news--focussing too much of their reporting on the failures of African nations rather than on important socio-economic events.

Mr. Gouede asks a question also posed by Cesaire Pooda, a journalist for a weekly newspaper published in Ouagadougou. The question is, "Where is the Western media's coverage of the largest hydroelectric scheme to have been launched in Angola since independence?" The Western media, Mr. Pooda complained, focus on droughts and famine, while ignoring or paying little attention to the daily struggles of West African nations to overcome poverty, hunger, and illiteracy. Stories reaching American readers usually portray

African countries in bleak or desperate circumstances.

For at least a decade, African and other Third World nations have been voicing these complaints and challenging the West's near-monopoly over world news. They have called for a 'new world information order,' which would end the dominance of the Western press over news flowing in and out of Africa and the rest of the Third World.

In reality, says Mr. Gouede, the dispute over the news media is just one of the issues in the larger debate between states of the North and states of the South. The fundamental questions in this great debate are about finding solutions to the problems of development in the Third World. For the press and other news media, he says, the issue is to find ways in which the southern media can cooperate with the northern media in using their information resources as an aid in the struggle for development.

Mr. Gouede writes further about this controversy:

VOICE #2        "The primary forum for debate over the new order has been the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization also called UNESCO. Proposals made there by Third World representatives have angered the Western media. Westerners by and large enjoy the traditions of a free press which operates without government controls. They view the UNESCO proposals as an effort to impose an international code of conduct on journalists and to bring the media under the control of various international agencies and of national governments.

"African journalists argue that even the supposed custodians of press freedom, the United States and British governments, for example, have imposed restrictions on journalists during crises such as the Grenada and Falkland operations. Those restrictions certainly conflict with the West's own standards of freedom of the press. They demonstrate that no nation can completely avoid the temptation to tell the press what it should or should not write."

NARR:            Nicholas Gouede points out that the American press does more than convey information to the American public. It also conveys information, news,

and the values of the Western world back to Africa and to other regions of the developing world.

The process is one in which correspondents send in their stories from the various world regions to American news centers. There they are edited before being returned to readers and listeners in the regions from which the original stories came. Thus West Africa often learns of news about itself or other African nations from Western news centers such as New York, London, and Paris.

This process clearly is inefficient. And it also means that news is collected and interpreted through Western eyes. Mr. Gouede provides an example of a way in which the process commonly affects news reporting. With a Western perspective, an American reporter is more likely to report a certain kind of act as one committed by a "clandestine terrorist" rather than by a "courageous freedom fighter," the term more likely to be used by newswriters with an African perspective. The probable Western choice of a phrase obviously reflects a certain set of values and encourages a negative rather than a positive response from the reader.

Mr. Gouede continues:

VOICE #2

"African complaints about news distortion are based on more than just the choice of story topics and editing in Western newspapers. The complaints also are directed against the common failure of Western journalists to provide the background information necessary to an understanding of the significance of the reported events. For example, the military coup that brought Major General Muhammadu Buhari to power in Nigeria did receive attention in the Western news media. The nature of the coverage, however, failed to provide background information adequate to a story about an event that affected the lives of tens of millions of people.

"As another African journalist has observed, 'A military coup is usually covered in bloody detail. Coverage of the conditions creating the coup, however, is surprisingly sparse. Because the daily news diet of most mainstream American papers lacks sufficient background information, American

readers are ill prepared to receive and interpret information about a crisis when it does erupt."

NARR: Continuing his assessment of American and Western coverage of African news generally, Mr. Gouede says that critics bemoan not only the distorted substance of coverage, but also the limited amount of news that reaches the American reader. Mr. Gouede fears that Americans get the impression from their media that little of importance happens in Africa. He says news of Latin America and Western Europe may appear on the front pages, but news of Africa is most often--though not always--buried deep within the paper.

Mr. Gouede acknowledges that American newspapers do have problems in covering the news from all of the world. He has discussed those problems with John Darnton, deputy foreign editor of The New York Times, one of the United States's most respected newspapers. Mr. Darnton said the rising cost of maintaining journalists overseas has reduced the number of American newspapers able to maintain their own reporters in Africa. The cost of keeping a correspondent in Africa for just one year is more than \$200,000. The New York Times, therefore, is able to keep only four correspondents in Africa. That is too few for adequate coverage of an entire continent, but it is more than the number kept in Africa by any other American newspaper. Mr. Darnton also told Nicholas Gouede that rising publishing costs have reduced the space allotted to foreign news of any kind, because it competes for space with national and local stories in which American readers naturally are more interested.

Mr. Gouede discusses these matters further:

VOICE #2 "Not all of the problems concern costs. John Darnton has traveled throughout Africa as a correspondent for The New York Times, and he knows the situation there very well. That situation includes difficulties arising from the poor state of African communications systems. News media in the United States use highly sophisticated and reliable telecommunications systems. Most African countries have problems just maintaining a telecommunications system which can provide essential, local services. In such circumstances, foreign news reporting becomes very difficult.

"It is indeed a fact that many areas of sub-Saharan Africa remain

totally unserved by any telecommunication system. Highspeed technology is expensive to install and, in any case, transport and communications lines are inadequate to its maintenance. Some countries, to be sure, have made impressive progress, but many others desperately need extensive foreign assistance, if they are to establish reliable telephone lines, telex services, and direct broadcast satellites.

"Another serious difficulty which affects the quality of reporting on Africa in the United States is the ignorance or indifference of many American news editors. In this respect, Americans differ considerably from French and British editors. Those countries had colonial ties with Africa, their educations have contained much more substance about Africa, and their reporters serve in Africa for longer periods of time. They get to know the continent as relatively few Americans get to know it."

NARR:

Mr. Gouede has learned that the American news media generally prefer that reporters serve only short terms abroad. They fear that staying longer would result in reporters becoming too emotionally involved in the areas they cover. Mr. Gouede's opinion is that the rather rapid replacement of reporters contributes to superficial coverage of foreign news. American reporters, he suspects, do not acquire the necessary expertise and perception to improve their understanding of political and cultural events. He says they need far more experience over longer periods of time, and they should acquire greater knowledge of the historical roots of modern Africa. Those roots, he adds, are embedded in the bitter times of colonial rule and even long before that.

Mr. Gouede also accuses the majority of American editors and reporters of being largely ignorant of the historical setting of news from Africa. He feels that increasing the number of journalists in Africa will not improve coverage. Editors, he says, cannot do a good job of selecting stories for publications, if they themselves do not even know the names of the countries they report about.

Having indulged in this sharp criticism of American newspapers, Mr. Gouede turns his critical eyes upon Africa and the situations facing American reporters there.

VOICE #2            "The problem, however, cannot be blamed entirely on the American media. African governments usually pay lip service to the fundamental concept of freedom of the press, though the constitutions of several African states recognize it. According to an official of the Organization of African Unity, nonetheless, about 90 per cent of African governments deny basic freedoms to the press. This situation is related in part to the fact that governments run most newspapers as well as radio and television stations.

"This is far different from the situation in the United States. Here the government owns no newspapers and no radio or television or other media which directly inform the American public. The American government by law even forbids the Voice of America from broadcasting in the United States. Americans do not listen to the Voice of America. It is one of the means by which the American government speaks directly to the people in foreign countries, but the Voice of America may not be used by any regime or administration for speaking to American citizens.

"Many African governments also exert control over foreign correspondents in ways that the American government does not. African governments sometimes deny foreign reporters the use of transmitting facilities, they may hinder their coverage of rural areas, or in some cases may put the foreign reporters in jail. Some countries, like Guinea or Benin, formerly banned foreign correspondents on principle,, and reporters have been refused visas to other countries.

"If they do succeed in entering a country, reporters then risk being thrown out for writing stories unfavorable to the government. An official of the Organization of African Unity estimated that more than 100 foreign journalists have been expelled from African countries during the last ten years.

"This denial of press freedom has occurred even in Nigeria, a country that was regarded as the best example of modern democracy in Africa, and where a vigorous and independent press has flourished for many years. The military government that seized power at the close of 1983 took strong measures against the press. The result is that journalists now speak freely or critically from

within Nigeria only if they do not attach their names to their writing."

NARR: AFRICA IN PRINT's discussion of the news media in Africa and of American and Western coverage of African news will continue next week. Our assessment is based on an article, "The West African Beat," which was written by Nicholas Gouede for the July 1985 issue of the American magazine of African affairs, Africa Report. Nicholas Gouede is an American-educated journalist from Ivory Coast. The African-American Institute, publisher of Africa Report, is located in New York City.

NARR: An Ivory Coast journalist, Nicholas N. Gouede, has recently written an article about the controversial issue of Western press coverage of Third World countries. As he sees it, the controversy is between the newspeople and governments of many African and other Third World countries, and the communications media and governments of the United States and other Western nations.

The publishing and TV industries in most Western countries have inherited the democratic traditions of a free press. These traditions hold that the news media have a social obligation to print or broadcast whatever they observe and whatever they believe to be of interest and importance to their readers and viewers and their nations. Essential to the tradition is the principle that the press be independent of control by governments or by any particular groups or institutions within a society. The press must stand independently and apart from other institutions. Its special role in society is to observe and report objectively the actions of individuals and the conditions of national and international social, political and economic institutions, relationships, and events. The press may also prepare analyses of the news and express the conclusions and opinions of its independent owners, editors, and writers.

VOICE #2 On the other side of the controversy, says Mr. Gouede, are many of the media people and governments of Third World nations. They are not convinced that the Western press is as consistently objective or as free of outside control as it claims to be. They particularly resent what they believe to be distortions in the way the Western press chooses Third World topics and presents them to its readers and listeners. Critics perceive a shallowness, even ignorance, in many Western reporters and editors as well as a disdain for, and lack of empathy with, the peoples of the Third World. Critics claim that Western news media are poor sources of information about the people, problems, development, and successes of Third World nations. If they get any news at all, Westerners are likely to acquire only partial and misleading views of the Third World.

Many Third World newspeople also resent the dependence of their own media on Western reporters and wire news services for what they print or

broadcast about themselves, about other Third World countries, and about world affairs generally. Poorly equipped with telecommunications technology and lacking resources to pay for large numbers of well-trained journalists, Third World news media are often forced to present the news as written, interpreted, and made available by Westerners.

NARR:               Resentment about this perceived state of affairs has led to attempts by Third World nations, through the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO, to gain some degree of international authority over the news media. They have sought to establish a kind of international secretariat which would give Third World nations more control of the flow of national and international news between the nations of the world. The Western news media and their governments tend to resist, while Third World newsmen and governments tend to approve the imposition of such international controls.

Nicholas Gouede, who has a degree in journalism from Columbia University in the United States, presents both sides of the controversy in his article, "West African Beat," It was published in the July issue of the American magazine of African affairs, Africa Report.

Third World criticisms may be summarized in the contention that the Western news media tend to report only the sensational and tragic in Africa and the Third World. They fail to present the positive aspects of Third World life and society.

On the other hand, says Mr. Gouede, the existence of the problem cannot be blamed entirely on the American and other Western media. He refers to the estimate by an official of the Organization of African Unity that about 90 per cent of the African governments deny even basic freedoms to the press. The reason is largely that governments control most newspapers, radio and television, and determine what may be printed or broadcast. Most African governments also exert quite strict controls over, and may expel or even imprison, foreign correspondents who write articles the governments dislike.

Of this state of affairs, Mr. Gouede writes:

VOICE #2 "A paradox certainly does exist here. West African and other developing nations call for a more free flow of information. They invariably restrict that flow, however, through the limitations they impose on the freedom of both local, Third World and foreign journalists.

"What is the outlook for improving American and other Western media coverage of Africa in the next decade? Nat Polowetzky, a foreign correspondent for 12 years and now the foreign editor of the Associated Press, an American international news service, says that the nature of foreign news is changing. He believes that most journalists assigned overseas nowadays are better prepared than in the past. No correspondent goes abroad for the Associated Press, for example, without absolute fluency in the official language of the country to which he has been assigned.

"Edward Butler, deputy foreign editor of the Associated Press, has said that American press coverage of the Third World is not as inadequate as its critics claim it is. Mr. Butler cites Africa's drought and famine as one of the Associated Press's most dramatic continuing stories for more than a decade. He admits that there have been deficiencies, but insists that coverage is improving. The Associated Press now has bureaus in eight major African cities. AP, the world's largest news agency, has also increased the size of its foreign staff by hiring local news writers in other African cities, and is now filing more stories on Africa. In 1984, for example, well over 200 stories were written about Africa in comparison with the 100 written in 1983."

NARR: Mr. Butler also believes that the nature of the stories written about Africa is changing. He feels that the Associated Press does cover all aspects of life in Africa, that it does provide the necessary background about such issues as agricultural projects, literacy campaigns, birth control, and climatic conditions. The modern correspondent, he says is expected not only to report on a regional meeting of the West African Economic Community but also to analyze how its decisions will affect the lives of farmers in the participating countries.

Mr. Gouede agrees that Western wire services are improving their coverage of African news. He feels, however, that the news flow is still unbalanced. Correction of this imbalance will require both the use of more powerful and sophisticated communications systems and the establishment of independent or national news agencies in Africa itself. Mr. Gouede says the basic coverage of African news can only be improved when Africans themselves gather the news, write it up, and send it on.

Unlike the United States and the Western countries, African nations lack the resources necessary for establishing private, non-governmental news agencies. Some governments also oppose establishment of private news systems on political and ideological grounds. That being the case, says Mr. Gouede, many West African journalists have proposed that the governments themselves establish their own national news agencies.

NARR: American and Western journalists generally dislike such proposals. Nicholas Gouede tells why:

VOICE #2 "Western newspeople and governments fear that national news agencies run by governments will become the sole source of news. They suspect that governments will limit their news and analysis merely to what is essentially government propaganda. They will permit the publication only of what the governments want the people to hear.

"While Americans believe that the media has an obligation to inform and educate people, they do not agree that the press should be used as a tool of development. African governments have every right to use health care services, agricultural agencies, and educational systems to further the goals of national development and to bring about socio-economic change. But Americans firmly believe that the press has different and equally important purposes. Its role is to observe and report objectively and to criticize when criticism is appropriate.

"The relations between Western journalists and Third World nations are thus contradictory in certain ways. Inspired by models of reporting that have helped bring down governments, American reporters often seek out stories of social inequality. Many Westerners believe that, whether or not it is intended, journalism which only reports successes in development merely furthers the aims of the ruling regime or class and helps keep it in power. Other Western reporters argue that in a one-party state, the press inevitably serves only as an arm of government and as a means of discrediting and even eliminating legitimate opposition.

"Westerners also fear that government-run news agencies would eventually force all foreign or local newspeople to report only what the news agencies tell them or permit them to report. They fear the agencies would censor any stories critical of the government."

NARR:

A privately published monthly magazine in the United States is named Black Enterprise. Its associate editor, Frank Brown, told Mr. Gouede that the black American press should show more interest in the development needs and problems of African peoples. He says he would like to see all of the American press writing analytical stories about the continent, but the black American press especially should present fair and full information about what is happening to America's black brothers and sisters in Africa.

Mr. Gouede also talked with another American journalist, Pat Orvis, formerly United Nations correspondent for the Chicago Sun-Times News Service and now writing about developing countries for the United Nations. Ms. Orvis disagrees with American editors who claim that Americans are not interested in news about Africa--that they cannot connect such news to their daily lives. In her view, American interest in Africa would increase greatly, if American readers could come to see Africans as fellow human beings across the Atlantic Ocean.

Ms. Orvis speaks from a decade of experience in covering Third World development. Her major suggestion is that American newspapers and magazines reserve a daily or weekly section for news of West Africa and other developing regions or countries. This, she claims, would allow papers to do

much more than just print the daily news events and would enable them to provide the necessary background for better-informed analysis of socio-economic issues.

Mr. Gouede seems to support such views when he writes:

VOICE #2 "American journalists and their editors and publishers share a duty to their readers to go beyond the daily news from Africa and the rest of the Third World, and their first obligation is to educate themselves. Monique Rubens is an American freelance writer based in New York. She covers the United Nations for the Gemini News Service and for the British-published magazine, West Africa. Ms. Rubens feels strongly that West African nations and their political systems are not well understood in the West. A principal reason is that many newswriters are unfairly critical, because they only compare African institutions with their own political and social systems. African politics can only be understood and clearly presented if the writer has a thorough understanding of the elements in the historical evolution of African countries.

"The need for better coverage can no longer be ignored. African journalists are justified in asserting that the Western press in general and the American press in particular have been for the most part indifferent to Africa's development struggles. The charges against the Western press are substantially correct.

"Many of its writers and publishers seem to prefer to entertain or merely to stimulate their readers rather than to inform them about the deeper realities of the developing African nations. Western journalists should not stop advocating the benefits of a free press as a means of keeping African people informed about themselves and keeping the world informed about the African nations. At the same time, they should try more seriously to evaluate the relevance of government policies and to publicize the needs of African people to Western readers."

NARR: Having concluded that much African and Third World criticism of the Western press is justified, Mr. Gouede once again casts a critical eye on the African press and governments. He urges West African governments to realize

that placing barriers in the way of Western news coverage eliminates a valuable perspective on African affairs. Western understanding is limited in part because Africans and other Third World people are unable adequately to transmit what they have to say through the world's news media. But he says the Western perspective nonetheless remains important, and it will not improve, if Africans impose restrictions on the Western media's freedom to report the news.

Mr. Gouede says the fears of politicians that lead them to place controls on the press are not well-founded. Contrary to this often-held belief, he insists that control of the press does not create political stability in the long run. He believes that the opposite is more true. Controls on the press create greater cynicism and disbelief among the people and thus contribute to greater political instability. A free press, Mr. Gouede insists, makes it possible to conduct an open and productive national debate on development issues. The failure to provide a forum for opposing points of view, he says, can only lead to greater social resentment and political instability in the future.

VOICE #2            "African leaders must come to realize that news consists of far more than stories that glorify their policies or themselves. They should regard telecommunications and the press as investments in development, as essential components of the development process. African leaders should recognize, too, that their repressive press policies actually prevent Western journalists from telling a more accurate story. Repressive policies also hinder development because they slow down the growth of a healthy indigenous African press. Only a more free and healthy press can enable African news media to compete with Western news media, and thus add a new dimension to the West's and the entire world's understanding of Africa, its people, its problems, and its development."

NARR:                This appraisal of news coverage of Africa in the Western press is based upon an article, titled "The West African Beat," written by Nicholas Gouede for the July 1985 issue of the American magazine of African affairs, Africa Report. Africa Report is published by the African-American Institute in New York City.



# WORLD CHRONICLE

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PROGRAMME: "WORLD CHRONICLE" (Radio and Television)

GUEST: Amb. Jacques Leprette  
France

REPORTERS: Louis Halasz, Time-Life News Service  
Nicolas Gouede, Radio Ivory Coast Int'l  
Georges Wolff, Agence France Presse

MODERATOR: Michael Littlejohns

## PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

France is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council with the power of veto in that body. How does France, a founding member of the United Nations, view the Organisation today? To find out, World Chronicle's guest is Jacques Leprette, the French Ambassador to the United Nations since 1976. Ambassador Leprette talks about the role of the world body, its strengths and weaknesses and its evolving place in international diplomacy.

"WORLD CHRONICLE" is produced by United Nations Radio and Television in co-operation with the United Nations Division for Economic and Social Information, Department of Public Information. "WORLD CHRONICLE" is distributed worldwide.

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Programme No. 066

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VOICE: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is World Chronicle, an in-depth interview with a senior official concerned with the developing nations of the world. Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's World Chronicle.

LITTLEJOHNS: Hello again. I am Michael Littlejohns. The programme is World Chronicle.

In many ways diplomacy and the great nation of France are synonymous. French became the premier international language of modern diplomacy. What would our political lexicon be today without laissez-passer, pourparlers and détente, to cite only a few examples. France occupies a special position in the United Nations as one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, having the power of veto in that body. How does France, a founding Member, regard the United Nations today? To find out, we have as our guest on World Chronicle Jacques Leprette, the French Ambassador to the United Nations for the past five years. Formerly head of the International Organizations Section of the French Foreign Ministry, Ambassador Leprette has now been appointed to a new post - permanent representative to the European Community in Brussels, Belgium. He will be interviewed here at United Nations Headquarters in New York by Louis Halasz of Time-Life News Service, Nicolas Gouede of Radio Ivory Coast International, and Georges Wolff, Bureau Chief of the French Press Agency, Agence France Presse.

Ambassador Leprette, welcome to World Chronicle. May I say how sorry I am that your term at the United Nations has come to an end. We have enjoyed having you with us, those of us who have been around a little longer, and one of these days perhaps you may come back. We hope you will.

Your Excellency, as we all know, the United Nations grew out of the allied victory in the Second World War, in which Free France and the indomitable General de Gaulle played major roles and helped to bring about that victory. Yet, as President, General de Gaulle was rather negative about the United Nations. He referred to the Organization as ce machin - this thing or this what-d'you-call-it. But President Giscard d'Estaing - as also President Mitterand - seemed to have a somewhat better opinion of the Organization. How do you account for these differences in perception?

LEPRETTE: Let me first thank you for this opportunity to answer your questions after a period of five years at the United Nations.

In relation to your question let me tell you a story. I was in Austin, Texas about two years ago, delivering a lecture on French policy and the United Nations. After my statement somebody in the audience said, Well, Sir, we have listened. It seems that now you have more refreshing views about the United Nations. We remember the time when General de Gaulle used to brand the United Nations the machin." My answer was this: "A couple of weeks ago I read a report from Henry Ford II to President Carter about what had been done in the United States to commemorate United Nations Day, which happens every year in October. It was a 30-page report, a very interesting one, which showed that everybody, all the associations, the states and the communities had done something to commemorate United Nations Day. That was in 1977, and during that same period the United States Government decided to withdraw from the ILO and not to pay its contribution to UNESCO. General de Gaulle, the brave man to whom you have referred, never dared take such steps against the United Nations. In my opinion, there is no contradiction between the two things. On the one hand, I understand perfectly well that a country like the United States celebrates the United Nations ideals. On the other hand, I understand also that whenever we feel that the United Nations is maybe out of step some kind of reaction is in order. General de Gaulle did not have the courage of President Carter, but never in France have we disregarded the Charter. We felt that at the time, for some reasons the United Nations was interfering too much in our affairs at a time when we had delicate decisions to make.

LITTLEJOHNS: Especially in the period of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, I think.

LEPRETTE: Hammarskjöld. Algeria and other decolonization problems. To follow up on your question, it is true that since then we have adopted a more, I would say, constructive attitude towards the United Nations, more particularly concerning a number of issues about which I am ready to answer questions, if you so desire.

HALASZ: If I may stay in this United Nations framework, Mr. Ambassador, professionally you were Ambassador to Washington, and since then you have been Ambassador to the United Nations for five years. How would you compare the two? Were your five years at the United Nations a good experience or a frustrating experience? How does it compare to others?

LEPRETTE: Many people have said to me, You lived in Washington and now you are living in New York. How does it compare? My answer is that it is very difficult to compare, because they are two different cities. I love Washington, where I stayed for 10 years of my life, and I love New York.

Now as far as the two posts are concerned, first let me just correct a small point which is important. I was not Ambassador to the United States. I was just Deputy Chief of Mission. But for 10 years, in two different periods, I worked with the Department of State, Congress, the newspaper-men in Washington. I found that extremely interesting, fascinating. Now, at the United Nations it is different. We are in a multilateral area of action: we meet many more people, and the number of issues at stake at the United Nations are, I would say far more important than those encountered in the course of bilateral diplomatic action.

I would conclude by saying that from a professional point of view New York in my opinion offers more opportunities.

HALASZ: Professionally?

LEPRETTE: Professionally.

HALASZ: Socially?

LEPRETTE: Socially too, I would say.

GOUEDE: Mr. Ambassador, we are coming to the end of the General Assembly session. Would you give us your assessment of this thirty-sixth session, especially in terms of whether or not enough attention is being paid to what is apparently one of history's turning-points. I am referring

to the restructuring of the international economic system. Would you reveal to us the new orientation of global negotiations following the Cancun summit?

LEPRETE: We are at the end of the session, but nobody knows whether today or tomorrow something will come out as far as global negotiations are concerned. We do not know yet. But if no decision is made today or tomorrow, a decision might come up in January.

As a whole, my impression about this thirty-sixth session is that it has been less lively than the other ones for reasons which everybody knows. A number of issues had been dealt with previously at other sessions special sessions, and it is very difficult to repeat the same exercise all over again. So, as far as, for instance, the economic order is concerned, we all knew that we would have to wait until Cancun before anything would happen. This year we had a special session on economic matters: we had a special session on Namibia we had a special session on Palestine.

That leads me to another point: whether these special sessions are really that useful. Too many of them would in my opinion lessen the degree of attention of world public opinion.

LITTLEJOHNS: The United Nations reaches a kind of saturation point.

LEPRETE: Maybe. We have to be very careful about that.

WOLFF: Mr. Ambassador, you certainly will agree with me that the United Nations was founded after the Second World War to do well where the League of Nations had failed - that is, to ensure the so-called collective security of the nations of the world. Now, after these five years, could you give us a brief assessment of your views regarding the degree of collective security that has been achieved by the United Nations?

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LEPRETTE: As I said a moment ago, on the one hand there are ideals, and on the other hand there is the problem of how to achieve those ideals.

Let me tell you, and you may be surprised by my comment, that having been associated with the United Nations off and on for almost 10 years, my assessment is that the United Nations has grown in stature and influence, not only because we now are 150 and more, whereas we were only 50 at the very beginning, but because on several counts the United Nations has assumed new functions. I was referring to the Organization's 157 Members

It is extremely interesting to see that the United Nations, as it is, with all its headquarters - not only in New York, but in Geneva and Vienna and Montreal, London, Nairobi and other locations for the specialized agencies - offers a network which is a diplomatic instrument for most countries in the world. Fifteen years ago, that was not the case. I have witnessed the entry of new, independent nations. I was at the United Nations when the Ivory Coast was admitted in 1960. For a couple of years, the United Nations was used as a forum to express views which until then had not been heard, and that use of it was very good and was welcome. Since then, all these new nations have learned how to organize themselves and how to put some pressure on the other countries of the world: in other words, the United Nations has become the major diplomatic instrument for many nations and I welcome that evolution, because it is extremely important.

We know that there is now what I would call in French convergence, a convergence, in many fields which are progressively shaping the future. Let us choose, for instance, an issue which is not controversial: the environment. I remember how it started 10 years ago. It climaxed in the Stockholm Conference in 1972 and since that Conference, we have seen how a number of Governments that had no real ideas about environment and environmental programmes have created agencies or branches of the Government or new legislation on environmental matters. They have done that because it was more satisfactory and more appropriate. They just borrowed from the United Nations literature what they needed.

So on the one hand, there is convergence on a number of issues - law of the sea, environment, decolonization, nuclear issues. Now, to refer more precisely to collective security, my answer would be this: it is impossible to draw up a list of all the crises which have been prevented. It is impossible. But having been here five years, I know that we have sometimes spent days and nights, with the result that at the end of that time another major crisis had been prevented. To that extent, this is an achievement of the United Nations. In other words, perhaps we no longer have the structure of a collective security system, but we have a group of people - highly qualified diplomats - always available - trying to prevent or to solve issues whenever they become too sensitive.

To that extent, I think that I shall leave the United Nations with the profound conviction that it has a role to play and is playing a role which is not always, unfortunately, appreciated as it should be.

LITTLEJOHNS: The programme is World Chronicle and our guest is Ambassador Jacques Leprette, the Permanent Representative of France. Mr. Wolff, I think you want to follow up that question.

WOLFF: Could you, in regard to what you just told us, comment on the respective roles of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and the Secretary-General as an organ of the United Nations, precisely in that impregnation by the United Nations of the whole tissue of international relations.

LEPRETTE: You want me to comment in two minutes about the most important things at the United Nations, and that is very difficult. I shall try to be brief.

I have enjoyed my participation in the work of the Security Council. I have been President of the Council four times, not because of any merit, but because France happens to be a member of the Security Council, and as you know, every month the presidency changes.

LITTLEJOHNS: I think there is an element of merit there too, Sir.

LEPRETTE: I was President of the Council, for instance, in October 1978, when fighting was breaking out in Beirut and I had to handle a situation where some of us felt that it was too early to launch an appeal for a cease-fire. I was President of the Security Council in January 1980, at a time when a number of Americans were hostages in Teheran and when the Soviets had invaded Afghanistan and when the British were trying to find a way to give Rhodesia independence. Those were weeks when we had a great deal to do and I remember quite well that a President, although he is always supported by his colleagues, is very closely watched, particularly when he is dealing with matters of interest to permanent members of the Organization.

The Assembly is different - legitimately so. I think that the General Assembly plays a different role - to make known the views of the world, even if those views are a bit exaggerated. It is in order; I have nothing against that. Of course, it means that sometimes France cannot go along with or approve all the resolutions, because there are a number of provisions or paragraphs that it does not like and cannot vote in favour of. But the General Assembly is a forum that offers the views of all the nations and I am glad to say that after five years, after having listened to so many speeches, I think that I have a clearer view of the positions of a number of countries. I think that I have learned a great deal.

As far as the Secretary-General is concerned, Mr. Waldheim used to say that it is an impossible job. I think it is a very interesting function. Contrary to what people think, the Secretary-General is an indispensable organ of the United Nations. And any Secretary-General

is successful to the extent that he knows the limits of his powers. Once he has accepted that, provided that he knows how to keep communications open, I think he can be more successful than many people want to admit.

HALASZ: If I may turn to a crisis area which I know must, for historical reasons, be very close to the heart of France - and that concerns the military clamp-down in Poland. Do you feel that that step was justified by raison d'Etat, or was it an excuse to re-establish Soviet-style discipline?

LEPRETTE: Are you referring to the measures which have been tried by the military Government?

HALASZ: Yes, the Military Government.

LEPRETTE: Well, this is an issue which is not on the agenda of the United Nations, so it is outside the framework of this interview for me to say anything about it. I do not know precisely for what reason the Polish authorities decided at that time to take those measures. I am not familiar with the internal situation in Poland; what I know is what I read in the press. But what I hope is that the Poles, among themselves, will solve their problems through negotiations. This morning, before coming in, I read press reports that the military authorities had said that they did not want to go back to the former order, that they still considered that all the changes which had occurred during the last twelve months would be maintained. I think that is to some extent a light in a rather dark landscape.

WOLFF: I realize that this is not an easy issue to deal with in view of the relations that France enjoys with the Soviet Union, as well as with Poland and the other East European countries - and of course other countries. But the question is, are you willing to accept the good faith of the Polish authorities?

LEPRETTE: I do not have enough information to answer such a question.

GOUEDE: There is a great variety of reports which reveal that some European countries are softening their position towards the issue of debt on the part of many third-world countries. Now, given the Europeans' interest in setting up ways and means to put world economic relationships on a fairer and more secure path, if there is no co-ordination in the Western bloc do you see the possibility of the Europeans supporting a move independently?

LEPRETTE: On what precisely? On the question of debt?

GOUEDE: Yes, on the question of debt on the part of third-world countries.

LEPRETTE: Well, it is very difficult to give a global answer because you have different situations. On the one hand, it is a fact that indebted nations are more or less paralysed in their efforts to develop their own economy. On the other hand, since they want to invite more investments they have to accept some kind of fair agreement in that regard - and they have. So I would say that there is no global answer to such a question, only different situations which have to be taken care of according to their merits. This is why, for instance, we have that Club de Paris, which, for a number of countries, has been trying to give answers and solutions to critical situations au fur et à mesure, as they come up.

WOLFF: You are called upon to represent France at the European Community in Brussels now, having been engaged for so long in so-called multilateral diplomacy, instead of bilateral diplomacy. Could you tell us whether you could conceive of closer co-operation - or of co-operation pure and simple - between the European Community in its various branches and organisms and the United Nations in its various branches and organisms?

LEPRETTE: Well, I think that I shall be better equipped to answer such a question after five years in Brussels. Now it is a little early to give an opinion on that. But, as I understand it, there are already close relations between the European Community and the United Nations, on two accounts: First, there is this group of 10 European countries which now has taken on some consistency within the United Nations, and when we have to negotiate or discuss an issue, very often we turn to groups, in so far as they exist - there is the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries; there are the 10 European countries; there is the Group of 77, they play a role -

LITTLEJOHNS: The Group of 77 being the developing countries?

LEPRETTE: Yes, developing countries. And secondly, you have an observer, somebody from the Commission, who is watching the debates, who has the right also to participate - with some limitations. Those two factors in my opinion show that Europe at the United Nations is playing a more and more important role. I shall try when I am in Brussels to develop that role as much as I can.

LITTLEJOHNS Do you quarrel at all among yourselves in the Group of Ten, the 10 European Community countries?

LEPRETTE: Yes, we do, to tell you the truth but I am speaking in a low voice and off the record.

LITTLEJOHNS: Has the entry of Greece and the change of Government in Greece had any effect on the harmony within the group?

LEPRETTE: I can only speak about the political co-operation and the participation of Greece has been excellent in the group.

LITTLEJOHNS: And you feel that the relations on the part of the group with the developing world and with the socialist countries are good?

LEPRETTE: It is a very good relationship. Of course, since we differ on some issues we have our differences and sometimes very hectic debates. But all in all I would say that it has been a healthy development - the role that the Europeans have played at the United Nations, the fact that many of them have special relationships with groups within the third world.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Ambassador, I am afraid we have to cut you off at that point. That is about all the time we have. We want to thank you for being with us today to answer our questions on this edition of World Chronicle. Our guest has been Jacques Leprette, the Ambassador of France to the United Nations, now to become Ambassador in Brussels, and asking the questions were Louis Halasz of Time-Life International, Nicolas Gouede of Radio Ivory Coast International and Georges Wolff of Agence France-Presse.

Thank you for joining us today and we hope you will join us again for the next edition of World Chronicle.

Transcripts of these interviews may be obtained - without cost - by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to WORLD CHRONICLE, United Nations, New York, New York 10017.

WORLD CHRONICLE is broadcast in developing and developed nations world wide and features senior officials whose work is concerned with the developing nations of the world. This programme is a public affairs presentation of this station from United Nations Radio and Television and the Division for Economic and Social Information.

# secretariat NEWS

United Nations Headquarters, New York

16 December 1981

## Brewster revisited



The 1981 winners of the UN Correspondents' Association Dag Hammarskjöld Memorial Scholarship Awards: Nicolas Gouede (Ivory Coast), Isabel Seguel Silva (Chile), Dhruba Hari Adhikary (Nepal) and Rebecca Katumba (Uganda).

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The day before they left New York City to spend a week as guests of the Canadian Government, the four recipients of the Scholarship Awards paid a visit to the Landmark house in Brewster, New York, where the late Secretary-General used to spend the little leisure time he had.

The present owners of the house, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dawson, a friendly and charming English couple, warmly welcomed the Fellows. They showed them where the ping-pong table used to be, the holes in one wall from dart board contests and the now almost dead oak tree which Bill Ranallo and Mr. Hammarskjöld used for target practice. They trudged along one of the trails where Mr. Hammarskjöld liked to walk, and they saw the raft which the boys in the Carpentry Shop built for him. He was so pleased by this gesture that he invited them all, with their families, for a summer Sunday cook-out at the Brewster estate.

The dirt roads of twenty-five years ago have been paved and there are many new houses in the area, yet the rural character persists - for now. The UNCA Fellows thoroughly enjoyed seeing the village, so different from the towers of Manhattan, which Dag Hammarskjöld chose as a place for relaxation.

## Women's Guild

photo: Trevor Biggs



The orientation programme for the spouses of internationally recruited staff members, held several times a year under the sponsorship of the Welcoming Committee of the UN Women's Guild and the Staff Counsellor's office, was particularly well attended last month.



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**DAG HAMMARSKJOLD SCHOLARS VISIT BREWSTER**—Foreign journalists covering the United Nations under Dag Hammarskjöld Fellowships visited Brewster Saturday to tour the Southeast Museum and the house on Foggstown Rd. where the late UN secretary-general used to come to relax. The young journalists included (left to right) Nicholas Gouede of Radio Ivory Coast, Senorita Isabel Seguel Silva of the magazine Ercilla in Chile, Druhba Hari Adekahary of Nepal and Miss Rebecca Katumba of the Uganda Times.

## Foreign journalists visitors in Brewster

Four young journalists from abroad visited Brewster Saturday to tour the Southeast Museum and visit the landmark house on Foggstown Rd. where Dag Hammarskjöld, the late secretary general of the United Nations, used to spend his leisure time. The journalists have been awarded Dag Hammarskjöld Fellowships presented annually by the United Nations Correspondents Assn. Every year, since the untimely death of Hammarskjöld in a plane crash at Ndola, Zambia, the Memorial Scholarship Fund brings fledgling journalists from around the world to New York City. In New York the visitors, under tutelage of Members of the UN Correspondents Assn., cover the events of the UN General Assembly's 3-month session.

Herbert M. Sanborn of Carmel, a retired employee of the UN, served as escort and guide for the journalists on the visit to Putnam County. They visited the Southeast Museum to view a 20th anniversary exhibit on Dag Hammarskjöld.

Later they visited the Foggstown Rd. home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dawson. This is the house where Hammarskjöld used to spend whatever leisure time he could spare from the pressures of his UN office back in the 1950s and early 1960s.

The Hammarskjöld Fellowship journalists included Senorita Isabel Seguel Silva, who writes for the magazine Ercilla in Santiago, Chile; Nicholas Gouede of Radio Ivory Coast in Abidjan, Miss Rebecca Katumba of the Uganda Times in Kampala, and Druhba Hari Adekahary, who writes for Gorkhapatra Samhain in Nepal.

## Holiday Shopping Day Friday in Putnam Plaza

David D. Bruen, Putnam County executive, and the Putnam Plaza Merchants Assn. have proclaimed Friday, Nov. 27, as "Putnam Plaza Holiday Shopping Day."

In honor of the day, Bruen said fares would not be charged this Friday on the Putnam Area Rapid Transit (P.A.R.T.) #1 bus during its regularly scheduled morning and afternoon shopping runs. The cost of providing the free service - about \$50 - is being borne by the Putnam Plaza Merchants Assn.

Bruen indicated that the "Holiday Shopping Day" was proposed for (1) recognize the importance of the County's retail establishments as this year's holiday shopping season commences; and (2) to promote Putnam Area Rapid Transit, the County's newly established bus system. He added that in pursuing this campaign, we have sought to promote a public understanding of P.A.R.T.'s role in both helping and enhancing business in Putnam County.

Bruen also said that for this day, Putnam Area Rapid Transit and the Putnam Plaza Merchants Assn. had adopted the following slogan: "Our business is picking up!" It is hoped that more "Holiday Shopping Days" can be provided both this year and in future years.

Anyone who has questions concerning the Putnam Area Rapid Transit (P.A.R.T.) #1 bus, should contact the Putnam County Planning Department at 878-3480.

## Fish sees alcohol fuel filling in energy needs

"Alcohol fuels can play a significant role in meeting our future energy needs and I believe that it is high time that we move forward and take advantage of its potential," Cong. Hamilton Fish, Jr. (R-NY) said Monday in remarks before the Stanford Grange at the Dutchess County Farm and Home Center in Millbrook.

Fish, ranking member of the House Subcommittee on Energy Development and Applications, said that "alcohol fuels have the potential to provide 5 percent of our gasoline needs by 1985, and 10 percent by 1990. Both the

private sector and the Federal government must play a role in the development of this alternative energy source."

Fish pointed out that federal budget cutbacks have closed off much of the public financing that was previously available for alcohol fuels development.

"Although federal grants and loans for alcohol fuel development have been restricted, the Federal government still believes that this source of energy has a significant role to play and funding for research and development programs will continue," Fish added.

## District nurses collecting food

The District Nursing Assn. of the Town of Southeast is again seeking contributions of canned foods to distribute to the needy at Christmas.

Brewster High students Claudia Monroy, Julie Baumgartner and Teresa Clark have announced that students of the BHS homeroom that collects the most food will each receive a free ticket to the "Battle of the Bands" to be held on Dec. 18.

Mrs. Marion Burdick of the District Nursing Assn. notes that "...students... have been very generous in helping in the past and we hope they will again."

Anyone with questions about the food drive can contact Paul Whiting of the Social Studies Dept. at BHS, 279-8001, Ext. 296. The articles of canned foods will be picked up at the high school on Dec. 15.

## Youth services session Tuesday

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Committee of the Putnam County Youth Bureau invites all persons interested in the development of services to youth in crisis to attend a meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 1 at 7:30 p.m. in Room 315 of the Putnam County Office Building in Carmel.

This committee is concerned with developing community support for the implementation of a coordinated plan of services to assist youth and their families in crisis situations which may result in runaway and homeless youth.

For further information, contact the Putnam County Youth Bureau at 225-3641 or Bob Goldberg, program coordinator, at 628-7597 or 723-4522.

## Office for Aging needs a typist

The Putnam County Office for Aging has a job opening for a part-time clerk typist.

Job responsibilities include filing, updating records, typing, as well as assisting senior citizens in various energy related programs. Work week will consist of 25 hours and applicants should have their own transportation.

The position is funded through a Title V (5) Senior Community Service Employment Program Grant and by Putnam County.

To apply, one must be at least 55 years of age, and have an income of less than \$5,388 for an individual living alone, or \$7,113 for a couple. This amount includes social security and pension income.

If you are interested in this Title V (5) position, stop by at the Putnam County Office for Aging, located at 179 East Lake Blvd., Mahopac, or call Mrs. Patricia Mackey, Coordinator of Services at 628-0452.



**SHE IS RETIRING**—Mrs. Thille Tarr, secretary to High School Principal Dr. Robert J. Meyer, is leaving that position as of Nov. 25. She has accepted a position as secretary to the marketing manager at Union Carbide Corp. Mrs. Tarr was born in Port Chester and completed her education there. She then moved to Brewster and has lived here for the past 23 years. During her tenure at Brewster, she worked as secretary to 4 principals, a job she thoroughly enjoys. She says she will "miss the people at BHS, both staff and students." Dr. Meyer said, "Mrs. Tarr was not only extremely capable but pleasant to work with. She will be missed very much. We wish her only the best in her new position." Mrs. Tarr lives with her husband, John, in Brewster. Photo by Françoise Mastelloni.



## [Burundi](#)

### **Burundi launches national good governance programme**

Report

#### [UN Development Programme](#)

With efforts to end years of civil conflict continuing, the Government of Burundi is undertaking a national good governance programme in partnership with UNDP

UNDP is providing US\$7 million to support the initiative, covering three areas: political institutions and human rights, government administration, and the economy and public finance.

The initiative was approved at a workshop last month that included participants from the Government and Parliament, civil society, the public and private sectors, and international organizations. Minister of Commerce and Industry Charles Karikurubu presided at the event.

Vice President Donatien Ndayizeye emphasized that good governance occupies a place of paramount importance in the Arusha Accords for National Peace and Reconciliation, the framework for the ongoing peace process, as well as in the country's campaign against poverty.

Mariam Pangah, acting UNDP Resident Representative, said that support for good governance is a priority for UNDP in Burundi and the programme will be an important first step for cooperation in this sector. She also noted the national scope of the initiative.

The programme will work to strengthen the Parliament, the judicial system and the prison system; promote and protect human rights; and support preparations for a constitutional referendum and elections.

It will also focus on improving public administration and public sector management, training for public employees and supporting government decentralization.

In the economic sphere, the programme will improve management of public finance, promote transparency in public sector management, and develop economic policies to promote private sector investment.

The Vice President underscored the need for more donor support, since the \$12 million dollars raised for the programme falls far short of the estimated \$89 million needed to fully implement it through 2004. Workshop participants urged that donors organize a round table to mobilize additional funds.

Democratic governance is one six thematic practices UNDP carries out as the UN's global development network, focusing on priorities in developing countries.

<http://reliefweb.int/node/111512>

01/03/2012

United Nations Development Programme (New York) »

27 FEBRUARY 2004

## Burkina Faso: Report Recommends Measures Against Corruption in Burkina Faso

New York — A report UNDP issued in Burkina Faso recently calls for ethical conduct by politicians, adequate resources, audits and other preventative measures, and separation of institutional powers to stem corruption.

Entitled "Corruption and Human Development," the report calls the fight against corruption crucial to strengthening government integrity and transparency in the west African country, one of the world's poorest.

It is the fifth national Human Development Report that an independent Human Development Group, coordinated by UNDP, has produced. While many anti-corruption institutions are in place, the report notes, their missions should be clarified and coordinated, and gaps in the judicial framework, especially regarding private financing of political parties, should be filled. UNDP is working with civil anti-corruption organizations and is helping the Government formulate a national anti-corruption strategy.

"The Government is ready to play a key role in the fight against corruption," said Minister of Economy and Development Seydou Bouda at the report launch earlier this month in Ouagadougou, the capital. He urged the Human Development Group to organize workshops around the country to disseminate the findings and translate the report into the main local languages.

"To achieve significant victories over corruption, it is important to mobilize action for change in every public institution," said Anna Coulibaly, interim UNDP Resident Representative. "Therefore, the ongoing dialogue between civil society and private sector should be reinforced to strengthen the fight against corruption and make it more effective."

Of the 500 people surveyed for the report, including government administrators, 95 per cent said corruption is a widespread problem. The main causes, researchers found, include low salaries, poverty, crumbling moral and social values, mismanagement, financial pressure, customs, poor governance, and uncontrolled economic liberalization.

The sectors most affected are the police, customs, politics and public procurement.

In addition to public perceptions, the report examines corruption's impact on the economy, democratic governance and sectors ranging from health and education to environment and socio-cultural values. It also looks at regional and international cooperation to combat corruption and concludes with a comprehensive chapter with recommendations for strengthening anti-corruption activities in public institutions.

*For further information please contact Théophile Kinda , UNDP Burkina Faso, or Nicholas Gouede , UNDP Communications Office.*

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United Nations Development Programme (New York) »

10 OCTOBER 2003

## Cameroon: Country Upgrades State Employee Management to Spur Efficiency, Curb Corruption

New York — The Government of Cameroon is reforming management of its more than 110,000 state employees to boost efficiency, promote transparency and curb corruption.

UNDP is providing US\$160,000 from its Thematic Trust Fund for Democratic Governance for the initiative, which includes upgrading payroll and employee information systems.

"This support will help strengthen Cameroon's strategy to combat poverty through a viable public service, fit to stand the challenges of the times as well as to achieve the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals," said Patricia de Mowbray, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative.

Public Service and Administrative Reforms Minister René Ze Nguele, thanked UNDP for its strong commitment to support reform to make public administration user-friendly. He called the Thematic Trust Fund for Democratic Governance "a major catalyst that will help Cameroon's public administration meet international standards."

The initiative, which supports the Government's broader decentralization programme, includes codification of human resource management procedures in coordination with the computerized state personnel and payroll management system, known by its French acronym SIGIPES. It will also help simplify and harmonize job classifications and provide training in modern management techniques.

Ngouo Leon Bertrand, the ministry's Permanent Secretary in charge of Administrative Reforms, said decentralization will empower officials at the provincial and local levels and help end corruption among civil servants. Among abuses, he noted, are demands for kickbacks for performing services, frequent unnecessary travel to Yaoundé, the capital, where records are located, and "ghost workers" who draw salaries while absent from posts and even out of the country.

Under the reforms, government departments will be able to manage employee payrolls and benefits independently and these records will be computerized and quickly accessible.

For further information please contact Peter Ngu Tayong, UNDP Cameroon, or Nicholas Gouede, UNDP Communications Office.

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United Nations Development Programme (New York) »

29 APRIL 2002

## Central African Republic: Bangui Launches Sweeping Governance Reforms

### PRESS RELEASE

New York — The Central African Republic is launching sweeping reforms to promote good governance, an important step towards reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development.

The reforms include improving public services; promoting decentralization and local governance; enhancing economic policies; and setting up an effective, transparent judicial system that respects human rights. The other areas are: creating an enabling environment for private sector development, promoting civil society participation in public affairs, and strengthening operations of the National Assembly.

Prime Minister Martin Ziguélé introduced the reforms at a national seminar earlier this month in Bangui organized by the Government and UNDP.

Participants included government leaders and representatives from the private sector, civil society, political parties, local communities and development partners.

Although it exports diamonds, gold, and timber, and has iron ore, limestone and uranium and potential oil fields, the landlocked Central African Republic is in deep poverty, with two out of three people earning less than a dollar a day. Decades of misrule decimated the economy, and since 1996 there have been several army mutinies and attempted coups — a legacy that demonstrates the need for reforms.

The seminar supports the Government's initiative to undertake "a complete reform covering all sectors of public administration," said the Prime Minister. It gives a new impetus for all citizens to support the "exercise and protection of their basic freedoms and to a judicial system that respects rights," he added. The seminar also reflects public calls for "improvements in public services, greater transparency in public administration, a better response to grievances and fairer distribution of development gains," he said.

To guide the reform process, participants set up a national steering committee that includes representatives of all social groups and a technical committee to deal with each reform area. They also agreed on a strategy and schedule. The next step will be drafting a good governance programme, based on recommendations from the technical committees.

"These are vital input to the good governance programme and a foundation for preparation of a strategic framework for the battle against poverty," said Prime Minister Ziguélé.

Pascal Karorero, acting UNDP Resident Representative, said good governance should not be the concern of only a few high ranking government officials and politicians. "It is a challenge for all citizens, because through good governance people can become empowered personally and collectively," he pointed out.

UNDP support for governance has aided efforts by the Government to stem corruption, bolster economic and financial management, promote dialogue on social and political issues and strengthen public security.

*For further information, please contact Lina Fatou Ikoli, UNDP Central African Republic, or Nicholas Gouede, UNDP Communications Office.*

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United Nations Development Programme (New York) »

15 OCTOBER 2003

## Mali: Partners Support Decentralization in Timbuktu Region

New York — UNDP and several partners are working with the Government and rural communities in Mali's northern Timbuktu region to help people gain skills in planning and managing development activities.

The project supports the Government's efforts to improve lives and livelihoods through decentralization, giving localities greater authority and resources for development. In the arid and semi-arid Sahelian environment, the challenges are great.

Agriculture is a mainstay of the region, including cultivation of rice, sorghum, tubers, as well as raising livestock. About 60 per cent of population lives below the poverty line.

The Ministry of Interior began the five-year initiative in 1999, encompassing 27 municipalities with 444 villages in the Timbuktu, Diré, and Gourma-Rharous districts.

UNDP, partnering with the Belgian Solidarity Fund (FBS), the UN Capital Development Fund and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, is providing technical assistance. The Government is providing 2 per cent of the US\$8.6 million budget and the communities about 5 per cent.

The project is training elected officials, local government staff and central government employees, as well as community leaders, members of civil society groups and private service providers. It is also reaching out to citizens through the media to raise awareness about decentralization.

To promote wide participation in local decision making on development, the initiative has helped communities set up planning committees. These include community council members, as well as local men and women serving as resource people. The committees set local development priorities - such as construction of schools, health centres, irrigation systems and roads - and track their implementation.

"Thanks to the project, we are happy to see that decentralization is taking shape in the region," said Segui Kanté, Cabinet Director of the High Commission of Timbuktu. "We salute the initiative for helping build the capacities of local elected officials through training."

This positive assessment was reinforced by the results of a recent survey by Radio Jamana, which found that local people view the project as contributing the most to the region's development.

For further information please contact Mahamadou Coulibaly, UNDP Mali, or Nicholas Gouede, UNDP Communications Office.

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From the August 2001 issue of *World Press Review* (VOL. 48, No. 8).

## Senegal: A Landslide for Wade

Nicholas N. Gouede

Parliamentary elections held on April 29 in Senegal resulted in a landslide victory for the Sopi Coalition dominated by President Abdoulaye Wade's Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS). President Wade was elected in March 2000,



Wade on the campaign trail (Photo: AFP)

defeating former President Abdou Diouf, whose Socialist Party had ruled Senegal for four decades. The Socialists, however, had continued to control parliament. No longer: Wade's 40-party coalition obtained 90 of 120 parliamentary seats, while the opposition collected 30. The Socialists will have 10 members of parliament, against 97 in the former 140-seat house dissolved in February.

The overwhelming margin of Wade's victory was at the center of local press coverage after the elections. In a (May 2) commentary in Dakar's independent *Sud Quotidien*, Vieux Savane noted that the president now has the power to make changes. "The massive vote of Senegalese illustrated the confidence they had in President Wade," Savane said. "However, this should not be interpreted as a 'blank check' or freedom to do whatever he pleases." Rather, it should be interpreted as a mandate "to find solutions to the ills that affect the populace."

Dakar's independent *Wal Fadjri* (May 2) echoed opposition fears that the huge majority won by Wade's coalition would mean that its MPs would blindly endorse government policies. "Most of the members of the future National Assembly lack the aptitude to carry out...meaningful discussion of government projects," the paper said, adding that in the previous assembly members from diverse political

<http://worldpress.org/Africa/121.cfm>

2/18/2012

forces were able to amend government-proposed bills. The pro-government *Le Soleil* noted (May 3) that the president now has "the assets to carry out any reforms he has in mind," but warned of "a shipwreck of small parties."

Now that Wade has won a majority in parliament, the expectations of Senegalese are high, Daniel Ole Shani, West Africa regional director of World Vision International, told Dakar's Panafrican News Agency (May 4). "They are going to demand a lot from him and his cabinet." But giving a comfortable majority to a president is not dangerous, Shani said, provided "the character of the president is such that he would use that majority for the benefit of the country."

Wade reappointed Mame Madior Boye, a lawyer, as prime minister. In forming her new 24-member government, Boye gave 10 cabinet positions to members of Wade's PDS, ruling out the inclusion of the opposition. Asking, "Will the PDS sail alone?" *Sud Quotidien* warned (May 11), "If the prime minister excludes the participation of the opposition whose mission, she said, is to oppose, then we fear that a certain number of difficulties might emerge with Wade's key allies who participated in the defunct government of transition."

But the new cabinet's composition was greeted positively by most commentators. It indicates that Wade has kept his campaign promises, Demba Ndiaye said in *Sud Quotidien* (May 12): "Six women altogether, including the prime minister herself." The new administration will go forward with "a small government team, the confirmed presence of women and civil society, the only criteria being competence," *Le Soleil* agreed (May 11).

