

WORLD BRIEFS

ABSENCE OF DEMOCRATIC CULTURE UNDERMINES OAU

LUANDA, Angola (PANA) - Angola's deputy foreign minister Joao Miranda says the lack of a culture of democracy is a major hindrance in the Organization of African Unity's goal to unite the continent. The group marked its 35th birthday May 25. Speaking at a ceremony in Luanda to mark Africa Day, he attributed the organization's low performance to "the lack of democratic culture, the non-respect of sovereign institutions arising from democratic pluralism and the resort to arms to solve problems among African politicians." The inability of the OAU to prevent the outbreak of civil wars, he said, was among the continental body's failures during its 35 years of existence. Nonetheless, Miranda commended the OAU for having managed to maintain African unity, although it had not conceived concrete proposals on how to resolve the external debts of its member states or eradicate poverty.

EASTERN AFRICA REGISTERS MODEST ECONOMIC RECOVERY

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (PANA) - The eastern Africa sub-region registered "some degree" of economic recovery in 1997, the deputy executive secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Lalla Ben Barka, said. The 13 countries in the sub-region registered an estimated average Gross Domestic Product growth rate of 3.9 percent in 1997, which compared positively with their average growth rate of 3.0 percent in 1996 and 2.8 percent in 1995, she said. The overall growth rate of Africa was estimated at 3.9 percent in 1997 and 2.7 percent in 1996. Ben Barka attributed the sub-region's recovery to improvement of security conditions in some countries, the end of war in others, good weather conditions and economic reform measures. Addressing a meeting of the intergovernmental committee of experts of the eastern Africa sub-regional development center, she said improving transport and communications links among the countries would help widen opportunities for economic cooperation and contribute to continental economic integration. The countries of the sub-region are Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda.

ERITREANS ACCUSE ETHIOPIANS TROOPS OF ATTACKING BORDER AREA

ASMARA, Eritrea — Eritrea accused Ethiopian troops today of attacking Eritrean positions in the southern Ambesete Geleba area with tanks and heavy artillery. Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman Andemicael Kahsai said no details were immediately available on casualties. The ministry called the attack "a new and dangerous escalation" of the border crisis between Eritrea and Ethiopia and said it was the fourth attack in less than two weeks on Eritrean positions. Ethiopia first made public the border dispute on May 13, calling on Eritrea to withdraw from occupied Ethiopian territory. Eritrea has consistently denied it has moved into Ethiopia and today repeated a call for a total demilitarization of border areas and outside mediation to solve the dispute. Andemicael called the Ethiopian demand that Eritrean troops withdraw from disputed territory "a stumbling block to any progress."

AFRICANS, OTHER NON-WHITES GET RAW EMPLOYMENT DEAL

LONDON, England (PANA) — Africans in Britain are getting a raw deal on the employment front although, on average, they are better educated than white workers, the London Chamber of Commerce said in its report published earlier this month. The report, the result of research by the chamber and the University of Westminster, found that non-Whites were better qualified than White workers but were more likely to be unemployed or paid less than their white counterparts. The researchers said that white workers were more likely to be represented among senior management than black workers. It was discovered that national employment rates among white men were high and unemployment rates low. In London, Africans and Bangladeshis suffer high unemployment rates. Non-White workers make up about 20 percent of the city's population. The average weekly wage in the United Kingdom is 141 pounds (about \$235) for white workers and 135 pounds (about \$225) for Blacks. In Greater London, the figures are 161 pounds (\$268) and 143 pounds (\$238), respectively. Commenting on the findings, the chief executive of the London City Council, Simon Sperry, said "Many ethnic minority workers seem to be over-qualified for the jobs they are doing. It is also (of concern) that they also seem to be losing out to white workers in London and other parts of the country when it comes to pay."

INTERNATIONAL

Minutes might link Botha to murder plans

Special to Sentinel-Voice

GEORGE, South Africa — Minutes of South Africa's apartheid-era security meetings indicate that then-President P.W. Botha knew about plans to kill black activists, according to testimony at Botha's trial Monday.

Botha is charged with ignoring a summons to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is probing apartheid-era human rights abuses.

But the trial — the first ever of a former South African head of state — has focused on Botha's role as chairman of the State Security Council, which coordinated a security crackdown on black liberation

groups.

Truth Commission executive secretary Paul van Zyl said minutes from those council meetings contained words like "eliminate" and "neutralize" when referring to opponents of white rule.

"It is quite clear from these documents, as we interpret it, the word 'eliminate' means 'kill,'" van Zyl testified Monday.

"In showing why it wants to question Botha, the Truth Commission has presented the court in the southern coastal town of George with dozens of documents allegedly implicating Botha in atrocities.

Botha, 82, led South Africa from 1978-89. White rule ended in 1994, when Nelson

Mandela won the presidency in the nation's first all-race elections.

Van Zyl said the Security Council had been briefed in 1979 about plans to launch overseas operations against members of the African National Congress, including sending bombs in the mail.

His lawyer, Lappe Laubscher, alleged that van Zyl was diverting the case to uncover Security Council deeds.

Prosecutor Bruce Morrison indicated that Eugene de Kock, a former police colonel who led a group of apartheid-era assassins, may testify.

De Kock, currently serving a life sentence, carried out the 1988 bombing of an anti-

apartheid group's offices. Former national police chief Johan van der Merwe has told the Truth Commission that Botha authorized the attack.

Talks, meanwhile, have resumed on a possible settlement to end the trial. The Truth Commission says it is still willing to drop its complaint against Botha if he appears at a special Truth Commission hearing.

Botha has pleaded innocent. He says he has already given the commission 1,700 pages of written answers and that the panel just wants to humiliate him by forcing him to appear in person.

He faces two years' imprisonment and unspecified fines if convicted.

Apartheid-era cop admits covering up murder

Special to Sentinel-Voice

PRETORIA, South Africa — Johan van der Merwe, South Africa's top police commander during apartheid, told a tribunal Tuesday that he helped throw the body of an activist into a crocodile-infested river to hide the evidence of the killing.

The ex-cop admitted to helping cover up the death in testimony before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is investigating apartheid-era human rights abuses.

The former commander said he tried to hide the 1988 killing of anti-apartheid activist Stanza Bopape, who died while being tortured by police, to avoid mass demonstrations and keep up police morale.

Van der Merwe was chief of the Security Branch at the time

of the cover-up and later became the national police commissioner.

His lawyer has disputed that he ordered Bopape's killing.

Van der Merwe said he lied to his superiors about Bopape's death, keeping up the charade for years that the activist had escaped from police custody.

Also Tuesday, testimony continued in the case against former President P.W. Botha, on trial for refusing to appear before the Truth Commission.

A former security guard described the 1988 bombing of the South African Council of Churches. No one was killed in the attack, which a former national police chief testified Botha had authorized.

Botha has denied the accusation.

Murderous apartheid police col. implicates Botha

Special to Sentinel-Voice

GEORGE, South Africa — Nicknamed "Prime Evil" for his ruthlessness, one of apartheid's most notorious killers testified today in former President P.W. Botha's trial that white-led governments ordered black activists killed.

Former police Col. Eugene de Kock arrived in an armored personnel carrier at the courthouse, where Botha is on trial for refusing to appear before a panel probing apartheid crimes.

The trial is being held in the southern coastal city of

George, near Botha's retirement home. He faces up to two years in prison and fines if convicted of contempt of the Truth Commission's subpoenas.

The case has turned into an examination of Botha's possible complicity in state-sanctioned killings and violence when he was head of state from 1978-1989 and presided over the State Security Council, which coordinated the crackdown against opponents of white rule.

Standing in the witness dock just 10 feet from Botha,

de Kock was asked by prosecutor Bruce Morrison for his interpretation of the words "eliminate" and "neutralize," used in State Security Council meetings in reference to dealing with opponents of apartheid.

"In the terminology that

they used it means killing," said de Kock, peering at the packed courtroom through thick glasses.

When Morrison asked de Kock how he felt about serving two life sentences plus 212 years for murder and other

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NASA

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in violation of NASA's own safety rules.

In the week that preceded the cancellation of the experiments, law enforcement authorities became increasingly desperate in their efforts to quell the protests. Police turned the area around the launch site into a virtual "no-man's land" arbitrarily searching passersby and fining motor vehicles for trivial traffic law violations, according to the Committee against Experiments on the Environment.

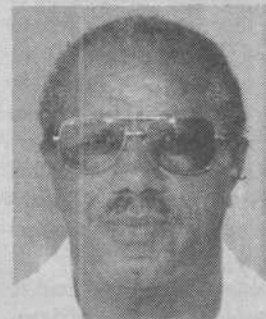
Protesters at the entrance to the launch site say they encountered an increasingly belligerent attitude from police

in the vigil's last days. In one incident filmed by a local television station, a police lieutenant waved his gun and threatened to shoot the demonstrators, the Committee said.

In the end, NASA decided to abandon the experiments and Coqui Two opponents are convinced that their protests, and not the weather, precipitated it.

"Being able to stop three of the launches is a great triumph for the people and an encouraging precedent for other social and environmental struggles in Puerto Rico," says Committee representative Luis Lourido.

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