

BITS**PIECES**

NIGERIAN CONFERENCE ENDS: Last month the Nigerian Foreign Policy Conference recommended that Nigeria remain a secular state and steer clear of membership in international organizations based on religion. The statement refers to Nigeria's January initiation into the Islamic Conference Organization and the ensuing debate between Christians, Muslims and government officials over the legality and wisdom of Nigerian membership. (See *AN*, March 10.) The conference also recommended that the nation refrain from re-establishing ties with Israel. In the future, the delegates suggested, Nigeria focus its foreign policy on African unity and the struggle against foreign domination. [AN]

DETAINEES RELEASED: Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda ordered the release of all 24 people detained for Mandrax trafficking late last year. (See *AN*, Nov. 18.) Mandrax is an illegal habit-forming drug which induces effects similar to marijuana. According to the Pan-African News Agency, those released included former Foreign Minister Vernon Mwaanga and Sikota Wina, a former Central Committee member. The 24 are prohibited from traveling abroad and remain subject to prosecution on new charges. [AN]

GOUKOUNI'S EXCUSE: Goukouni Oueddei, president of the rebel Transitional Government of National Unity (GUNT), said he did not attend the planned meeting with Chadian President Hissein Habre because of "biased remarks" made by the intended moderator, OAU chairman Abdou Diouf. According to Goukouni, Diouf, the Senegalese president, referred to Habre as the legitimate leader of Chad and therefore "cannot logically play the role as mediator." The warring factions were scheduled to meet in Brazzaville, Congo to discuss their on-going civil war. (See *AN*, Feb. 24.) [AN]

NEW BREW: This summer, Americans will see an African beverage in their supermarket's cooler. In June, Tusker Malt Lager, a beer brewed in Kenya, will make its first appearance in the U.S. Tusker has been a big favorite in Europe for years. Creative Import Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is contracting to take a minimum of 150,000 cases this year for sale in major U.S. cities. [AN]

LEADERS ARRESTED: Liberian authorities have arrested Gabriel Kpolleh, a former presidential candidate and leader of the four-party opposition coalition that has been seeking reconciliation with President Samuel K. Doe. A day before the April 24 arrest, a special committee set up to investigate allegations Kpolleh made against Doe's regime recommended that the probe be dropped. Kpolleh, who faces sedition charges, had accused Doe of preparing to stage a fake coup attempt in order to crackdown on the opposition. An arrest warrant has also been issued for Edward Kesselly, head of the United Party, a coalition member. [AN]

KING CROWNED: The people of Swaziland crowned a new king on April 25 when 18-year old Crown Prince Makhosetive assumed the throne left vacant by the 1982 death of his father, King Sobhuza II. (See *AN*, March 24.) Now known as King Mswati III, the teenaged monarch greeted dignitaries and heads-of-state including presidents Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Samora Machel of Mozambique, Pieter W. Botha of South Africa and King Moshoeshoe II of Lesotho, the only other sub-Saharan monarch. The traditional African coronation took place at the royal capital of Lobamba. [AN]

COFFEE PRODUCES: Political strife and drought have crippled Ethiopia in recent years, but there is some good news for its troubled economy. One of Africa's leading coffee producers, Ethiopia has announced that the current crop, now fetching record-high prices, will earn the country some \$500 million this year. The coffee tree is native to Ethiopia and still grows wild in some parts of the country. [AN/Africa Church Information Service]

DEBT, DEBT AND MORE DEBT: According to a new World Bank report, the total debt of Third World nations to Western institutions is expected to exceed \$1 trillion by the end of this year. In addition, Third World debtors, despite their need for economic growth, paid more to foreign banks than they received in loans last year. Ivory Coast, Morocco, and Nigeria top the list of Africa's most indebted countries. [AN]

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