

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

DEREK INGRAM

The terrorism crisis that hit the world in September led to postponement of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and cancellation of the meetings of Finance Ministers in St Lucia and the Commonwealth Business Council in Melbourne. One consequence for the Commonwealth was to put out of the headlines the increasingly serious situation in Zimbabwe. Foreign ministers gathered in Abuja had just secured pledges from Zimbabwe on orderly land reform and an end to violence in return for British and other funding. Peace was returning to Sierra Leone, while in Pakistan General Musharraf elevated himself to President before meeting Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee. A peace treaty was signed in Bougainville, but in Fiji the general election produced a confused result, raising a question mark about ending the country's suspension from the Commonwealth. As Brisbane prepared for CHOGM, Prime Minister John Howard said the Ashes should rest permanently in Australia—not at Lord's cricket ground.

IT IS ALREADY A CLICHÉ that the world will never be the same again after 11 September 2001. Certainly, the events in New York and Washington profoundly and suddenly affected the Commonwealth which was in the last stage of preparations for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) planned to take place in Brisbane in less than four weeks' time—on 6–9 October. The annual Commonwealth Finance Ministers meeting was about to be held in St Lucia and this was quickly cancelled on news that the World Bank/IMF meetings would not take place.

At first there was a determination to proceed with CHOGM, especially because it began to be pointed out that to put it off would be a victory for terrorism. It was also argued that the Commonwealth could enhance its influence and prestige by convening the first international summit after the crisis had engulfed the world. Then it became plain that many leaders would be unwilling or unable to leave their countries. Not only the big players began to

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have their doubts; almost every Caribbean leader said he could not attend, many of them because the journey would involve travelling via the USA.

When Indian Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee and British Prime Minister Tony Blair said they could not come Secretary-General Don McKinnon announced (28 September 2001) that the meeting would be postponed. He flew to Brisbane where the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were already assembling for the Commonwealth People's Festival and gave a press conference (1 October 2001) at which he pledged that the CHOGM would now take place early in 2002. He said: 'CHOGM will be coming back, not maybe, and it won't put it out of sequence'. In other words the next would be in 2003. McKinnon said that until the previous Tuesday (25 September 2001) he had been confident that the Brisbane meeting would go ahead.

Meantime, the Commonwealth Business Council meeting planned to take place in Melbourne a few days before CHOGM, which expected nearly 300 businesspeople and eight heads of government, had also been cancelled—a grave blow to the future of this fledgling body.

Zimbabwe

As land seizures and violence continued across much of the country, it became clear that President Robert Mugabe had no intention of allowing into the country the three-minister mission the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) had decided to send in March 2001. Intense diplomatic activity in the Commonwealth led to the adoption of a Nigerian proposal for a meeting of foreign ministers in Abuja (6 September 2001) to discuss the serious situation building up in advance of the Brisbane summit. After five months' effort involving Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon and many others, Mugabe was persuaded to send his Foreign Minister Stan Mudenge and Lands Minister Joseph Made to the meeting, although he had at first wanted the talks only to be about land reform.

Mugabe favoured a non-Commonwealth gathering with a Scandinavian foreign minister present and McKinnon excluded, but Obasanjo and Mbeki—and Britain—insisted on a Commonwealth meeting that would also talk about the problems of law and order and violence and fair presidential elections in 2002. Mugabe gave way—apparently after talks in Kenya with President Daniel arap Moi (20 June 2001).

Two days before, the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group met in London (3–4 September 2001) to review the situation in several countries within their remit but, as at their previous meeting, they also made a separate statement on Zimbabwe—despite the fact that Mugabe had all along argued that the subject was outside the CMAG remit. The statement registered continued concern at the situation and 'deeply regretted' that CMAG had not been able to send its mission.

The meeting of ministers in Abuja was chaired by Sule Lamido of Nigeria. Other foreign ministers attending were from Jamaica, Kenya, South Africa, the UK and Zimbabwe. Australia sent its High Commissioner in London and, at

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Obasanjo's request, Canada was also represented. The eight, recognizing 'that as a result of historical injustices, the current land ownership and distribution needed to be rectified in a transparent and equitable manner', produced an unexpectedly promising agreement (see Documentation).

It said the crisis in Zimbabwe had 'political and rule of law implications which must be addressed holistically and concurrently'. Land reform had to be carried out with due regard to human rights, rule of law, transparency and democratic principles. Mudenge, who had himself chaired CMAG until 1999, assured the meeting that Zimbabwe was committed to the Harare Declaration of 1991 and the Millbrook Action Programme of 1995 and freedom of expression.

There would be no further occupation of farmlands, rule of law would be restored, and firm action taken against violence and intimidation. Talks with the UNDP—virtually stalled for three years—would be speeded so that funding for the reform would be obtained. Although it was not spelled out, Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Jack Straw was said to have promised to release a British contribution of £36 million if the conditions were met. Assurances on free and fair elections were also not spelt out in the Abuja deal; merely agreement 'to respond positively to any request from the Government of Zimbabwe in support of the electoral process'.

The statement ended: 'The spirit of camaraderie, informality, honesty and forthrightness that was brought to bear in the proceedings of the meeting was also recognised as being consistent with the best Commonwealth tradition.'

Mugabe was in Libya when the ministers met and a question mark remained whether the agreement, while generally welcomed, would be honoured. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was sceptical and in the first days afterwards there was little sign of a change of climate in Zimbabwe. Violence appeared to be continuing.

The economic situation was also worsening. The grain harvest was down 28 per cent and the tobacco crop 40 per cent. A two-day strike (3–4 July 2001) was called by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions in protest at the 73 per cent rise in fuel prices. It virtually stopped all industry and most commerce, but the MDC, which originally sprang from the labour movement, did not actively join in the strike. Finance Minister Simba Makoni said (5 July 2001) he was very concerned about possible food shortages and was appealing to the international community to help import maize and wheat.

Several other international bodies were bearing down on the Zimbabwe situation. At the meeting of the newly named African Union in Lusaka 53 African leaders created a six-member committee—Nigeria (chair), South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Algeria and Cameroon—to deal with the problem. The foreign ministers, meeting first, accused Britain of trying to isolate and vilify Zimbabwe, but the leaders toned down the language. Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi drove across the border for a state visit to Zimbabwe and said he fully supported Mugabe on land. Later the government said Libya had agreed to supply 70 per cent of the country's fuel needs.

Mugabe failed to persuade the other 13 leaders of the Southern African Development Community (14 August 2001) meeting in Malawi to issue a statement supporting his land policies. Instead the leaders warned of the danger to investor confidence in the region and set up a task force of South Africa,

Botswana and Mozambique under President Thabo Mbeki, to bridge the gap between Britain and Zimbabwe. The leaders voted to withdraw Mugabe's chairmanship of their defence body because he had sent troops into the Congo in the name of SADC. Later SADC agreed to let Zimbabwe import maize from South Africa.

Tito Mboweni, Governor of the Reserve Bank of South Africa, said (24 August 2001) illegal means of land reform had led to 'blood flowing everywhere'. The problem had to be solved within the law and anyone acting outside 'must be locked up and brought before the courts'.

MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai visited the USA, Britain and Brussels in early July 2001, seeing Jack Straw, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, and EU commissioners Chris Patten, Neil Kinnock and Poul Nielsen.

Thousands more white-owned farms were listed for seizure (29 June 2001), bringing the total to 5200. This meant that all but 300 such farms had been designated for compulsory acquisition.

Attacks on farms over an area of 100 square miles north of Chinhoyi developed in early August 2001. Elderly Ralph Corbet became the ninth white farmer to be murdered (3 August 2001) and 21 others were arrested on charges of attacking ZANU-PF squatters. They were held in jail for two weeks. Their heads were shaved and they were put in prison uniform—treatment normally given to convicted prisoners. Sixty white families in the area fled their farms in the area in a convoy organized by the Commercial Farmers Union. Many farms were pillaged. Later farms in Hwedze, south of Harare, came under attack and 60 black workers who tried to protect white farmers were charged in court with 'public violence'. A total of 28 farmworkers had been killed since the veterans campaign began in February 2000. The government *Herald* said the farm looting was engineered by the British High Commission.

Action against the press continued. Geoffrey Nyarota, editor of the outspoken independent *Daily News*, and three of his staff were arrested (15 August 2001) for publishing 'rumour or false information' under an Act passed by the white Smith regime of the 1960s to suppress those fighting for black rule. They were released under a High Court ruling which said that the charges were illegal anyway, but a week later were told they would face new charges. Pointedly, the *Daily News* had begun serializing *Animal Farm*.

Later Basildon Peta, reporter on the *Financial Gazette* and secretary-general of Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, was held for questioning and Mark Chavunduka, editor of the *Standard*, who was tortured by the army in 1999, was told he would be charged with criminal defamation for writing that Mugabe was haunted by dead former aides. The BBC's press accreditation was suspended (26 July 2001). Rageh Omaar was accused of bias in a report on the opening of parliament. Earlier, London *Daily Telegraph* correspondent David Blair was expelled. Information Minister Jonathan Moyo said Reuters and AP were 'merchants of violence'.

After a campaign marred by violence, the ruling ZANU-PF increased its majority from 54 to 61 per cent in a by-election in Bindura (30 July 2001)—the first of seven in the run-up to the presidential elections of 2002. Bindura's MP, the popular youth and gender minister, Border Gezi, had died in a car crash. Turnout was high. The MDC alleged heavy intimidation. While polling was

taking place police arrested the MDC candidate and held him for three hours.

Mugabe swore in a Chief Justice and three new judges (20 August 2001). Godfrey Chidyausiku, 54, succeeded Anthony Gubbay, who had been forced to resign in March 2001. Chidyausiku was an independent MP in the days of white rule and attorney-general after independence. One of the five remaining white judges and Zimbabwe's third senior judicial figure, 49-year-old Michael Gillespie, resigned. He said circumstances constrained him 'to conclude that I can no longer continue in office'.

Twenty-one farmers who clashed with black settlers on a white-owned farm were arrested (6 August 2001) and accused of assault and incitement to violence. They were refused bail and spent 16 days in jail in Chinhoyi, having their heads illegally shaved. A group of diplomats from the seven Commonwealth countries attending the Abuja summit were flown to see their vandalized farms. It was alleged that the farmers had ransacked their properties from low-flying planes to show up the government. Later the men were freed on bail, but not to be allowed home for a month.

Agriculture Minister Joseph Made told the congress of the Commercial Farmers Union (12 August 2001) the government would take over 12.5 million acres of white-owned farmland—twice as much as previously announced.

The Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum reported details of rape and torture by squatters of anyone not suspected of supporting the Mugabe regime. It said atrocities were being committed by 'black people against black, white, yellow and brown'. It added: 'The rule of law has been replaced by rule by thugs'. The Amani Trust, which monitors human rights, recorded 11 political murders, 61 disappearances, 104 cases of unlawful detention and 288 incidents of torture in July 2001.

In a statement read out in all churches (26 August 2001), the Zimbabwe Council of Churches said: 'A very frightening culture of politically motivated violence has emerged ... we are convinced that the president of Zimbabwe has the capacity to stop this violence.'

The good news from Zimbabwe came in July 2001 when 17-year-old Hamilton Masakadza became the youngest cricket player to score a century on his Test debut. He scored 119 against the West Indies and became the first black Zimbabwean to make a Test hundred. Zimbabwe declared on 563 for 9—the highest score in its history.

Nigeria

President Olusegun Obasanjo dismissed eight ministers and advisers (13 June 2001). They included his chief economic adviser Philip Asiodu, and his foreign affairs adviser Patrick Dele Cole. One of the ministers, Mohammed Arzika, was responsible for the troubled communications sector. A few days before the sackings Nepa, the state electricity company, said one-third of the country would be without power for two weeks. Vandals had attacked a key transmission line and blacked out 13 states and several cities including Port Harcourt.

Obasanjo was coming under increasing criticism for not tackling successfully the problems of infrastructure he inherited from the military government. Nepa installations were poorly protected and on a good day were producing little

more electricity than Ghana, seven times smaller than Nigeria. Nepa said the presidential villa, national parliament and other institutions owed it £160 million.

The new National Council on Space Station Technology announced a programme to put Nigerian rockets and satellites in orbit. It would get £6.4 million over four years and eventually become economically viable.

A plan to transform the notorious Bar Beach, Lagos—at one time an execution site—into a prime commercial area with shopping malls, office and apartment blocks and a marina was launched by the Lagos state governor.

Sierra Leone

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the pro-government Civil Defence Forces (CDF) signed an agreement in Freetown (16 May 2001) to cease all hostilities. UN special representative Oluayemi Adeniji of Nigeria counter-signed it. The Kamajor militia, part of the CDF, has pushed the rebels back into the eastern diamond fields and troops from Guinea had pushed deep into Sierra Leone. UN troops were moving into areas once controlled by the RUF. In addition, the RUF had gone into Liberia to defend the government of Charles Taylor which was now under serious pressure as a result of a UN ban on diamond exports and on Taylor's personal overseas travel.

Britain prepared to scale back its 450 troops in Sierra Leone to about 150. The training of 8500 recruits for the Sierra Leone army was completed in September 2001 and the job was to be passed over to an international training team from Canada, Australia, France, Jordan, South Africa and the USA.

President Tejan Kabbah, due to stand for re-election in March 2001, persuaded parliament to delay the poll for six months on the grounds that the war would prevent the holding of free elections so soon. But rebel spokesman Gibril Massaquoi said (28 August 2001) that if a transitional government was not put in place when Kabbah's term expired legally in September cooperation with the government would end and with the UN force would lessen. But he added: 'We are no longer going to fight'.

At its 4 September 2001 meeting the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) recommended that Sierra Leone should be removed from its remit because it was not in violation of the Harare principles. Governments and NGOs should keep CMAG informed of their efforts to consolidate democracy there.

The Gambia

A few days after CMAG's September meeting the government of President Yahya Jammeh repealed Decree 89 which restricted political activity. CMAG had said the country needed to take further measures 'to create an environment in which all political parties and individuals could freely take part in the political process'. When the repeal of the decree came into force The Gambia was to be removed from the CMAG remit.

British deputy high commissioner Bharat Joshi was asked to leave the country (22 August 2001) within 72 hours. Gambian officials said he had

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meddled in their country's internal affairs by attending an opposition press conference. Whitehall said he had been conducting standard work, reporting on political events in the country. Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister Ben Bradshaw summoned the Gambian High Commissioner in London for an explanation.

Cameroon

On a visit (3–5 June 2001) Secretary-General Don McKinnon raised several Commonwealth human rights concerns with President Paul Biya. He discussed the high number of people in detention without charges being brought. Biya admitted that there were too many people in jail. He was looking at a system of bail and wanted Commonwealth help in this matter. McKinnon said he would follow through. McKinnon raised the alleged disappearance of nine youths while in custody of the Special Operations Command. Biya said any culprits must come before the courts.

He also admitted there was dissatisfaction with the National Elections Observatory, and promised to pursue full transparency. McKinnon pointed to concerns about the performance of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms. Biya said he had ordered more funding for it and might seek Commonwealth help in making the Commission more effective.

McKinnon referred to Cameroon's steady growth rate of 5 per cent over several years, adding that the Commonwealth wanted to ensure that 'the green shoots of economic recovery are based on a firm democratic foundation ... and a more democratic culture ...'

The visit was a follow-up to the continued interest by the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) in human rights and democratic lapses since Cameroon joined the Commonwealth in 1995.

Mozambique

Plans were announced (10 July 2001) for a big dam in the south to prevent recurrence of the devastating floods which killed 700 people in 2000 and another 84 in early 2001. The dam, in Moamba district, 45 miles from Maputo, would cost £260 million and be funded by the African Development Bank. Mozambique also sought £20 million to settle the 85 000 victims of the latest floods.

In an operation expected to last several years 1100 elephant bulls, cows and calves due to be culled in South Africa's Kruger National Park were to be moved by lorry to a new game reserve in Mozambique. The plan was to repopulate areas where wildlife was decimated in the years of civil war. Kruger's elephant population of 10 000 doubles every 11 years. The animals would be immobilized by dart and winched on to the lorries. They would be fitted with collars and tracked by satellite.

Kenya

Opposition MPs defeated a bill (14 August 2001) to amend the constitution and

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set up an anti-corruption authority as demanded by international donors. They said it was too weak. With 82 MPs voting against, the government was denied a two-thirds majority. President Daniel arap Moi made an unprecedented appearance in parliament to vote for the bill. Next day the IMF said the vote meant it could not resume lending to Kenya. As a result Kenya would lose about £220 million in donor funds in 2001. Britain, waiting with £30 million tied to IMF support, said it was disappointed.

Meantime, the constitutional review was making slow progress. Professor Yash Ghai, its chairman, complained of constant obstruction but refused to compromise. The review, aimed to satisfy donors, was expected to curb the President's powers.

Charity Kaluki Ngilu, a presidential candidate in the 1997 election, launched a new political party—the National Party of Kenya (24 June 2001). She said it would fight for gender equality and good governance.

Moi urged Kenyans (12 July 2001) to abstain from sex for at least two years to stop the spread of AIDS. Government plans to import 300 million condoms had run into trouble with Christian and Muslim leaders. About 700 Kenyans die of AIDS every day and at one point Moi had said that people who knowingly passed on HIV should be hanged because contracting HIV amounted to a death sentence. To infect someone was murder.

Moi and the Trade and Industry Minister Nicholas Biwott filed a lawsuit (31 July 2001) against former US ambassador to Kenya Smith Hempstone because he had portrayed them in his memoirs as murderers.

Elephants started wandering into the suburbs of Nairobi for the first time in more than a century. One bull elephant had to be anaesthetized and taken back to Amboseli national park 150 miles away. The elephants are apparently emboldened as a result of the successful campaign to stamp out poaching. In the 1990s Kenya's elephant population rose from 19 000 to 30 500.

Uganda

Heads of state and government, mostly African, met in Kampala (18–21 August 2001) to discuss strategies to attract more foreign investment into their countries. The informal forum was called 'The Global 2001 Smart Partnership International Dialogue'. Among those present were the presidents of Botswana, Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, as well as the prime ministers of Grenada, Lesotho, Malaysia and Swaziland. Business and academic leaders attended, too, and the Commonwealth Secretary-General took part.

In legislative elections (26 June 2001) supporters of the no-party 'Movement' system won more than 230 seats, but 10 ministers and 40 other MPs lost their seats. Parliament has 292 members of which 214 are without a party label. Seats reserved for indirectly elected women number 53 and 25 are set aside for indirectly elected representatives of the armed forces, the disabled, youth and workers. Seven people were shot dead in violence on election day.

Kizza Besigye, runner up to Museveni in the presidential elections in March, went missing (22 August 2001). A few days later he said he had sent word that he was fleeing to the USA because he feared the government might harm him.

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Real GDP growth in 2000–01 had been 6 per cent against the target of 7 per cent. The 2001–02 budget (14 June 2001) aimed to deliver 6 per cent.

Zambia

The 37th summit of the Organization of African Unity took place in Lusaka (9–11 July 2001). By 50–53 member states ratified its relaunch as the African Union. The Union plans a single currency, a continental parliament and a court of human rights. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said a union modelled on present-day Europe would help it achieve prosperity. He urged delegates to stop blaming the former colonial powers for their problems. Sixty-five Mercedes limousines were flown from Germany for use by the VIPs, but the 3000–4000 extra visitors were expected to produce £4.5 million income.

The ruling MMD party adopted former vice-president Luke Patrick Mwana-wasa as its candidate for the presidential elections in October. He is a 52-year-old lawyer. At his nomination he said that if claims of misappropriation of funds or abuse of office could be proved against retiring President Frederick Chiluba the law would take its course, but his accusers would find themselves charged in court too.

A few days earlier Fred M'membe, editor of Zambia's only independent daily, the *Post*, had been arrested (17 August 2001) for publishing an editorial alleging that Chiluba had stolen more than £3 million allocated for emergency food aid. M'membe was charged with criminal defamation.

UN Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson said on a visit to Lusaka that 'serious questions' needed to be answered over the murder of Paul Tembo, who had recently resigned as deputy national secretary of the MMD and joined the new Forum for Democratic Development.

Privatization of the mining industry brought Shell Oil back to Zambia after 20 years.

Zambia's population is now 10.3 million against 7.8 million in 1990, according to a preliminary census report (16 June 2001). But the UNDP said that because of AIDS life expectancy was likely to fall by 17 per cent by 2005.

South Africa

Several thousand homeless people moved on to farmland at Bredell, near Johannesburg, in early July 2001. Armed police surrounded them while the government sought an eviction order from the Pretoria high court. The ruling African National Congress blamed the rival Pan Africanist Congress which had said it was distributing plots for £2.30 a piece. PAC Secretary-General, Thami ka Platjje said: 'This is the land of the African people, being held in trust for us by the government.' Some squatters said they had been on the housing list for five years.

Minister of Agriculture Thoko Didiza said the government had acted swiftly to show foreign investors it would not allow illegal land occupation. It would not tolerate what had happened in Zimbabwe. The rule of law had to be followed. The government won an eviction order (10 July 2001). When private security guards moved in, mediation by the South African Council of Churches

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averted a confrontation. The churches agreed to negotiate with the government to find alternative land and the PAC appealed for calm. Shacks were demolished in a step that made the government uncomfortable since the action was all too reminiscent of what used to happen in the apartheid days.

Anxieties about future land grabs were growing. An umbrella body called the National Landless Peoples Grouping was being formed to model action on what happens in Brazil. At the forefront was the National Land Committee, whose leader, Tom Lebert, said: 'The constitution in Brazil has a use it or lose it clause. You can't just own land, it has to be put to productive use. Landless people occupy land that is under-utilized and they force the government to implement the constitution.'

Later, the government introduced tougher measures to declare land invasions illegal. South Africa has 45 000 commercial farmers and one million employees. Since 1998 about 140 farmers have been murdered each year, 80 per cent of them white.

Nelson Mandela, who was reported to be suffering from prostate cancer, launched a £150 million drive (17 July 2001) to regenerate inner Johannesburg. Because of the crime rate big business had migrated to Sandton, 15 km away, and the stock exchange had moved out of the centre. Car hijackers strike in the city eight times a day.

President Thabo Mbeki made a state visit to Britain (12–14 July 2001), during which he tried to win increased support from his country's trading and investment partner. He brought 80 business people with him. The government had been disappointed at the low level of foreign capital going into South Africa. After peaking at \$4 billion in 1997 it had fallen to nearer \$1 billion. In the first six months of 2001, however, foreign investment rose substantially, despite the downturn in the world economic situation.

Top of the political agenda in his talks with British Prime Minister Tony Blair was Zimbabwe and the plan for Africa which he and President Obasanjo of Nigeria were later to put before the G8 meeting in Genoa. The plan aims to rescue the continent from the cycle of poverty, mismanagement, corruption and war.

The lengthily titled UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance in Durban (31 August 2001) began stormily and remained an acrimonious affair till it ended nine days later. Ten thousand delegates from 150 countries attended. The USA threatened to boycott the meeting, but then sent a mid-level delegation. It objected to Zionism being equated with racism. Demands for the former colonial powers to apologize for slavery and to pay reparations to descendants of slaves who want to return to Africa ran into difficulties.

Britain sent a delegation headed by Baroness Amos, the minister for Africa, which lined up alongside Europe. South Africa emerged as one of the leading voices to promote recompense. President Obasanjo of Nigeria said that although he could live without reparations Africans demanded a full apology from Western countries for slavery. Many countries had problems with the meeting. India fought successfully to sideline the issues of caste discrimination so that the subject did not appear in any conference paper.

The country's banks voiced increasing concern at the growing brain drain.

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An annual survey by 27 banks showed that 10 140 emigrants in the industry left in 2000 and more had gone without registering. Most head for Britain, the USA, Australia and Canada.

The crime rate continued to be a factor driving people away. Health minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang announced findings of a survey that seemed to conflict with the government view that the foreign media were exaggerating the situation. It found that about 27 000 people were being murdered each year, most in their own homes. People were more likely to die from shooting than in a car accident. Almost one in nine of all deaths in the country were murder.

Winnie Mandela, still president of the ANC women's league, accused the Mbeki government of lacking democracy, betraying the ideals of the liberation movement and neglecting the poor. This followed an incident when she gate-crashed a ceremony commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Soweto rising and Mbeki pushed her away as she tried to hug him. The ANC later accused her of 'tomfoolery'.

Public hearings into 50 allegations of corruption, involving a multi-million arms deal signed with European makers in 1999 to re-equip the military forces, opened in Pretoria (11 June 2001). The cost of the deal, which included purchase of 24 Hawker fighter trainers from British Aerospace, was estimated at £3 billion but now said to be £4 billion. Television of the proceedings was barred.

Govan Mbeki, father of the President and one of the key leaders in the long struggle against apartheid, died (30 August 2001) aged 91. He was one of the eight ANC leaders who along with Nelson Mandela were in 1964 jailed for life on Robben Island. He was released in 1987 and became deputy president of the Senate in 1994.

Two other figures in the fight against apartheid, journalists Donald Woods and John Sutherland, died in the same month. Woods, 67, famous for his championing of Steve Biko, was editor of the East London *Daily Despatch* and had to flee the country. Sutherland, 87, was persecuted over many years as outspoken editor of the Port Elizabeth *Evening Post*.

Namibia

The world's biggest underwater diamond rush developed on the continental shelf off the Namibian coast. The scale of the deposit was only recently realized—an estimated three billion carats worth £346 billion. In 2001 six ships owned by De Beers were mining diamonds lying in 350 ft of water and they were being flown to the high security mining town of Oranjemund. In 2000 De Beers lifted 575 000 carats off the seabed. In 2001 the figures were expected to be much larger.

Botswana

To fight AIDS the government decided to make anti-retroviral drugs available through its public health service. Botswana has one of the world's highest infection rates, with 38.5 per cent of its 1.5 million population affected. Neighbouring South Africa has decided not to provide the drugs through its health service, but Botswana considered the huge cost was necessary if the country was to keep the skills needed for economic growth.

Swaziland

A decree made in June 2001 empowering King Mswati to ban newspapers, overturn court rulings and jail anyone for ridiculing him brought strong protests from trade unionists, human rights activists and pro-democracy groups. The US State Department threatened economic sanctions if it was not revoked. The King, the last absolute monarch in sub-Saharan Africa, abolished the decree (25 July 2001), saying that he had not had time to read it in detail before it became law. One of its orders in the decree made it a criminal offence for the King's subjects to bare their buttocks in protest at royal edicts—a common expression of popular dissent.

Lesotho

A case that opened in Maseru in June 2001, in which Masupha Sole, former chief executive of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, was accused of receiving £3 million over 10 years, marked the beginning of a government drive to put multi-national companies on trial for paying bribes. European and Canadian companies, four of them British, were involved. Attorney-General Fine Maema said in an interview: 'People are quick to point the finger at Africa, but if someone is taking the money then someone is paying it and they must be held accountable too. You can see from this case that it is not only Africa that is corrupt.'

India

When former actress Jayaram Jayalalitha was elected chief minister of Tamil Nadu, she ordered her predecessor, Muthuvel Karunanidhi, to be jailed for corruption. The ex-chief minister, 78-year-old leader of the DMK party, was seen on television being snatched from his bed by police at 2 am (30 June 2001). Two central government ministers from DMK were also arrested on charges of 'criminal intimidation' while trying to prevent Karunanidhi's arrest. Jayalalitha's move was said to be revenge because Karunanidhi had jailed her for 27 days when he was chief minister.

Jayalalitha was appointed Chief Minister by state governor Fathima Beevi, despite the fact that the ex-actress had been banned from standing because of a criminal conviction. After the arrests the central government forced Beevi to resign and Jayalalitha then ordered Karunanidhi's release 'on humanitarian grounds'. The episode provoked violence in the state with one man burning himself to death.

Former defence minister George Fernandes was sent from Delhi to inquire into the situation. He said direct federal rule should be imposed, but the Indian government rejected his recommendation (3 July 2001). The DMK is an important component in the 23-party coalition in New Delhi.

A few weeks later, another high profile woman politician made big headlines in India. Phoolan Devi, aged 38, known as the bandit queen and the subject of an internationally successful film in 1994, was shot dead outside her home in New Delhi (25 July 2001)—police said by three masked men who escaped in a

bicycle rickshaw. But two days later Sher Singh Rana called a press conference in Deradhun and proclaimed himself the killer. Police arrested him.

Low-caste Devi was a legendary figure. She was accused in 1981 of orchestrating the murder of 22 upper-caste men said to have gang-raped her. She hid for two years in the forests of Madhya Pradesh living on banditry. She surrendered in 1983. Although she was charged with 49 crimes, she was never convicted but served 11 years in jail. She joined the Samajwadi (Socialist) Party, vowing to fight for lower-caste people, and became an MP in New Delhi with a huge majority.

She was defeated in the 1998 election, but a year later returned to parliament. Films and books made her a cult figure and President K. R. Narayanan, himself lower caste, came to see her as the symbol of the struggle for the poorest of the poor. Devi's murderers were thought to be members of families of the 22 she killed in 1981 and high caste. Sher Singh Rama's claim to be the avenger was doubted. Samajwadi party leader Amar Singh accused the ruling BJP of conspiring to kill her. Such had Devi's fame become by the time she died a leading article in the London *Times* likened her to Boadicea and Joan of Arc.

Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee said in his independence anniversary address (15 August 2001) that the 10-year-old economic reform programme would be refocused to target the rural poor. He also pledged to stamp out corruption in the financial system by regulations to protect small investors. The pledge followed the resignation and arrest (21 July 2001) of P. S. Subramanyam, chairman of the Unit Trust of India, which has 20 million investors. Two weeks earlier Vajpayee, 74 and in poor health, had offered to resign for failing to keep unity in the 23-party coalition. His position became increasingly precarious when the Samata party, a key component, again threatened to pull out of the government.

India's economy grew by 5.2 per cent in the year to March 2001, according to revised figures—below expectations. A rate of 5.5 per cent was forecast for the next year, still making it the fastest-growing economy in Asia after China. Software exports were still growing strongly, despite the world slowdown. Manmohan Singh, leader of the opposition in the upper house and architect of the economic reform programme begun in 1991, said India no longer had food or foreign exchange shortages, but 'what is holding us back is lack of good government'.

A new setback in the reform programme came when the government said the privatization of VSNL, the monopoly international telecommunications provider, planned for August, was to be postponed by several months.

Severe floods in July submerged 7000 villages in Orissa, still recovering from the 1999 cyclone which killed 10 000 people. UNDP said the state had become a new global frontline as a result of climate change. By contrast Gujarat, hit by severe earthquake in January, was suffering its worst drought in 100 years.

Fire in a village mental asylum in Tamil Nadu (7 August 2001) killed 25 patients chained to their beds. Four staff were arrested. In two other disasters, 54 people died as a train plunged off a bridge in Kerala (22 June 2001), and 25 died as a bus fell into a gorge in the Himalayas (28 June 2001).

Pakistan

Military ruler General Pervez Musharraf dismissed President Rafiq Tarar, dissolved the already suspended parliament and provincial assemblies and elevated himself from Chief Executive to President (20 June 2001). Tarar had stayed as a figurehead after Musharraf seized power in 1999. Chief Justice Irshad Hasan Khan swore in Musharraf who said he had made the move 'to guarantee stability and continuity of all reforms'. The Commonwealth and the USA condemned the move. Secretary-General Don McKinnon called it 'steps in the wrong direction' and said it had to be asked where the military would fit in to the equation after democratic elections. Washington said that until Pakistan moved towards democracy it would keep in place sanctions imposed after the coup. Musharraf said he would abide by the Supreme Court's judgment setting a three-year deadline from the coup for a return to democracy. It was suggested Musharraf had taken the presidency to strengthen his hand in the July 2001 talks with Indian Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee.

On Independence Day (14 August 2001) Musharraf promised elections to the provincial and national parliaments and the senate in the first 11 days of October 2002—the latest date to comply with the court order. Changes in the constitution would allow future presidents to dismiss prime ministers on evidence of corruption and inefficiency without having to dissolve parliament. It was expected that the army would remain in the background and that Musharraf would stay as a civilian president. The army had ruled Pakistan for 27 of the 54 years of independence.

The Commonwealth Secretary-General visited Pakistan (23 August 2001) and discussed the President's 'roadmap' for the restoration of democracy. When the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) met in London (3–4 September 2001) it decided to recommend to Heads of Government that the Secretary-General should have an active monitoring rôle in the period leading to restoration of democracy and they should favour the presence of Commonwealth observers. Pakistan's suspension should continue pending a return to democratic government.

In announcing his election plans Musharraf promised £715 million building projects, mostly dams and canals. He also announced a ban on two hardline Islamic sectarian groups responsible for killings. A few days later extremists killed two prominent Shi'as—Shaukay Mirza, head of Pakistan State Oil, and top research director Ayed Zaffar Hussain. All this came a day before an IMF team arrived for talks in Islamabad.

Finance Minister Shjaukat Aziz announced in his budget (19 June 2001) a freeze on defence spending for the next financial year—a change from earlier years when such spending was inviolate. Officials said it was a concession to international financial institutions from which Pakistan sought help to reschedule debt repayments. Up to 39 per cent of foreign exchange earnings go into debt servicing.

Figures released in July showed the serious extent of the brain drain from Pakistan. Visa applications for the USA tripled in the year up to October 2000. The biggest number of applications for Britain came from Pakistan, while Canada, the first choice, received 40 per cent more in the first quarter of 2001.

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A landslide and flash flood killed more than 200 people (24 July 2001) in the North West Frontier Province, the heaviest rains in a century. Rawalpindi and Islamabad had 24.4 inches in 24 hours.

India and Pakistan

President Pervez Musharraf visited India (14–16 July 2001) for talks at the invitation of the Indian Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee, during which he went to the house where he was born four years before the transfer of power and from which his family fled to the new Pakistan. Before he went Musharraf said he wanted an unequivocal acceptance that Kashmir was the dispute bedeviling relations. Both sides repeated hardline statements over Kashmir. On the eve of the talks India freed more than 400 Pakistani prisoners and Pakistan released Indian peace activist Vikas Singh. Other confidence-building measures included resumption of civilian traffic with Pakistan and an Indian offer to issue instant visas at the Kashmir checkpoints and at the Line of Control.

The talks, held in Agra, did not succeed. The two leaders could not agree on the wording of a declaration setting out a course for tackling Kashmir and other issues. Neither side would give way on how to describe the Kashmir dispute and the 12-year-old civil war there. India calls the militants terrorists and Pakistanis ‘freedom fighters’. Pakistani Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar said afterwards that the talks had been inconclusive but not failed. Vajpayee asked Musharraf to India in 2002 and he accepted.

On his return home Musharraf, regarded by India as the architect of the 1999 Kargil conflict, broadcast a conciliatory address in which he said his people had to accept the reality that there was no military solution to the dispute.

Human rights groups believe about 60 000 people have died in Kashmir fighting in the last 10 years. About 4000 Pakistani guerrillas face an Indian army of 350 000–400 000. Even as the Agra talks were going on 90 people were killed in Kashmir.

Following three massacres in two weeks in the Hindu-dominated region of Jammu the Indian government introduced (9 August 2001) sweeping emergency powers similar to those that had been in force in the Muslim-dominated Valley of Kashmir since 1989. The move gave the Indian army the right to search and detain without legal warrant and shoot suspected terrorists on sight.

Bangladesh

Pending elections, Sheikh Hasina left office (5 July 2001) after five years in power—longer than any other prime minister since independence. In accordance with the constitution she was replaced by a caretaker administration. President Shahabuddin Ahmed swore in Latifur Rahman, retired chief justice, as chief adviser to head a 10-member administration. Opposition leader Khaleda Zia boycotted the ceremony because she said the Prime Minister had stayed in office two extra days.

Shots were fired at Khaleda Zia’s motorcade near Dhaka (17 June 2001). She was unhurt and said it was an attempt on her life. A two-day general strike was called two days later in protest at the attack.

Sri Lanka

A devastating attack by Tamil Tiger rebels on the Bandaranaike International Airport (16 July 2001) killed 18 people, destroyed 13 aircraft and caused nearly £300 million of damage. About 13 rebels, some with suicide bombs strapped to their chests, broke through the tight defences. All were killed. So were five soldiers. Sri Lanka Airlines lost three Airbus airliners and two more were damaged. The air force lost eight aircraft. The attacks sent hundreds of foreign tourists scrambling for cover. It was a serious setback for the country's economic revival. Tourism had been enjoying its best summer since 1983. The timing of the raid was symbolic—it was the day in 1983 when the Tigers began their separatist campaign. Sri Lanka immediately launched air strikes against Tiger positions in the Jaffna peninsula.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga suspended parliament for two months (10 July 2001) to thwart a non-confidence vote against her minority government. The crisis was caused by the defection of seven Muslim MPs. It was the first time since independence in 1948 that a government had clung to power after being reduced to a minority. The President called a referendum on whether the country needed a new constitution. Opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe said impeachment of the President was the only way to stop the country sliding into dictatorship. Two died in a rally in Colombo demanding the reopening of parliament, but a second rally (23 August 2001) passed peacefully.

Malaysia

Public prosecutors told a court hearing (12 May 2001) that four outstanding charges of corruption and one of sodomy against former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim were to be dropped. No reason was given. Anwar, serving 15 years jail on other charges, had just returned to prison after spending five months in hospital with a slipped disc.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad warned (22 June 2001) that the Islamic opposition, PAS, could win power at the next elections, due by 2004, and that could lead to Malaysia's 'recolonization'. PAS became the largest opposition party in the 1999 elections and the ruling UMNO had not won back support since. Mahathir said a swing of 200–300 votes in 21 Malay-majority constituencies would mean PAS replacing UMNO as the largest party.

Nine Malaysian men who had served with the mujahideen in Afghanistan and against Christians in Ambon, Indonesia, were arrested in June—an Islamic group, said police, wishing to 'procure a purist society' who had committed bank robbery, murder and temple bombing.

Singapore

Two thousand people attended Singapore's first ever officially permitted anti-government rally (28 April 2001), held to raise funds towards heavy damages from a lost defamation suit against J. B. Jeyaretnam, one of Singapore's three opposition MPs. Jeyaratnam was succeeded (27 May 2001) as general secretary of the Workers' Party by Low Thia Khiang. Two months later he lost an appeal

against a bankruptcy order (23 July 2001). He was a day late with an instalment paying off the suit and disqualified from the legislature. The 30-year-old political career of Jeyaratnam, famous as a defender of civil liberties and press freedom, was over.

Legislation was put before parliament (26 July 2001) to curb political campaigning and debate on the Internet. Under it political parties, candidates and groups with websites would have to register them with the Singapore Broadcasting Authority (SBA). All election advertising in print or on the Internet would have to identify the printer, publisher and person for whom it was being done. The SBA code of conduct bans homosexuality, pornography, extreme violence and incitement of racial or religious hatred, but not politics. Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said 'information and disinformation' were disseminated equally on the net and not always easy to distinguish.

Brunei

Bruneians flocked to a six-day auction (11–16 August 2001) for 10 000 items owned by an investment company run by the Sultan's playboy brother, Prince Jefri Bolkiah. The bizarre collection included gold-plated toilet brushes, a fire engine, an Airbus simulator and 100 gold-plated chandeliers. On offer was enough marble to build another Taj Mahal. The prince's company went bankrupt in 1998 with £11.2 billion debt. The Sultan dismissed his brother as Finance Minister for allegedly siphoning off funds. After the auction, which raised only £5 million, the Prince accepted a summons from 300 creditors for £700 million. The sale had raised only £5 million.

Hong Kong

Despite hints to the contrary, Hong Kong made clear it had no plans to legislate against the Falun Gong, the spiritual movement banned in China. Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa had called it an evil cult, but the rule of law based on British common law principles—as required to continue when China took over the city in 1997—put the Falun Gong beyond the reach of the government. To outlaw them would have broken the 'one country, two systems' formula guaranteed for 50 years. The sect has 500 members in Hong Kong. About 160 members demonstrated outside Tung's office (20 July 2001) to mark the second anniversary of the outlawing of the Falun Gong in China.

The Court of Final Appeal turned down (20 July 2001) a request from the government to refer an immigration case to Beijing. A three-year-old Chinese boy born in Hong Kong while his parents were on a visit was involved. The court ruled that determining whether the boy was a Hong Kong resident was within its jurisdiction.

The government said the opening of a Disney theme park by 2006 would create 86 000 jobs. It would be the only nationalized Disney theme park in the world. The contract gave the government majority ownership of the park, but it was contributing more than £2 billion and supplying the hugely expensive land.

Fiji Islands

Elections held (25 August–5 September 2001) in the wake of the May 2000 coup by George Speight produced no clear majority for either of the two main parties, the Fiji Labour Party led by former prime minister Mahendra Chaudhry, and the newly-formed Fijian nationalist Soqosoqo Dauvata ni Lewenivanua (SDL), led by caretaker prime minister Laisenia Qarase. Although it won only 25 per cent of the votes, the SDL took 31 seats while the Labour Party with 38 per cent took only 27 seats. The 1997 constitution provides for a multi-party coalition requiring all parties with less than 10 per cent of the seats in the House of Representatives to be included in the government. Qarase was named Prime Minister again, but when he chose his cabinet there was no one from the Labour Party. Yet he included two members from an ultra-nationalist party who had been implicated in the Speight coup. In a letter to Chaudhry, Qarase said Labour ‘would not contribute to a stable and workable government’. Chaudhry accused Qarase of acting like a dictator ‘blatantly defying the constitution’. The government, he said, had marginalized Indo-Fijians.

Chaudhry claimed widespread vote-rigging. A 12-person Commonwealth observer group led by Sir Henry Forde, former foreign minister of Barbados, said shortcoming should be investigated by the Elections Supervisor. It showed concern about the percentage of invalid votes and acknowledged complaints of irregularities in the count. But, it added, ‘having considered the allegations and taken into account the explanations we have received, we believe that the vote-counting process was credible. There were problems and shortcomings, but they were not of such significance to have compromised the integrity of the process.’

Fiji remained suspended from the Commonwealth councils and Secretary-General Don McKinnon pointed to two conditions for return to full membership set by the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group—that the observers must be satisfied with the conduct of the elections and that the government was formed in accordance with the constitution.

McKinnon said he was not satisfied the second precondition had been met and he dispatched his special envoy, Justice Pius Langa of South Africa, back to Fiji to investigate.

The treason case against rebel leader Speight and 12 supporters opened in Suva (29 May 2001) and was several times adjourned. Just before polling began the trial was postponed again until February 2002 on the grounds that the judge was too old. He was 65 and would have to retire before the case could end.

Speight, now in jail for more than a year, was allowed to stand in the election and won the seat in Tailevu North—the heartland of his support.

Papua New Guinea

When the formal signing (30 August 2001) of the Bougainville peace agreement took place a message from Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon was read out urging every islander to heal the scars of the long conflict. He said: ‘As long as you breathe the fresh Pacific air, as long as you can walk the tracks to distant villages, please remember those who died and those who lived and strived to give you an autonomous Bougainville.’

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In student protests against IMF-backed economic reforms three people were shot dead in Port Moresby (26 June 2001).

Solomon Islands

The government bowed to Commonwealth and other pressure (8 May 2001) by withdrawing legislation extending the life of parliament by a year. On 28 August 2001 parliament was dissolved. An election would be funded by the Commonwealth, the EU and the UN. Former prime minister Bartholomew Ulufa'alu said the opposition parties would contest the poll as the Solomon Islands Alliance for Change. Later he filed a case challenging the legality of the government.

The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group asked the Secretary-General at its September meeting in London to keep available his good offices to further peace in the islands and to arrange for the elections to be observed.

Guadalcanal provincial premier Ezekiel Alebu was shot and badly hurt in an assassination attempt (2 June 2001)—one of a series of violent incidents which continued to plague the country.

Tuvalu

While 180 countries were negotiating on climate change in talks in Bonn Tuvalu asked Australia and New Zealand whether they would let its citizens migrate there if the islands continued to sink due to rising sea levels and become uninhabitable. Australian Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said the Tuvalu people were not entitled to any special scheme—and it was 'not at the moment an issue' in which Tuvalu and other countries in the region were at risk.

Vanuatu

Speaker Paul Ren Tari suspended Prime Minister Edward Natapei and five colleagues from parliament (7 May 2001), and a week later locked MPs out of the building. Tara and his two deputies refused to obey a court order to convene the assembly to debate bills presented by Natapei's new government. Next day they were charged with sedition.

Australia

The Norwegian tanker Tampa en route from Perth to Singapore rescued 438 mainly Afghan refugees from a wooden fishing boat and anchored off Christmas Island (27 August 2001), 930 miles from mainland Australia. Argument raged over which country should admit them. Australia refused entry, saying the immigrants should return to the country they had left. Canberra said that was Indonesia. The Indonesian navy would not accept the freighter and Norway said it had no duty to give asylum. As the countries wrangled, the health of the refugees deteriorated and doctors were helicoptered on to the tanker. Prime Minister John Howard said Australia was not 'a soft touch'

and opinion polls gave him 89 per cent support. A 37-strong boarding party of armed Australian SAS men boarded Tampa (29 August 2001) ‘to protect Australian doctors tending the refugees’. Norway reported Australia to the UN while Canberra tried and failed to rush retrospective legislation through the Senate, giving it powers to remove ships and their passengers from Australian waters. New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said she would not have turned away a ship in such circumstances.

Howard told UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (30 August 2001) ‘Australia would not retreat in any way from what we have done. It is the right thing to do ... and it was in Australia’s interest.’

President Abdurrahman Wahid became the first Indonesian president to visit Australia in 26 years (25 June 2001). But he missed most of the first leg of his four-day trip because his plane landed in Darwin with engine trouble. The talks were seen by both sides as an important step in restoring relations after the East Timor conflict, even though Wahid was out of office a few weeks later. Howard flew to Jakarta (12 August 2001) and became the first foreign leader to pay an official visit to Indonesia after Megawati Sukarnoputri had become President. Wahid was not pleased at the visit or at Howard’s rapid phone call of congratulation as soon as she took over.

After tense talks Australia signed a deal (5 July 2001) with soon-to-be-independent East Timor on the division of oil and gas reserves in the Timor Sea which separates the countries. Timor would get 90 per cent of the royalties from the drilling—£2.8 billion to £3.5 billion in the 20 years from 2004. Australia had a 50–50 split with Indonesia when it was part of the country, but partly in return for recognizing Indonesian sovereignty. It soon realized the claim had little legitimacy. For East Timor the deal would transform its economy.

The Labor Party won regional elections in the Northern Territory in August for the first time ever. The victory followed wins in Western Australia and Queensland and took even Labor leader Kim Beazley by surprise. In the 26 years since Northern Territory had an independent legislature it had been run by the Country Liberal Party.

Treasurer Peter Costello said (19 July 2001) that the worst was over for the economy, which should grow by 3 per cent in 2001. Australia was expected to buck the world trend and recover to 3.5–4 per cent in 2002.

Howard said he backed calls by Australian captain Steve Waugh that Australia had won the Ashes so often they should be handed over to Australia instead of sitting in the urn in the MCC Museum at Lord’s in London.

New Zealand

Prime Minister Helen Clark said (9 July 2001) that ‘over time, as I am on the public record as saying, it is inevitable that New Zealand will change its constitutional status and become a republic’. She added that New Zealand was evolving its own identity ‘and our media are perhaps no longer as oriented to what used to be known among the grandparents of many of us as “the Old Country”.’

A report of the Waitangi Tribunal (16 June 2001) said the government should compensate the descendants of the Mori people of the Chatham Islands

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killed in scores and enslaved in their hundreds 150 years ago. The last pure blood Moriori died early last century after their tribal life and culture was destroyed.

Finance Minister Michael Cullen said (4 July 2001) New Zealand would dodge some of the effects of the global slowdown and keep growth at 2.5 per cent in 2001, although this would be down from 4.6 per cent two years ago. Tourism and good prices for meat and dairy products were lifting the trade balance to its best performance since 1995.

Government scientists said they would commercialize animal cloning technology. They had already cloned the first cow. Green politicians said they would overturn the recommendations of Agresearch, the government agency involved.

Canada

Prime Minister Jean Chretien objected in a personal phone call to British Prime Minister Tony Blair (15 June 2001) to the way in which knighthoods were bestowed in the Queen's birthday honours list on entrepreneur Terry Matthews and George Bain, Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast—both Canadian citizens. Downing Street said the two men had joint British-Canadian citizenship, but Chretien argued that long-standing convention required foreign governments to seek approval from his government before honouring Canadian citizens. In 1999 Chretien had blocked the award of a peerage to newspaper tycoon Conrad Black, who took legal action over the decision. Canada's court of appeal ruled in May 2001 that the prime minister had every right to advise the Queen which Canadian she should name in her honours list. Under Canada's Nickle Resolution of 1919 Canadian citizens are not supposed to accept foreign titles, but in 1989 and 1994 Canadians were awarded knighthoods without any problem.

New rules provided for the world's first government-run centre for cultivating marijuana to be licensed to provide the plant for use by patients with terminal or chronic conditions. Those allowed to use the drug could grow it at home or designate others to supply them. Nearly 300 people signed up for the programme ahead of its becoming legal. The new centre was in a disused copper mineshaft in Flin Flon, Manitoba. The producers have pioneered growth of crops ranging from roses to tomatoes by powerful lamps 1000 feet underground.

Jamaica

Violence broke out (7 July 2001) when police searched homes for guns in the Tivoli Gardens district of Kingston, heartland of the Labour Party. As so often before, gangs in West Kingston linked to Labour and the ruling People's National Party (PNP) provoked days of clashes. In four days 24 people died. Incidents began to spill into other parts of the island and tourists were told not to tour it alone. Prime Minister P. J. Patterson ordered the entire army on to the streets. The fighting died down, but renewed gunfights two weeks later killed another five people. Since January 2001 550 people had been murdered in

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Jamaica and another 75 killed by police. Amnesty International said Jamaica had the highest rate of police killings in the world.

Opposition leader and former prime minister Edward Seaga said the search for arms was part of a PNP plan to gain political advantage and call elections, due in 18 months, early. Opinion polls showed Labour in the lead after 12 years of PNP power. Seaga, now 71 and an MP for 40 years, said the PNP planned to assassinate him. At the demand of Seaga for a commission of inquiry into violence, Patterson ordered one. A few weeks later a gang said to be from a PNP area firebombed (16 August 2001) tenements and made 60 people homeless. Government and opposition leaders met to try to curb the violence.

On a visit to Jamaica (29 July 2001) British Prime Minister Tony Blair promised extra money for the police in their battle against armed drug gangs in Kingston. Britain is worried that some of these gangsters are travelling to Britain. On top of £3 million committed in January, Blair offered a £200 000 fund to help train the police force.

An Australian company opened a gold mining facility in central Jamaica—the first on the island. A 35 000-ounce yield was expected.

Patterson promised (27 April 2001) to scrap in 2002—the 40th anniversary of Jamaican independence—the Oath of Allegiance which MPs swear to the Queen ‘and her heirs and successors’. An oath of loyalty to Jamaica and its constitution would replace it.

Caribbean Union

A proposal for a political union of the Commonwealth states in the Leeward and Windward islands was being studied by the prime ministers of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts-Nevis, St Lucia and St Vincent (combined population 450 000). The group already has a common currency, common aviation and telecommunications authorities, and shares an appeal court. St Vincent prime minister Ralph Gonsalves said he saw a basis for a confederation like the European Union. Such a body could solve problems of representation at WTO and other forums which individual islands cannot manage.

Trinidad and Tobago

Discovery of a significant gasfield in May 2001 will help to make the country by 2003, said the government, the fifth largest exporter of liquefied natural gas in the world—after Indonesia, Algeria, Qatar and Malaysia. The new field contains 1000 billion cubic feet of gas—equal in energy to 180 million barrels of oil and enough to provide all Trinidad’s electricity needs for 50 years. Robert Riley, local chairman of BP, said his company expected 100 000 billion cubic feet of gas deposits would eventually be found off the east coast. So far 35 000 billion cubic feet has been found.

Antigua and Barbuda

Prime Minister Lester Bird dismissed Health Minister Bernard Percival and

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Attorney-General Errol Cort (2 May 2001) after an audit into payment of legal fees at the state-run Medical Benefit Centre. Deputy Solicitor-General Gertel Thom became Attorney-General and health was added to the portfolio of Home Affairs Minister John St Luce.

Montserrat

In elections (2 April 2001) the New People's Liberation Movement took office with seven parliamentary seats. The National Progressive Party won two.

Guyana

To reduce continuing clashes between their supporters, President Bharrat Jagdeo and opposition leader Desmond Hoyte agreed (8 April 2001) to the setting up of an Ethnic Relations Commission and a review of voter registration arrangements that would lead to electoral reform. They would also cooperate in drafting a new constitution. Hoyte's People's National Congress/Reform party agreed to recognize the legitimacy of the Jagdeo government. Clashes had arisen because of disputes over the result of the March 2001 election.

Jagdeo appointed Sam Hinds as his Prime Minister (19 May 2001) and Rudy Insanally became Foreign Minister.

Falkland Islands

Tony Blair became the first British prime minister to visit Argentina. The trip in July 2001 was about trade—he took 13 British businessmen—and when he met President de laRúa the Falklands was not discussed.

Gibraltar

In the first formal ministerial talks since 1997, British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Jack Straw told Spanish Foreign Minister Joseph Pique (26 July 2001) that Britain firmly opposed Spanish proposals for joint sovereignty. He said he did not see the proposals put forward by Pique's predecessor, Abel Matutes, as a basis for future talks. There would be no change in Gibraltar's status without the consent of its people.

Cyprus

Hundreds of rioters stormed a police station at the British base of Episkopi (3 July 2001) in a bid to release MP and pathologist Marios Matsakis who had been arrested for leading a protest against the erection of communications masts in an environmentally sensitive area. In the protest Matsakis spent seven hours on top of a pylon. He claimed there was a health hazard to local residents. In the fighting 60 people, including 31 police, were injured. Twelve British vehicles and several buildings were damaged. The Cyprus government had reservations about the project, but President Glafcos Clerides condemned the rioters and so did the British government. The protests continued for a second day and 100

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British troops were called out for what was the worst rioting since the bases were created in 1960.

The European Court of Human Rights found (23 May 2001) Cyprus guilty of human rights violations in a case brought by nine Turkish Cypriots against the Cypriot police. The court said they unlawfully detained the nine and ordered the government to pay damages.

In talks with Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides (3 July 2001) British Minister of State for Europe Peter Hain said Britain would work closely with Nicosia 'so that Cyprus will be at the head of the queue for accession to the EU'. But the UN-sponsored talks for a Cyprus settlement remained stalled after talks in Geneva between UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan (28 August 2001) and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash and a visit to the island by UN Special Adviser Alvaro deSoto.

Finance Ministers

Following postponement of the World Bank/IMF meetings the annual meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers scheduled for 25–26 September 2001 in St Lucia was postponed indefinitely. The theme was to have been financing for development, ahead of the UN conference on that subject to be held in Monterey, Mexico, in March 2002.

Before the G8 meeting in Genoa in July 2001 the Commonwealth Secretary-General contacted each of the leaders to encourage their full commitment to international development targets 'in a spirit of generosity ... even where your political considerations make this difficult'.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, IMF and World Bank hosted a seminar on Conditionality and Ownership (23–24 July 2001). Senior officials and ex-ministers from African and other Commonwealth countries examined how conditionality is working in practice and proposals for reform to make conditions attached to the loans simpler and more useful for borrowing countries.

United Kingdom

Sir Michael Jay, 55, Ambassador to France for the past five years, was named (27 July 2001) as the new Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He would succeed Sir John Kerr on his retirement. As head of the EU department, he led the team that negotiated the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.

Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, told heads of state (26 June 2001) at a UN special session on AIDS that '... we waste too much time and energy on UN conferences and special sessions. We use up enormous energy in arguing at great length over texts that provide few follow up mechanisms or assurances that governments and UN agencies will carry forward the declarations that are agreed.' She said the UN global health fund had been vastly over-hyped and would not get near its \$7–10 billion target.

Around the Commonwealth

For the first Commonwealth Awards for Action on HIV/AIDS 68 people and

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organizations, including heads of state were nominated. Half of all the world's AIDS deaths have been in Commonwealth countries.

A workshop was held by the Maldives Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Commonwealth Youth Programme in Male, Maldives (4 September 2001) to show unemployed youth how to run successful businesses.

The Secretary-General attended the Caribbean Community (Caricom) summit in Nassau, Bahamas (2–4 July 2001). One issue of particular concern he discussed with the leaders was that of tax havens, which had produced much friction between the OECD and several Commonwealth countries. The OECD, which had issued a black list of 35 havens put off publication of a second list and planned that no sanctions would be put in place on countries until at least 2003—the same deadline put on OECD members.

A new NGO called the Commonwealth Students and Youth Development Organization was launched in Cameroon. Schoolteacher Victor Agbor, the executive president, said one of its aims was to establish a national youth council in Cameroon.

The Secretariat published a new study into ways of improving exporting conditions to the European Union for Least Developed Countries. It is called *Duty and Quota Free Market Access for LDCs: An Analysis of Quad Initiatives*.