

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

DEREK INGRAM

The prospect of a third war between India and Pakistan, this time involving the use of nuclear weapons, set alarm bells ringing in the world's capitals in the first half of 2002. India rejected mediation and the most tentative of Commonwealth approaches were, as so many times in the past, rebuffed. The tension was eased in June on promises by Pakistan that it had stopped militants infiltrating through Kashmir. In Zimbabwe the violence continued unabated and inflation spiralled in the wake of President Robert Mugabe's election win. Britain and Spain tried to work out joint sovereignty for Gibraltar, but the people and government of the Rock would have none of it.

India–Pakistan

Following the ejection of the Taliban from Afghanistan in the first two months of 2002 by US and allied forces, tension between Pakistan and India rose to new levels. India did not consider Pakistan had taken strong enough action to stop the activities of extremist Muslim groups. It said terrorist groups were increasingly infiltrating into India from the Pakistan side of the Kashmir line of control. The rising rhetoric from both sides alarmed the coalition of Western powers that now controlled Afghanistan. Because the two countries had nuclear weapons, anxiety grew that the world might be on the edge of nuclear war. Both sides made threats that war might lead to the use of these weapons and Washington and London claimed to find it difficult to convince Pakistan and India of the appalling consequences that could flow from that. Especially alarming was the fact that there were no hot-line arrangements between the leaders of the two countries, as had existed between Washington and Moscow in the days of the Cold War. Washington let it be known that US intelligence estimated 12 million people could be killed and seven million maimed in the first day of a full-scale nuclear exchange between the neighbours.

Tension had subsided after General Pervez Musharraf arrested 2000 Islamic

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COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

activists and banned five Islamic groups in January but, as more incidents took place in Kashmir, India claimed Pakistan militants were still piling in there, despite Musharraf's pledge to end the 'terrorism'. In March alone 600 people were killed in Kashmir. Indian spokesmen would not rule out the option of going to war. They talked about punishing Pakistan.

Three militants dressed in Indian uniforms stormed an Indian army camp in Kashmir (14 May 2002) and in a two-hour gun battle shot dead 34 people, including women and children. All three were killed. Pakistan condemned the attack, which took place on the same day as Pakistani police in Vehari, Punjab, shot dead Riaz Basra, chief of Lashkar-I-Jhangvi, a group outlawed by Musharraf. The camp attack was carried out by another banned group, Lashkar-e-Toiba. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said India would have to hit back. The Indians said the Pakistani army was training these terrorists. They named the three attackers and said they were all Pakistanis.

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi called for Indian retaliation. The USA, Russia, Britain, Canada and the EU counselled restraint on both countries. Vajpayee made a long-planned visit to Kashmir that coincided with the camp attack. Renowned for his gnomic utterances, he said afterwards: 'The sky is clear. But sometimes lightning can strike even when the sky is clear.' When Indian officials were questioned about his plan to take a short holiday in the middle of such a crisis, they said: 'The Prime Minister is quite relaxed about the situation. He's seen it all before.' Abdul Ghani Lone, a moderate Muslim leader who wanted independence for Kashmir through peaceful means, was assassinated by masked gunmen dressed as police as he left a rally in Srinagar (21 May 2002), the day before Vajpayee's visit. The timing was seen as significant since Vajpayee had originally planned to encourage moderate separatists to take part in the state's first assembly elections due in September.

India ordered the expulsion of the Pakistan High Commissioner in Delhi (18 May 2002) and moved five warships in the Arabian Sea closer to Pakistan. Vajpayee said a new pledge by Musharraf (22 May 2002) to stop the terrorists was an empty promise too late. There was evidence that elements of the Pakistan army were helping the banned terrorist groups and that Musharraf could not stop the activity.

A statement following a meeting between Musharraf and his military and political advisers (22 May) pledged for the first time that Pakistan would not allow Kashmir to be used for terrorist activity, but that it would continue to support the Kashmiri people's struggle for self-determination. Militants in Pakistan's part of Kashmir confirmed that the army had been ordered to withdraw support from them and to tell them to suspend their activities. Militant leaders said: 'We feel very betrayed.' At the same Pakistan withdrew thousands of troops from the Afghan border to reinforce their positions on the frontline in Kashmir because of heavy shelling across the line of control. Later (10 June 2002) hardline Islamists in Pakistan, including three retired generals, launched a campaign of protest against the military regime ending support for the militants.

Pakistan held two days of ballistic missile tests (26–27 May 2002)—the Ghauri, with a range of 1000 miles, and a new one, the Ghaznavi, which can deliver a nuclear warhead 200 miles. Vajpayee said (26 May): 'There is a limit to our patience and tolerance.' A day later Musharraf gave a TV address setting

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

out his pledges to curb Pakistan-based terrorists. He said: 'We do not want war, but we would respond with full might. The entire nation will shed the last drop of blood to protect our motherland.' The Indians said the speech was 'disappointing and dangerous'.

A procession of Western leaders visited Islamabad and New Delhi in May and talked to both sides in bids to calm the situation—British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Jack Straw, EU External Affairs Commissioner Chris Patten, US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, finally followed by Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld. As throughout the long history of this dispute any possibility of Commonwealth mediation remained remote. Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon made some tentative contacts with such suggestions as, for example, despatch of an Eminent Persons Group on the lines of the South African example, but such ideas never got off the ground.

Britain and the USA took the unprecedented step (31 May 2002) of advising their citizens to leave India, although the signs now were that the crisis was winding down. All but 40 of the British High Commission's 250 staff were told to leave. Canada, Germany, Australia and New Zealand followed suit. Within Pakistan and India war was still seen as a distant prospect. Indians in New Delhi were showing no particular panic and most British and other nationals in India did not heed the advice and stayed put. Vajpayee and Musharraf attended a summit of 16 regional leaders in Almaty, Kazakhstan (4 June 2002). The two avoided contact, even when a few feet from each other. Vajpayee would not agree to meet Musharraf, but President Vladimir Putin of Russia met them separately for 90 minutes each, and said afterwards: 'They have no intention of using force to resolve problems.' Putin asked them to talks in Moscow. Musharraf agreed, but Vajpayee declined. At the end of the summit Vajpayee made an offer to set up joint military controls to monitor cross-border terrorism, but Pakistan called the offer 'impractical' and 'not new'. Vajpayee rejected a Pakistan proposal for international observers to monitor infiltration across the line of control.

A positive sign came when India lifted restrictions imposed in December 2001 banning Pakistani aircraft from its airspace (10 June 2002). Delhi said it had evidence that infiltration of Kashmir by militants had dropped off. Western and eastern Indian fleets were returning to port. A new High Commissioner would be appointed to Islamabad. The turning point had apparently been the trip made by Armitage. He had followed up Straw's visit and each had secured the promise from Pakistan that its crackdown on cross-border attacks was 'permanent and irreversible'. The Indians were reported to have said that what clinched it was the fact that the promise was made to the Americans and not to them.

India

Weeks of Hindu–Muslim clashes in Gujarat state began when a train full of Hindus returning from a visit to the disputed shrine of Ayodhya was attacked at Godhra (27 February 2002). Some 58 passengers were burned to death and many more injured. Lootings and burnings went on in Ahmedabad and many

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

other towns. Curfews were imposed and many casualties were caused by police firing. Several diplomatic missions in New Delhi, alarmed by what some saw as a human rights issue of considerable concern, claimed there was evidence of planned killings of Muslims. Three ambassadors were refused a meeting with Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh. European Union officials formally raised concerns (2 May 2002). The EU said the talks were 'free and frank' and India said the issue was discussed 'in an open and candid manner'. Prime Minister Vajpayee described the violence as 'momentary disruptions' and denied India's secularism was under threat. However, 110 000 Muslims remained in refugee camps, afraid to go home. Many accused Chief Minister Narendra Modi, who belongs to Vajpayee's BJP party, of failing to stop Hindu gangs slaughtering Muslims, but he was unrepentant.

In the meantime, the Supreme Court banned (4 March 2002) Hindu militants from staging a controversial prayer ceremony at a site next to the mosque in Ayodhya demolished in 1992. Militants wanted to start rebuilding the temple by 12 March, but 8000 police and paramilitaries were moved in. They arrested 900 Hindu activists and militants were kept from the site. Vajpayee, who had cancelled his attendance at the Commonwealth summit in Australia because of the Gujarat riots, flew to see victims (4 April 2002) and urge the two communities to heal their differences. Gujarat is India's foremost investment centre with an economy that grew 4.5 per cent in 2001, despite having been hit recently by drought, cyclone and earthquake. A 16-hour censure debate took place in parliament (1 May 2002), during which Vajpayee denied he was anti-Muslim and offered Gujarat victims an aid package. The government comfortably won the censure motion, but Junior Foreign Minister Omar Abdullah offered his resignation, 'deeply pained' at what was happening. Incidents continued into May.

The BJP suffered defeats in elections (13–21 February 2002) to four state assemblies. It lost control of Uttar Pradesh to the socialist Samajwadi Party. It also lost the newly created state of Uttaranchal and Punjab, where Congress came back after five years out of control. Congress gained ground, too, in Manipur. The party was steadily making a comeback under Sonia Gandhi's leadership, being in government now in 14 out of 30 states. Four years ago it controlled only three states. Now the BJP led in only three.

A joint session of parliament—only the third since independence in 1947—passed the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance Bill (26 March 2002). Under it police could hold suspects for questioning for 90 days, and for 180 days with approval from a special court. Sonia Gandhi's Congress and other opposition groups opposed the Bill in a bitter debate. She accused the government of pushing it through in the wake of the Gujarat violence, but Home Minister L.K. Advani said it was vital following 11 September and the danger of terrorism from Kashmir. Sale by the USA to India of a £100 million weapon-seeking radar system was under negotiation in February—the first such sale since sanctions were imposed in 1998 after the Indian nuclear tests. Other defence deals were to follow. At the same time India signed protocols with Russia on bilateral defence cooperation on army, navy and air force projects. In May it was announced that India and the USA would hold joint military exercises for the first time in 40 years. Meantime, a huge deal with Britain for

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

Hawk military jets, which had been dragging on for 16 years, remained stalled over its cost.

The Supreme Court in New Delhi ruled (4 May 2002) that all parliamentary candidates must disclose their personal financial assets and, if any, 'criminal background'. One-third of members of regional assemblies were believed to have such a background—namely, either to have charges pending against them or to be appealing against conviction in the lower courts. Between 50 and 100 members of the lower house in Delhi are thought to be, or to have been, on charges ranging from corruption to murder. The ruling was seen as a welcome step towards cleaning up the electoral system.

Former prime minister, Narasimha Rao, now 80, was acquitted (15 March 2002) of vote-buying charges dating back to 1993.

Nearly 500 people died in Andhra Pradesh in April–May when the temperature soared to 49°C—a tragedy said to be unparalleled in the state's history.

Pakistan

President Pervez Musharraf announced (5 April 2002) that he would hold a referendum to seek public approval for his term of office to be extended for five years and to introduce a new political formula for the country. He would have the dominant role in the structure after parliamentary elections in October. The voting age was reduced from 21 to 18. In a TV broadcast he said Western democracy did not suit Pakistan, which should have a system suited to its environment. He added: 'I need an assurance that people are in favour of continuity and reform. It will give me a political confidence and moral ascendancy.' He had never wished to be involved in politics, but had decided to stay in power in the best interests of the country. In three weeks of political rallies he accused Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif of plundering the country and trying to appease India. He would continue to support the liberation of Kashmir.

Political parties were allowed one opportunity to gather publicly—three days before the vote. Several splinter groups from the two major parties, as well as former cricketer Imran Khan and former president Farooq Leghari, sided with the President. The supreme court, whose judges had been ordered to swear loyalty after the 1999 coup, threw out petitions challenging the vote and ruled the referendum legal. Three questions were put in the referendum (30 April 2002): Do you support the policies of economic reform? Do you support the policy of fighting extremism? Do you want General Musharraf to be President for another five years? The announced result (1 May 2002) was a 98 per cent Yes. Officials claimed a 75 per cent turnout, but opposition parties ridiculed the figure.

The Pakistan Human Rights Commission said turnout had been 'low' and irregularities 'exceeded our worst fears'. Commission director I.A. Rehman said the government figures were ridiculous—'in many polling booths there were no voters at all'. Officials admitted some irregularities but denied multiple voting and ballot stuffing. Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon said 'the Commonwealth would be concerned if the referendum were used to entrench any undemocratic form of government'. He pointed out that the

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

referendum was not part of the election roadmap to democracy announced by Musharraf in 2001 and outlined to him on a visit to Pakistan. McKinnon recalled that a similar device had been used by a former military leader in Pakistan to stay in power.

A Shia mosque in Bhakkar, Punjab, was bombed (26 April 2002) and 12 women and children killed. Police suspected the outlawed Sunni pro-Taliban Sipah-I-Sahaba group. Worshippers were marking the death of the prophet Mohammad's grandson in AD 680. A suicide bomber killed 14 people, mostly French naval engineers standing outside the Sheraton hotel in Karachi (8 May 2002). The men were working on a submarine project for the Pakistan navy. The attack was one of several on Westerners that included US journalist Daniel Pearl, who was kidnapped (23 January 2002) and murdered. Pearl's body was found, cut into pieces, weeks after the kidnap, although Musharraf had contended on a visit to Washington (13 February 2002) that Pearl was still alive. Grenades had been thrown into a Protestant church in Islamabad (18 March 2002), killing two Americans.

In advance of the Washington trip the USA signed a pact with Pakistan increasing defence cooperation. It enabled US forces in Afghanistan to receive fuel, equipment and medical services and they would use Pakistani training facilities and hold joint exercises. The USA had cut off military and humanitarian aid to Pakistan in 1990 after its nuclear testing. Now, in return for its support of Washington's war against terrorism Pakistan was coming in out of the cold, but the rewards were far short of what it had hoped for—\$200 million economic aid to reduce \$1 billion debt. However, the World Bank approved a £340 million loan (11 June 2002), the latest in a series of packages designed to help restructure the economy.

Musharraf flew to Kabul (2 April 2002) and for the first time gave his personal backing to Afghanistan's interim leader, Hamid Karzai. Two days later he freed several leading Islamist clerics and 1300 supporters arrested in a wave of pro-Taliban street protests after 11 September. Abdul Sattar resigned as foreign minister (7 June 2002) for health reasons. At the time, Pakistan was locked in the stand-off with India. Sattar had a reputation for toughness.

General Tikka Khan, chief of staff of the Pakistani army, who as the ruthless governor of West Pakistan tried to stop its independence as Bangladesh, died (28 March 2002) aged 87. Under Khan the army launched the assault on student halls of residence in Dhaka University on 25 March 1971 that caused the deaths of hundreds of intellectuals and students.

Bangladesh

After the October 2001 election the chief opposition Awami League party led by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed boycotted parliament. Begum Khaleda Zia introduced a bill repealing an act passed under the previous government which made mandatory the display of portraits of Hasina's father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founder of Bangladesh. As a result it was announced (14 March 2002) that all 58 Awami League (AL) MPs were sending their resignations from parliament to the Prime Minister. On the day the bill became law police injured 50 AL supporters demonstrating in Dhaka.

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

About 300 people died when an overcrowded ferry crossing the Meghna river sank in a storm (5 May 2002).

Use and production of polythene bags were banned to protect the environment and promote use of jute products. Shopping bags threatened to choke the country's drainage system. A layer of polythene was said to be lying on the bed of the Buriganga river in Dhaka. Many small factories making the bags had to shut.

Sri Lanka

Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe and Tamil Tiger rebel leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran signed a permanent ceasefire agreement (21 February 2002), aimed at ending 19 years of ethnic conflict that had cost 60 000 lives. The truce had been mediated by the Norwegian government and was to be monitored by representatives from Scandinavian countries. The document allowed unarmed combatants from either side to move through each other's territory and guaranteed civilians protection from 'torture, intimidation, abduction and harassment'. The two sides had agreed to meet for peace talks in Thailand.

Wickramasinghe visited the checkpoint into rebel-held territory at Omanthai, walking to within 500 metres of Tiger soldiers sheltering under a tree. It was the first time a Sri Lankan prime minister had visited the north for seven years. The Tamils released TV footage of Prabhakaran in civilian dress instead of his usual fatigues.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga said she had some concerns over clauses and aspects of the ceasefire document. She had been told about it only after Prabhakaran had signed. In a government of French-style cohabitation it was 'improper and undemocratic'. She warned that she could stop the agreement with one letter to the army commander.

Prabhakaran, in safari suit, emerged from a secret jungle location to give his first press conference for 12 years (10 April 2002). He said he was considering abandoning his demand for a separate Tamil state and 'renouncing the armed struggle if a solution acceptable to the Tamil people can be 'worked out'. Journalists were allowed to pour into the forbidden northern territory.

Prabhakaran said his was not a terrorist organisation: 'You have to distinguish between what constitutes terrorism and a liberation struggle.' In a two-and-a-half hour press conference he looked uncomfortable when asked about the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who was blown up by a woman Tiger suicide bomber in 1991. Wickramasinghe visited Sri Lankan army positions on the northern Jaffna peninsular (14 March 2002)—the first trip there by a prime minister since 1982—and held a meeting in Jaffna with US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca. She said the USA would lift its ban on the Tiger movement only when it ended all hostilities and renounced its goal of an independent state.

Finance Minister Kairship Nariman Choksy launched his first budget (22 March 2002), predicting a growth rate of 3.5–4 per cent after the first contraction since independence (of 1.3 per cent) in 2001–02.

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

Malaysia

Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmed Badawi said (12 March 2002) that 158 420 illegal immigrants had been arrested in 2001. Up to two million immigrant workers were believed to be in the country. It was reported that 6378 immigrants from Indonesia and the Philippines had been rounded up in Sabah (24 March 2002) and 10 000 squatter homes demolished.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad was enjoying better relations with Washington than for some years because of the way he had cracked down on Muslim extremists after 11 September. In May, 62 suspected militants were in detention. His strong stand was met by some opposition at home, but two by-election wins with increased majority seemed to show that it was generally approved.

Singapore

Relations between the ethnic Chinese majority and ethnic Malay Islamic minority were stirred when 13 Muslim Singaporeans were arrested for allegedly planning terrorist attacks against US military and commercial interests. Then a ban on young girls wearing headscarves in national schools angered Singapore's Muslim neighbours. When three Malay girls went to school in traditional scarves they were suspended. Officials from Malaysia, Brunei and Bangladesh criticized the action and were rebuked by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong. Some Malays feel they are second-class citizens in Singapore, although 15 per cent of the population practise Islam.

Hong Kong

Bankruptcies in the first five months of 2002 nearly trebled against the same period in 2001. Unemployment was at a record high of 7.1 per cent and GDP fell to 0.9 per cent in the first quarter. Earlier (21 February 2002) a government report warned that fiscal reserves could run out in seven years. Protests and demonstrations took place for several weeks after the expiry of the 31 March deadline for 4000 migrants to return to the mainland. In one protest about 200 people surrounded the car of Hong Kong's security chief and trapped her for an hour (24 April 2002). Of the 7000 people who had lost their right to stay, 4700 had returned to the mainland. The migrants were children of mainlanders who went to Hong Kong to find work, and for some deportation meant separation from family.

Fiji Islands

George Speight pleaded guilty to treason at his trial in Suva for overthrowing the ethnic-Indian-led government in 2000. He was sentenced to be executed (18 February 2002), but next day President Josefa Iloilo personally intervened and commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment. Speight surprised the court by pleading guilty. His counsel said he had done this to help close the country's ethnic wounds. Ten of Speight's co-defendants were sentenced to between one-

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

and-a-half and three years on abduction charges.

The Appeal Court ruled (15 February 2002) that the government was unconstitutional because it included no members of Chaudhry's Fiji Labour Party (FLP). It was entitled to representation proportional to the 38 per cent of seats in the legislature won in the 2001 elections. Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase gave notice of appeal to the Supreme Court. Fiji's Appeal Court comprises three New Zealand judges, one Australian and one British (Chief Justice of Tonga).

The Supreme Court ruled (15 March 2002) that the FLP had the right to make all eight nominations for opposition seats in the Senate. A Suva court acquitted (15 March 2002) two men, one an army officer, of conspiracy in the last days of December 2001 to abduct Qarase and the armed forces commander with the intention of freeing Speight and his co-defendants. The Senate enacted a bill to abolish the death penalty (6 March) Ten ethnic Indians were admitted for the first time to the army's officer cadet corps. It had long been perceived that Indians had been unwilling to serve in Fiji's armed forces during World War Two.

Papua New Guinea

Parliament unanimously voted to support Bougainville self-government (26 March 2002). Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon who, as New Zealand Foreign Minister, helped restart the peace process in 1996, said that 'the Commonwealth stands ready to assist if required in supporting programmes for the establishment of an autonomous Bougainville government'. One hundred troops of the PNG Defence Force mutinied (9 March 2002) and occupied barracks in Wewak, 80 km from Port Moresby. The mutineers burnt down buildings and petitioned for a halt to troop cuts, privatization and the dismissal of the Prime Minister. Loyal troops retook the barracks (23 March 2002) without injuries. Eleven ringleaders were charged. A ceasefire agreement signed (13 March 2002) in the Southern Highlands capital of Mendi was expected to end months of tribal fighting that had killed 200.

The Australian company BHP handed over majority ownership of the OK Tedi copper and gold mine to an independent trust. The government owns 30 per cent of the mine, and had long resisted a plan to close the mine, which accounts for 10 per cent of the country's GNP. Environmental pollution from the mine has been causing concern for years.

Samoa

New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark apologized to Samoa at a state luncheon in Apia (4 June 2002) for the inept and incompetent way the colonial administrators controlled the country after New Zealand took it over from Germany during World War One. The dinner marked Samoa's 40 years of independence. In particular she apologized for the decision to let the New Zealand ship *Tahuna* dock in Apia in 1919 when it was carrying passengers sick from the global influenza outbreak. Polynesian people had little resistance to the disease and 22 per cent of the population died. Clark also regretted the

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

shooting 10 years later of 19 people seeking self-rule by peaceful disobedience. Prime Minister Tuilaepe Sailele Malielegaoi said Samoa had forgiven New Zealand at independence and did not seek an apology. As a Christian nation, Samoans believed in forgiveness.

Solomon Islands

New Zealand Deputy High Commissioner Bridget Nichols, British-born and 50, was stabbed to death outside her home in Honiara after disturbing burglars (17 May 2002). Earlier a New Zealand building worker had been murdered, and in March Prime Minister Sir Allen Kemakeza appealed for public help against lawlessness. The unarmed, Australia-led international peace monitoring force supervising the hand-over of weapons and a return to normal policing had to abandon their post outside Honiara because of fears for their safety.

Finance Minister Michael Maina devalued the currency by 25 per cent during his budget speech (26 March 2002) in a bid to halt the fall in the Solomons' external reserves. The Prime Minister endorsed a restructuring programme cutting staff in some government departments by up to 40 per cent and reducing wages.

Tonga

The opposition Human Rights and Democracy Movement (HRDM) won seven of the popularly elected nine seats open to commoners in Legislative Assembly elections (7 March 2002)—two more than in 1999. Its leader, Akilisi Pohiva, received the most votes of any candidate. For the first time the HRDM was opposed by a royalist Kotoa movement. The 33 nobles of Tonga elected nine representatives in the 30-member assembly. The HRDM was reported to be planning legislation to create an upper house for nobles, with a directly elected lower house open to all Tongans.

Only a few days before the election HRDM had admitted that a letter it published claiming King Tauf'ahau Tupou IV held US\$350 million in offshore bank accounts might be a forgery. Police raided HRDM offices and arrested Pohiva and two others. Pohiva was freed, but his son was charged with knowingly dealing with forged documents.

Tonga complained to New Zealand (14 February 2002) that Foreign Minister Phil Goff had tried to interfere in its election by saying there was no sign of the constitutional change needed in Tonga to check endemic corruption. Goff said he had not known elections were being held.

Nauru

President Rene Harris said (3 February 2002) Australia had told him the processing of 1200 asylum seekers in Nauru camps was complete and he hoped they would soon leave. Australia was said to have given Nauru US\$15 million for accommodating the refugees.

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

Cook Islands

A no-confidence motion in the government brought down Prime Minister Terepai Maoate (12 February 2002) by 15 votes to nine. Deputy Prime Minister Robert Woonton voted against Moate and was elected to succeed him with the support of former prime minister Sir Geoffrey Henry and former deputy prime minister Norman George, who had been sacked by Moate six months earlier. In the new cabinet Henry became Deputy Prime Minister.

Australia

After the Howard government's victory in the November 2001 elections controversy continued over asylum seekers refused landing rights in Australia and now held in several Pacific islands. Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said (12 March 2002) that the government would build a permanent detention centre for 1200 illegal immigrants on Christmas Island. Legislation had been brought in changing the territory's status so that it was classified as being outside Australia's migration zone. It becomes offshore for immigration purposes so that Canberra is not obliged to take in any immigrant found to be a genuine refugee. Ruddock said: 'It will send a clear message that Australia is standing firm on mandatory detention.'

Meantime, the UN refugee agency UNHCR said it had rejected claims for refugee status from all but seven of the nearly 300 Afghans turned away from Australia in the freighter Tampa. The changed political situation in Afghanistan meant fears of persecution no longer applied. The UNHCR had been processing the Tampa Afghans in Nauru, which now held 529 people originally headed for Australia. In February Australia had agreed to let a UN envoy inspect its controversial Woomera detention camp after violent protests and hunger strikes there. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson had requested the envoy be allowed. At first Howard said: 'I am not particularly bowled over by a request from Mary Robinson.' But later he said a party would be allowed into Woomera between May and August 2002.

The first week of the new parliament in Canberra was dominated by the asylum-seeker dispute. The opposition Labour Party formally censured Howard, accusing him of lying during his election campaign to boost his chances. It had emerged that government claims that boat people had been thrown into the sea in the hope that Australian boats would be forced to rescue them and bring them onshore were false. So, too, were stories that refugees had sewed their children's lips up during a protest. Howard denied any wrongdoing. The opposition wanted a Senate inquiry.

The government said (23 May 2002) it would pay Afghan families up to £3800 to return home. The refugees had 28 days to decide. In its budget the government revealed a package of £1.1 billion of 'border protection' measures. They included funding the navy to turn away boatloads, building the Christmas Island centre and continuing to 'export' refugees to camps on Pacific islands. Pressure from the business community had led Australia to raise its intake of skilled migrants but it had tightened the criteria. Ruddock said migrant intake would rise from 93 000 in 2002 to 100 000–110 000.

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

Governor-General Peter Hollingworth came under pressure to resign after months of silence over allegations that he had covered up several sexual abuse cases when he was Archbishop of Brisbane. He was forced to issue a 10-page rebuttal (20 February 2002) of the charges. He told viewers: 'I have another four and a half years to serve, and believe me I intend to do just that.' However, he said he might have made mistakes and that, 'if faced with the same circumstances today, some of my judgments might have been different. I regret those I may have got wrong.' Prime Minister John Howard stood by the Governor-General at what was an embarrassing time politically because the crisis peaked just before the Queen arrived for her state visit and attendance at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Coolumberr. Hollingworth is the first cleric to become governor-general.

Bill Heffernan, a senator close to Howard, was forced to resign as parliamentary secretary to the Cabinet after falsely accusing a High Court judge of using a government car to pick up underage male prostitutes. He had made the charges in the Senate. Heffernan apologized to parliament on finding that documents supporting his claims were false. Heffernan was accused of damaging the institutions of the high court and parliament.

Pauline Hanson, former leader of the far right One Nation Party, was ordered to stand trial on fraud charges (27 May 2002). She and the co-founder of the party pleaded not guilty to dishonestly obtaining £180 000 electoral funding and fraudulently registering One Nation in Queensland. Hanson retired from politics to rear cattle after losing support in the 2001 federal election.

A decision by an Australian jury to award £260 000 against British American Tobacco to a Melbourne woman marked the first time a cancer victim had successfully sued a big tobacco group outside the USA. Although small by US standards, the award was seen as opening up the scope for further legal action by cancer victims in Australia.

The first of a million sleepers that will create a north-south rail link through the heart of Australia was formally laid (16 April 2002) in Katherine, Northern Territory. The railway between Darwin and Alice Springs was first proposed in 1878. It will join up with the existing rail route to Adelaide, cost £480 million and bring trade advantages with Asia.

Some 3500 British and Maltese people who were physically and sexually assaulted when they were sent to Australia after World War Two as child migrants were awarded £1.4 million in benefits to help them find families they have not seen for decades. The children had been handed over to the six states and many put in institutions and mistreated. The government expressed regret (13 May 2002) but stopped short of apologizing. The decision followed a damning parliamentary report on what had happened. In many cases the money was now too little and too late.

Rodney Dillon, Tasmanian representative of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, discovered at a meeting with officials of the Royal College of Surgeons Museum in Oxford in January 2002 that it held relics of Truganini, the last full-blooded Aborigine in Tasmania after British settlers rounded up the indigenous population. It was decided that pieces of her skin, hair and bone would be returned to Australia for a ceremonial burial. Truganini died in 1876. Sir Peter Morris, president of the Royal College of Surgeons,

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

announced as a policy that all indigenous remains would be returned to Australia. Dillon said 'huge amounts' of remains lie in museum storerooms and private collections across the world. He said: 'They are hurting our communities. Our people feel lesser people because they are not at rest.'

Camel catcher and exporter Peter Seidel sent the first 118 young camels to Saudi Arabia in mid-2002. He was already sending camels to Jordan, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates—mostly for restaurants. Camels were first brought to Australia in the 19th century by Afghans, known there as cameleers. Large herds now roam central Australia.

Australia observed a nationwide one-minute silence and held a state funeral (24 May 2002) for Alec Campbell, the last known survivor of the nine-month Gallipoli campaign in World War One. He was 103. Sir John Gorton, who became prime minister when Harold Holt drowned in the sea in 1967, and remained in office till 1971, died aged 90 (19 May 2002). Gorton was a plain speaking, stormy figure. *The Times'* obituarist said his 'lack of respect for the mother country found an echo in a republican sentiment which was beginning to burgeon in Australia'.

New Zealand

Prime Minister Helen Clark called (11 June 2002) an early general election for 27 July in a bid to turn her coalition government into a majority Labour one. For six months opinion polls had given her 50 per cent and the conservative opposition parties were in bad shape. The National Party, which ruled the country from 1990 to 1999 now had sunk to 24 per cent. Its leader is Bill English.

Queen Elizabeth visited the country (22–26 February 2002) as part of her Golden Jubilee travels. Clark was absent in Sweden for a meeting of centre-left government leaders, but she returned in time for the official section of the visit. In Stockholm Clark repeated her well known view that she thought it inevitable that New Zealand would eventually become a republic.

Sierra Leone

Elections held almost entirely peacefully (14 May 2002) resulted in the return to power of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and his Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) with 70.6 per cent of the vote. Nine presidential candidates and 11 political parties joined the contest. The day before the election an SLPP rally in Freetown ended in a clash with supporters of the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF), and its offices were looted. But polling day was calm and 80 per cent of the population voted.

The Commonwealth sent an 11-strong Observer Group led by former Canadian foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy. Observers also went to Sierra Leone in January and March to witness first-hand the registration of voters and the display of the provisional voters' list. Commonwealth experts were also involved in the training of domestic election observers, who numbered 2000 on polling day. In their report UN and British troops helped protect the voters, and the UN force of 17 500 would remain in place for some time. UN officials

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

pointed out that, in past situations elsewhere, early UN withdrawal had prevented consolidation of the peace process. On a visit to Freetown before the election, the head of the UN General Assembly, Han Seung-soo, said the UN mission to Sierra Leone was proving one of the most successful in UN history. Palio Bangura, RUF candidate standing in place of his leader, Foday Sankoh, who had been in jail for two years, said: 'We have lost, and we accept the people's verdict.' Johnny Paul Koroma, former military ruler who overthrew Kabbah in 1997, won only two seats, but it was believed that 70 per cent of the British-trained police and armed forces voted for him.

Nigeria

In a speech marking the third anniversary of the country's return to civilian rule (29 May 2002) President Olusegun Obasanjo said he was worried about ballot rigging and intimidation in the run-up to the 2003 presidential elections. He would introduce a bill to prevent political violence and was writing to all political parties asking them to support it. He said: 'This will be the most supreme test of our commitment to the survival of a credible democratic system. Obasanjo said he was concerned at 'the pervasive pessimism in the land'. The latest UN Development Programme report said the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty had risen from 48.5 per cent in 1998 to between 66 and 70 per cent.

A report released in May 2002 by the commission set up to investigate human rights violations and modelled on South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission detailed thousands of cases of torture and abuse under Nigeria's military regimes. The commission urged Nigerians to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

A Nigerian BA111 with 76 people on board crashed into a densely populated area of Kano (4 May 2002) just after taking off. The death toll was 148 including the Sports Minister, Ishaya Mark Aku. President Obasanjo ordered two days of national mourning. The plane belonged to a private carrier.

Health Minister Alphonsus Nwosu denied that £12.3 million donated by the European Union to a polio eradication campaign had been mismanaged in any way. Funds had been transferred to earn 25 per cent interest that had been accrued on behalf of the campaign. Nigeria, together with India and Pakistan, is considered one of the last reservoirs of the disease. Doubts about the interest payments on the EU funds had been raised by donor agencies.

Justice Minister Kanu Godwin Agabi wrote in March to the 12 northern states operating the sharia legal system saying that 'a Muslim should not be subjected to a punishment more severe than would be imposed on other Nigerians for the same offence'. Any court imposing 'discriminatory punishment was deliberately flouting the constitution.' A few days later the Sokoto appeal court overturned a death sentence for adultery imposed in October 2001.

A federal High Court in Lagos ruled (22 March 2002) that the 1999 constitution was superior to all forms of acts or decrees enacted under the military regimes of the past. To remain valid any decree had to be consistent with the constitution.

The IMF said (6 March 2002) it was discontinuing the informal monitoring

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

of the Nigerian government's economic policies. The Finance Minister of State said 'we now have the power to run our economy as we deem best and not to take dictation from any institution'.

Four days of ethnic fighting between Muslim Hausas and Christian Yoruba (2–6 February 2002) in Lagos led to nearly 100 deaths and injury to hundreds more. The fighting erupted in the Mushin and Odiaraba districts, where tension had been high after the ammunition store explosion had killed 1000.

Parliament formally called (24 January 2002) on President Olujsegun Obasanjo to demand the return of the Benin bronzes housed in the British Museum. A motion passed unanimously by MPs told the Nigerian Commission for Museums and Monuments to draw up a list of all Nigerian artifacts in the museum. The motion said the bronzes were ruthlessly plundered after British forces invaded Benin in 1897.

Cameroon–Nigeria

A new stage of the hearing before the International Court of Justice on the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria opened in The Hague (18 February 2002). Cameroon filed proceedings against Nigeria in 1996 following renewed skirmishes along the border in oil-rich areas of the Gulf of Guinea. The dispute, involving the entire 1800 km boundary, results from boundaries poorly demarcated in colonial days. It is a highly complex matter—at one point the border runs through the middle of a lake, which is drying up, resulting in villagers moving in and occupying islands that never existed. Both countries recognize as compulsory the court's jurisdiction, but differences in French law and English common law add to the difficulties. The verdict was expected by the end of 2002.

Ghana

The IMF and World Bank International Development Association agreed (26 February 2002) to a debt reduction package under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. It amounted to US\$2.186 billion—56 per cent of total debt outstanding.

Ethnic fighting at Yendi in the north at the end of March caused 36 deaths. Two clans that had been rivals since independence in 1957 started fighting at a fire festival. The paramount chief of Dagbon and his entourage were killed when his palace was stormed. The government declared a state of emergency and ordered an inquiry. The Interior Minister, who represented Yendi in parliament, resigned so as not to impede the inquiry. The Minister for the Northern Region also stepped down.

Mozambique

In line with an international mine ban, the army announced (25 April 2002) that it had given up its stock of landmines for destruction by the national de-mining commission. So far 2500 had been destroyed, but 37 000 remained because of shortage of funds to pay for their destruction. The South Africa company Sasol

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

began work in April on the gasfields of central Mozambique. It expected to pipe natural gas along a 865-km pipeline to South Africa from 2004. Mozambique has vast natural gas reserves that are expected to boost the country's growth. The Sasol operation had ended the ambitions of Enron, the bankrupt US company.

Famine

A belt of famine built up in east and central Africa in the first months of 2002. Several hundred people died in Malawi of hunger-related diseases and government warned that 70 per cent of the population were at risk. Mobs lynched 80 people suspected of stealing corn. A state of disaster was declared on 27 February 2002. Malawi was giving concern to donors for other reasons. They said the country was governed by a small elite which had tied up the economy and done little to help the very poor. One diplomat said: 'The very rich are screwing the very poor.' In Mozambique, devastated by flooding in 2000 and 2001, it barely rained in the first six months of 2002.

Zambia, without food stocks, had a second year of crop failure and poor governance was blamed for exacerbating the situation. Lesotho faced a second year of food shortage and in Zimbabwe, where farm takeovers resulting in low yields were compounding the problem, the situation by June was becoming alarming.

Kenya

The Kenya African National Union (KANU) and National Development Party (NDP), partners in the ruling coalition, merged (18 March 2002). President Daniel arap Moi was elected unopposed as national chairman of the new KANU. Raila Odinga, leader of the dissolved NDP, became party secretary-general. Uhuru Kenyatta, 41-year-old son of Kenya's first President Jomo Kenyatta, was elected one of four vice-chairmen. Moi's long-standing deputy, Professor George Saitoti, withdrew his candidature for the vice-chairmanship. The changes led to speculation that Kenyatta, brought into the cabinet from obscurity as Local Government Minister only a few months earlier, was being groomed to take over when Moi retired in December after 24 years as President. Moi had already said that he would remain party chairman after stepping down. Earlier (17 February 2002), Gitobu Imanyara resigned as secretary-general of the opposition Restoration of Democracy-Kenya (FORD-Kenya). He was protesting against the party chairman's support for the creation of a new opposition coalition.

Aid organizations accused Kenya of obstructing the move of thousands of Somali refugees from the Kenya-Somali border and cracking down on 'illegal foreigners' in Nairobi. The refugees were fleeing renewed clan warfare in southern Somalia. Fear grew in early 2002 of a big resurgence of ivory poaching across east and central Africa. In April the Kenya Wildlife Service found that 10 elephants in a Tsavo East reserve had been killed by a gang of four hunters, one of whom died in a shootout. The resurgence in the ivory trade was blamed on the campaign by some countries to lift the ban on stockpiling

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

ivory before the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species taking place in Chile in November.

Raila Odinga, Energy Minister, called (18 February 2002) for a review of the 1929 colonial treaty that gave Egypt the right to veto building projects seeking to use the headwaters of the Nile. He said the interests of upstream countries needed to be examined.

Uganda

When Ugandan troops pushed back rebels of the Lord's Day Resistance Army from Katire, 37 miles north of the Uganda border with Sudan, the rebels burned six villages and killed nearly 500 people. A campaign for the return home of Idi Amin gained strength when President Yoweri Museveni began to pardon many of his former associates. Amin had lived in Saudi Arabia ever since he was ejected from Uganda in 1979. Amin's family—he has 48 children—said that at 77 he should be allowed to spend his last days in a villa they were building for him. An aide to Museveni said (5 May 2002): 'He can come back, but he will be arrested the second he steps on Ugandan soil.'

Congo war

President Thabo Mbeki made strenuous efforts to achieve peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the last stages of weeks of intermittent talks in Sun City, South Africa (February–April 2002). The 368 delegates reached consensus at one point that Joseph Kabila's unelected government in Kinshasa and Pierre Bemba's Congolese Liberation Movement would confirm Kabila as interim president and head of an integrated army, with Bemba as prime minister. But the Rwanda-backed rebel group MLC rejected the deal and the chief mediator, former Botswana president Ketumile Masire, said it was outside the Lusaka peace process started in 1999. Mbeki said South Africa could not accept a deal that excluded one of the belligerents. Although the talks got further than earlier efforts, the parties left Sun City (21 April) without plans to reconvene.

Tanzania

Britain's International Development Secretary Clare Short froze £10 million aid to Tanzania in March because of its purchase of a £28 million British air traffic control system. It became known that Short was furious at Department of Trade and Industry backing for the contract. Secretary of State Patricia Hewitt agreed to amend the export control bill to prevent decisions like that over Tanzania being repeated. The amendments would make clear that sustainable development and human rights must be addressed when trade and industry secretaries issue guidance about the principles to be followed when granting licences. Meantime, Tanzania agreed with the World Bank not to pay BAe Systems any more money until the project had been scrutinized by a team from the International Civil Aviation Organization. Up till then it had paid £11 million.

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

A ferry capsized on the Kilombero River, in the central region of Morogoro (11 April 2002). About 100 people drowned.

Zambia

President Levy Mwanawasa announced (10 April 2002) in an address marking 100 days in office the introduction of free education. Plans to improve health services, tourism, forestry and agriculture would be implemented. Poverty reduction and job creation would be 'vigorously pursued'. In an anti-corruption drive he ordered heads of state security agencies to investigate suspects—those in office and out—without fear or favour. He started purging his government of those suspected of disloyalty. A first casualty (11 March 2002) was Information and Broadcasting Minister Vernon Mwaanga, seen not long ago as a potential president.

At the beginning of 2002 Anglo-American mining group said it was withdrawing from Konkola Cooper Mines, throwing the privatization of the copper-belt into reverse. Copper accounts for 75 per cent of Zambia's export earnings and the 1970s output was 700 000 tonnes; today it is about 140 000 tonnes. The Anglo pullout put 1000 jobs in jeopardy. The Zambian Chamber of Commerce called it a disaster. Anglo blamed ex-president Chiluba for the long delay in effecting privatization, which should have happened when the copper price was higher. Mwanawasa said (10 March 2002) that the government would renationalize Konkola while it found a partner to manage the project. In the event Anglo delayed its pullout till the end of May. Meantime, copper prices rose a little and management remained optimistic. Canada's Quantum Minerals said it was interested in investing and the World Bank reached agreement with Anglo and government, clearing the way for its support of the mining venture. At the World Economic Forum summit in Durban, Mwanawasa accused Anglo (7 June 2002) of exploiting a loophole in its ownership of the mines to avoid paying compensation to cover environmental and social costs. After eight months of talks Anglo had agreed to pay a total of only \$30 million. The government sought \$200 million.

As drought conditions worsened Mwanawasa declared a national disaster in May and warned that current food production levels could provide for only six million of the 10.4 million Zambians.

Ex-president Chiluba and his wife Vera, who have nine children, made an out-of-court deal in May after a long legal dispute spiced with accusations of financial and sexual double dealing, during which she demanded £1.7 million from her husband. She said he had made a fortune during his two terms as president and she deserved a share. A sale of Mrs Chiluba's goods, including Mercedes and Honda cars, furnishings, handbags and shoes was stopped by court order. A government plan to take half the ex-president's pension for the former first lady was called off because the Chilubas were divorced.

Zimbabwe

Western diplomats and the 57 MPs of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) boycotted the inauguration of Robert Mugabe as President

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

for a third six-year term on 17 March 2002—two days before Zimbabwe was suspended from the Commonwealth. Few African leaders attended, but the Presidents of Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and Tanzania were there and South Africa was represented by Deputy President Jacob Zuma. In a long speech Mugabe said he had ‘dealt a stunning blow to imperialism’. It was a victory for Africa against the ‘blatant racism’ of the West and Tony Blair was trying to ‘recolonize Zimbabwe’.

The official election result as announced (13 March 2002) was: Mugabe 1 685 212 votes (56.2 per cent of vote), Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC) 1 258 401 (42 per cent). Three other candidates got 1.8 per cent between them. The total of eligible voters was 5.6 million. Like the 42-strong Commonwealth observer group, which had been headed by General Abdulsalami Abubakar of Nigeria, the Norwegian observers condemned the election. So did the Southern African Development Community (SADC) parliamentary team, which said it ‘could not be said to adequately comply with norms and standards for elections in the SADC region’. But most other African observer groups, including those from South Africa, Nigeria, Namibia and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) gave the election legitimacy. The OAU teams said it was ‘transparent, credible, free and fair’. The Namibian team said the poll was ‘watertight, without room for rigging’. When the 42-strong Commonwealth team came to issue their quite different report, the Namibian observer alone refused to sign it. Archbishop Desmond Tutu said his country has done itself a disservice by calling the poll legitimate. Zuma accepted the South African team’s view that the elections ‘went very well’, although only days later his President, Thabo Mbeki, was one of the troika of Commonwealth leaders which decided on the suspension of Zimbabwe from the Commonwealth. On their way to London before the suspension, Mbeki and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria visited Harare for separate talks with Mugabe and Tsvangirai. They pressed them to accept a government of national unity, but both rejected the idea.

Eventually, seven-strong delegations from Zanu-PF and the MDC met in the Senate chamber in Parliament House. It had taken the South African and Nigerian mediators six days to persuade them to sit in the same room. The two delegations delivered three-hour formal opening statements (8 April 2002)—the first face to face meeting since the MDC was founded 30 months earlier. The parties were far apart and the talks came to an abrupt end (12 May) when the Zimbabwean Justice Minister wrote to the Nigerian and South African facilitators that they had to be shelved because the MDC was challenging the election result in the courts.

Tsvangirai, claiming that he had been the true winner of the election, demanded a new poll. He said the election had been ‘daylight robbery’. The MDC lodged a 135-page affidavit in the High Court (16 April 2002) demanding annulment of the election. British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Jack Straw also accused Mugabe of stealing the election and said Britain would not recognize the result.

It became apparent soon after the election that Mugabe was intent on continuing his land reform policies and no let-up was evident in the sporadic violence that had been plaguing the country. Two more white farmers, living within 40 miles of Harare, were murdered, bringing the total death toll since the

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

land crisis began in 2000 to eleven. In another incident 50 miles from Harare a white woman farmer was shot in the back. In the days after the election 388 more farms were listed for acquisition, taking the total to 6000—85 per cent of the commercial farming area and including a huge estate owned by the South African Oppenheimer family. So-called war veterans stormed dozens of farms and beat and tortured labourers. A number of white and black farmers moved into Mozambique, where they found a ready welcome. One rural development director there said: 'We are keen for foreign investment and there is no reason to discriminate. They will open up the land.' Police seized tractors, combine harvesters, trucks and irrigation equipment from white farmers. The government began in April 2002 to ban farmers from exporting agricultural equipment. Border posts were ordered not to let farming equipment through to Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia.

Two days after his talks with Mbeki and Obasanjo, Tsvangirai appeared in court accused of treason. He had first been charged during the election campaign. He was ordered to give up his passport and report to the police once a week, pay £19 000 bail, and was fingerprinted. The key state witness in the case, which was based on a video involving publicist and former Israeli spy Ari Ben-Menashe, withdrew and said he would not appear.

New Zealand called for Zimbabwe to be excluded from the Commonwealth Games, but the Commonwealth Games Federation pointed out that the country had been suspended from the councils of the Commonwealth, and this did not affect sporting links.

One of Mugabe's first acts on re-election was to sign into law the Access to Information and Right to Privacy Bill, which required local journalists to be accredited by a government panel and banned foreign correspondents from working full-time in Zimbabwe. Peta Thorneycroft, correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph*, was arrested (28 March 2002) and held for five days under another draconian Act—the Public Order and Security Act. The *Guardian* correspondent, Andrew Meldrum, a US citizen, was arrested and held in jail (1 May 2002) for publishing false information. The editor of the independent *Daily News*, Geoffrey Nyarota, and two Zimbabwean journalists on the *Daily News* were arrested for the same story. Earlier Nyarota had been charged for 'fabricating a story that the government rigged Mugabe's victory.' During the election the Commonwealth Press Union sent a team of four editors (from Mauritius, Barbados, Tanzania and Kenya) to observe the performance and handling of the media, issuing a report which praised but was not uncritical of the performance of the independent media.

The election was followed by a round-up of thousands of MDC supporters and others in human rights groups—a wave of terror that was said to far exceed what had happened earlier. The human rights Amani Trust said 30 000 people had been forced from their villages. The report of an inquiry by the Danish group Physicians for Human Rights described in great detail the stepping up of a campaign of 'mutilating torture' and starvation of Zimbabweans who voted against Mugabe. His supporters were said to have denied food to tens of thousands of people in drought-stricken areas, including maize to children. Mugabe circumvented restrictions on his travel imposed by the USA and the European Union when he addressed the UN summit on children's rights in New

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

York (10 May 2002). Under international law heads of state are allowed to enter countries from which they are barred if they are attending UN meetings.

Later Mugabe went to an FAO summit on world hunger in Rome (10 June 2002). By now Zimbabwe was facing a serious food crisis caused by drought but also by a serious drop in production because of the land reforms. Maize output had fallen by 67 per cent from 2001 and the country had almost no foreign currency. Mugabe said in Rome that he was requisitioning white-owned land because he was 'responding to the people's cry for land'. Whereas Zimbabwe had been farmed by 'only a handful of colonial settler farmers' it now had more than 260 000 'indigenous farmers on varying sizes of land' who were transforming Zimbabwe into 'vibrant agricultural zones'. Italy said Mugabe was an unwelcome guest; it had no choice but to let him attend the Rome summit. UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson said Mugabe was himself 'primarily responsible' for much of the hunger and human deprivation affecting Zimbabwe.

Alum Mpfu, head of state radio and TV, was forced to resign after charges that he was caught having sex with a man in a Harare nightclub. He had been recruited from South Africa and was one of the main architects of Mugabe's propaganda campaign for the general election. A government inquiry was ordered.

The Gourleys Conservatory, one of the biggest rhino conservation projects in Zimbabwe, was taken over by veterans in April when they threw the owners off their Matabeleland farm. One rhino died and 40 others were in danger when their water supply was cut off. After Zimbabwe's suspension from the Commonwealth, Andrew Ndlovu, secretary of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans, called for the remains and memorial to Rhodes in the Matopo Hills to be removed before they 'take the law into their own hands'. He said: 'Cecil Rhodes is the hero of the British. He is the one who grabbed land and left it in the hands of whites and is the reason why Zimbabwe has been suspended from the Commonwealth for trying to address a problem that he left behind.'

South Africa

The High Court ruled (11 March 2002) that the government had to start providing anti-retroviral drugs immediately for HIV-positive pregnant women in state hospitals. This followed a similar decision by the Pretoria High Court three months earlier. The matter went to the Constitutional Court, which also ruled (5 April 2002) against the government. All this legal activity led to a marathon cabinet meeting followed by the announcement of a major shift in government HIV/AIDS policy (17 April). In effect, it now embraced for the first time anti-retrovirals as a valid form of therapy. A comprehensive plan was launched to offer the therapy to victims of rape and sexual assault. The government stopped short of a policy of universal access to anti-retrovirals for all Aids sufferers. Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang said: 'Government calls on all South Africans to join hands in a campaign of hope. We have it in our power to defeat this epidemic.'

Nelson Mandela said (22 April 2002) he was delighted by the policy turn-

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

around. It was believed that he had been instrumental in bringing about the change, but he was careful now to laud President Thabo Mbeki, saying: 'There is no previous president or prime minister of this country who has done a better job.' In February Mandela had disclosed he was seeking to persuade the African National Congress leadership to stop arguing about the causes of AIDS. He said: 'We must not continue to be debating, to be arguing when people are dying.' He held talks with the ANC and Mbeki (18 February 2002)—two days before Finance Minister Tevor Manuel announced in his budget a threefold increase in spending on the AIDS fight. Mbeki acknowledged (23 April 2002) that the government had failed to communicate its message on AIDS successfully. He said there might have been a problem with communication. South Africa has the largest number of HIV-positive people in the world—the UN estimate was 4.2 million.

Later, Mandela was active on quite a different front. He had an hour-long meeting in Glasgow's Barlinnie Jail (10 June 2002) with the Libyan convicted of the Lockerbie airliner bombing. He emerged suggesting that the man should be given another appeal against conviction and that he be transferred to a Muslim country. He did not quarrel with the conviction, but argued that the prisoner had no one to talk to and it was 'a psychological persecution' that a man must stay for the length of his long sentence all alone. The British government seemed to reject the request, saying that it went against what Libya had agreed before the trial.

In yet another initiative the 83-year-old Mandela met Scotland Yard investigators who suspected a boy found dead in the Thames near Tower Bridge had been kidnapped in Nigeria and smuggled to Britain for a ritualistic killing. Detectives had visited South Africa, as it is the only country in the world with an occult murder squad.

At the end of a two-and-a-half year trial, Wouter Basson, former head of the apartheid regime's secret chemical and biological warfare programme, was acquitted by the High Court (11 April 2002) of all 46 charges brought against him by the state. The charges included multiple murder, fraud and drug trading. Sitting in the court were Magnus Malan, former head of the defence force, and Constand Viljoen, former leader of the right wing Freedom Front. Applause greeted the verdict. The judgement delivered by Judge Willie Hartsenberg was 1500 pages long. He said: 'The state did not prove its case beyond reasonable doubt.' He accepted an amnesty which shielded Basson and all members of the South African military from responsibility for crimes committed in Namibia and Angola. The amnesty was signed by the administrator of South West Africa on the eve of its independence as Namibia. This meant Basson, aged 51 and known as 'Dr Death', was not charged with allegations that he provided muscle relaxants to kill scores of Namibian guerrillas whose bodies were dumped into the sea from a plane. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, former head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, called the acquittal shocking and a big blow to the judicial process.

Eight years after majority rule, South Africa's judicial system is still dominated by white males. Of 201 judges, 127 are white men. Black male judges number 52 and there are 12 white and 10 black women judges. Despite government efforts to encourage greater black empowerment, black control

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

of the formal economy halved in 2001, according to a report (10 April 2002). Cyril Ramaphosa, chairman of the Black Empowerment Commission, said lack of progress could jeopardize the country's political stability.

Mark Shuttleworth, a wealthy South African, became the first African in space when he blasted off to the International Space Station from the Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan (25 April 2002). He spent eight days helping with experiments being managed by scientists from the South African universities. His flight generated huge interest among the young of South Africa.

Botswana

A High Court judgment (19 April 2002) refused an order for the San Bushmen to be restored to their land in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. In January the government suspended provision of water, emergency food, medical aid and other services to 750 San and BaKgalagadi hunter-gatherers living in the heart of the reserve. In February it sent trucks and moved all but 72 to resettlement camps. The Bushmen say they have occupied the land for 40 000 years. In a 25-page judgment Justice M. Dibotelo dismissed their case on technical points relating to the swearing-in of affidavits from illiterates. The Bushmen's lawyers said they would appeal against the judgement, which was condemned by Survival International. Its director said: 'This is one of the most important cases in Botswana's history. The government doesn't want to develop the Bushmen—it wants to destroy them.'

The position of Botswana's minority tribal groups has been a simmering issue for a long time. The constitution recognizes eight major tribes, but ignores the rest. The smaller groups say the constitution discriminates against them. The High Court ruled in November 2001 that it does not have the jurisdiction to review the constitution because it is not mandated by the constitution to do so. The government appointed a commission of inquiry to examine how to make the constitution tribal-neutral. It reported in July 2001, but awaits parliamentary debate. Meantime, ethnic groups have formed organizations to push their cause. They say the commission chose to 'play with words' rather than bring about tribal equality.

Lesotho

The High Court found (20 May 2002) Masupha Sole, former chief executive of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, guilty of taking bribes from international consultants and contractors involved in the £5.5 billion Highlands Water Project. He was given an exemplary 18-month jail sentence. The case had wide implications. Several big names in construction engineering were under suspicion. They denied the charges, but if found guilty could be barred from World Bank-financed projects.

Jamaica

A new political party, the Jamaican Alliance for National Unity, was set up by church and civil leaders in March 2002 to fight the general election which

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

had to be called by Prime Minister Percival Patterson by the end of the year. Increasing violence in the island and five years of economic stagnation led to a nervous political atmosphere as Patterson prepared to lead his People's National Party into a bid for a fourth consecutive term in office.

Bahamas

A referendum on five constitutional changes proposed by the ruling Free National Movement was held on 27 February 2002. In a 65 per cent turnout all were rejected. Most No votes went to plans for judges to retire at 65 (instead of 60) and appellate court judges at 72. Other ideas turned down were creation of an independent boundaries commission and independent parliamentary commissioner, for gender discriminating language to be removed from the constitution, for children born to Bahamian mothers and foreign fathers to have Bahamian citizenship and for the creation of a commission to monitor the standards of teachers.

Barbados

The OECD and Barbados announced (31 January 2002) that Barbados would not appear on the OECD's list of uncooperative tax havens. They said that talks had shown Barbados had transparent tax and regulatory systems and a mechanism that enabled it to engage in effective exchange of information. New legislation had enhanced the transparency. Barbados had been highly critical of the blacklist of 35 tax havens harmful to trade and investment issued by the OECD in June 2000. By March 2002 only two other Commonwealth countries had been removed from the list—Tonga and Seychelles.

Bermuda

Long drawn-out efforts failed to get the US to finance the rehabilitation of military bases it was given by Britain on a 99-year lease in 1941. Bermudians claimed that the bases were left badly polluted in 1995. Under a deal between the USA, Britain and Bermuda the USA has renounced its right to reoccupy the bases and agreed to pay \$11 million to rebuild a bridge. But Bermudian officials said restoring the polluted areas would cost \$50 million. The bases make up 10 per cent of Bermuda's 22 square miles. Premier Jennifer Smith said (12 March 2002) that the USA had a long-standing policy of not accepting responsibility for environmental damage caused by its armed forces in foreign countries.

Antigua and Barbuda

Alistair Thomas, leader of the newly formed opposition National Movement for Change, failed in an attempt to win an injunction to stop presentation of the budget on 22 March 2002. His case was that no audited government accounts had been presented for 12 years. In the budget Prime Minister and Finance Minister Lester Bird proposed measures to cut corporate tax and reduce a \$10 million deficit by selling land.

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

Overseas territories

The 200 000 inhabitants of Britain's 14 remaining British overseas territories became full British citizens on 21 May 2002. This was the result of the British Overseas Territories Act passed at Westminster in 2001 and meant they could work in the UK and the rest of the European Union. Among the 200 000 were the 4466 islanders of the Chagos Islands, forcibly removed in 1967 to make way for the American Diego Garcia base. On getting their citizenship they lodged a writ with the High Court in London in an attempt to reclaim the coral atoll in the Indian Ocean. They won the right to return there in December 2000, but cannot settle because of lack of infrastructure. They want compensation from Britain and the USA for their suffering since their eviction. Washington regards Diego Garcia as an important base in its war on terror and maintains that repopulating the archipelago might pose a security risk.

Falkland Islands

Islanders were disappointed that Britain sent only a junior minister, Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram, to attend ceremonies marking the 20th anniversary of the conflict with Argentina. In Argentina on the anniversary of the invasion (2 April 2002) hundreds of veterans and families of the dead marched through Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, carrying a mile-long Argentine flag to a monument built to remember the dead. It became known (1 April) that the British government knew of an Argentine threat for almost a year before the Falklands were invaded. Margaret Thatcher and Lord Carrington, her foreign secretary, were accused of ignoring or failing to act on warnings from diplomats and Foreign Office officials.

Gibraltar

British Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary Jack Straw and Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Pique began in London (4 February 2002) a new round of constitutional talks. A declaration on a form of power-sharing was under discussion. Chief Minister Peter Caruana would have none of it. He boycotted the talks and Gibraltarians took to the streets to protest. Straw insisted that 'any provisional agreement' would be 'subject, entirely freely in a secret ballot, to the wish of the people of Gibraltar'. Caruana said the British had told him that, even if the referendum rejected the agreement, co-sovereignty would still become the official basis of all future negotiations—seen as a major shift in British policy. Although Spain had finally accepted that Caruana could form part of the British delegation on the basis of 'two flags, three voices', he would only join the talks if Straw guaranteed that there would be no policy shift. He said the proposed joint declaration would amount to rewriting the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht.

In an article in the *Gibraltar Chronicle*, Straw said there was no question of handing over Gibraltar to Spain and that the people would retain British citizenship. Pique said Spain would not accept that Gibraltarians had a right to self-determination and would not drop its claim to the colony. Britain was holding

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

out as a carrot the prospect of an EU aid package to help Gibraltar adjust to the end of its tax-haven status. An angry Caruana said a stitch-up was being planned behind his back. Almost the entire population of Gibraltar staged a massive, silent, peaceful protest (17 March 2002). Schools and offices closed. To gain support, Caruana toured Britain, while his government launched a £1 million advertising campaign in the British media against any deal with Spain. British opinion polls showed 79 per cent support.

It became clear in May that the prospect of any immediate agreement was receding. Straw flew fleetingly and at short notice into Gibraltar (3 May 2002) and met a hostile reception. While there he took phone calls from the public for 40 minutes, but found no support. New demonstrations as he left underlined the negative message. The cries were of 'traitor' and 'Judas'. A leaked letter (10 May) to Straw from Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon opened up a rift in the British Cabinet. Hoon said a joint sovereignty deal would be contrary to the principle of self-determination. The letter seemed to reflect British and American service concerns that the naval base's operational capability might be endangered. Spain began to indicate that a Gibraltar deal would have to involve 'joint use' of the base. The British Conservative opposition called for the abandonment of the talks with Spain.

Another meeting between between Straw and Pique (14 May 2002) was followed by a Downing Street talk between British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar (20 May). Both sides conceded progress was minimal. Aznar said talk of a crisis was misplaced—'we have had this on the table since 1713'. Whitehall started talking about a two-year interval before a referendum. Conservative leader Iain Duncan Smith called off a fact-finding visit to Spain when Aznar decided not to meet him because he was going on to Gibraltar. When Smith arrived in Gibraltar (28 May 2002) he was given a hero's welcome and promised the Tories would stand by the Gibraltar government. He blamed Blair for raising false expectations that Spain would regain sovereignty.

Straw was reported to have asked the Gibraltar government (3 June 2002) why it had not published key accounts for more than a year and basic economic statistics for five years. Whitehall was concerned that the colony was being used as a centre for money laundering. About 200 millionaires live in Gibraltar and according to Caruana, 28 000 offshore companies are registered there, 8500 tax exempted.

Documents declassified in April 2002 showed that the Heath government secretly planned to hand over Gibraltar's sovereignty to Spain 30 years ago. Sir Alec Douglas-Home, then foreign secretary, proposed a 999-year lease on the lines of Hong Kong. Sir John Russell, the ambassador to Spain, wrote: 'Militarily, in the age of the intercontinental ballistic missile, Gibraltar can only be an extinct volcano.'

Jury trials in Gibraltar were suspended when Chief Justice Derek Schofield ruled that all-male juries were in breach of the constitution. It happened during a case brought by a woman suing her boyfriend for alleged assault and false imprisonment. The suspension was for three months while women jurors were found.

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

Cyprus

The first direct negotiations for four years between President Glafkos Clerides, now aged 82, and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash, 77, took place in Nicosia (16 January–19 February 2002). They met in the abandoned Nicosia airport in the UN zone and the talks were hosted by UN special envoy Alvaro de Soto of Peru. The two men set themselves a deadline of 30 June to reach agreement. By 31 May the two men had had 36 face-to-face sessions and the talks seemed to be flagging. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan flew to Cyprus (14 May 2002) to try to put them back on track. He said he was still hopeful the deadline could be met. No breakthrough was achieved and news blackouts prevented many details being issued. Resolution of the 38-year conflict was becoming more urgent as Cyprus and Turkey shaped up for EU membership.

European Parliament President Pat Cox visited Cyprus at the beginning of May and crossed the ceasefire line to talk to Denktash. He told both sides the EU was prepared to become directly involved in the talks if invited. He said that this year there was a compelling political deadline for a settlement that reunited the island. The EU wanted to approve membership by December.

Spyros Kyprianou, who followed Archbishop Makarios as Cyprus President for 11 years, died in March aged 69. In 1978 and 1985 he rejected a Cyprus settlement, believing rejection better than engineering a ‘bad solution’.

Malta

A series of victories in local elections for the opposition Labour Party in March 2002 cast doubt over whether Malta would think again about its proposed membership of the European Union. It was expected to be among the first of the new members, but Labour leader Alfred Sant favours a free trading zone with the EU instead of joining. A referendum on membership was due in 2003 and a general election in 2004.

UK

In the year of the Golden Jubilee the Commonwealth and the Queen’s role as its Head received more attention than for many years. In the early months Queen Elizabeth made an extensive overseas trip, taking in Jamaica, New Zealand, and Australia for the CHOGM in Coolumb, Queensland. The crowds in the streets were not always as great as they had been in the earlier part of her reign, but the atmosphere was now much more informal and the celebrations in London in June 2002 brought a million people out on to the streets around Buckingham Palace two days running. By far the most spectacular and popular part of the long procession on 4 June was devoted to the Commonwealth. The accent throughout was on young people.

In Britain the media devoted much attention to those holding republican views and there was far more public debate about the future of the monarchy than ever before in her reign. The public enthusiasm for the Jubilee celebrations, however, showed that the country was in no mood for major constitutional change. Opinion polls reported a firm majority in favour of the

COMMONWEALTH UPDATE

monarchy, although almost everyone seemed to want a different style, further modernization and a slimmed down royal establishment.

Commonwealth Secretariat

Florence Mugasha succeeded Krishnan Srinivasan as Deputy Secretary-General (Political) on 1 May 2002. Mrs Mugasha has been Head of Uganda's Public Service and Secretary to Cabinet in the office of the President and on taking up the post in 1996 she became the first woman head of public service in Africa. She has represented Uganda at many international meetings, including several Commonwealth summits. She was at the 2002 CHOGM in Coolum.

Around the Commonwealth

A French version of the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System was launched (23 May 2002) by Secretary-General Don McKinnon and Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of La Francophonie. The system, which aims to improve economic performance by helping countries record and manage debt, was first developed by the Commonwealth in 1985. It is now used in 43 Commonwealth countries. At their meeting the two secretaries-general discussed new areas of collaboration between the two organizations. McKinnon met Mike Moore, Director-General of the World Trade Organization, (17 June 2002) and expressed great concern at the adverse effect of the US Farm Bill and increases in tariffs for steel imported into the USA. He also pointed out that the Doha Declaration set a tough timetable for developing countries—stretching their negotiating capacities to breaking point. Ways were discussed as to how the technical expertise could be made available by the Commonwealth and the WTO.

At a ceremony (30 May 2002) the flags of all Commonwealth countries were flown for the first time along the Mall, in the gardens of Marlborough House. Children from across the Commonwealth raised the flags in the presence of their High Commissioners.

UN Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson delivered the fifth Commonwealth Lecture in London (6 June 2002) on 'Human Rights in the Shadow of 11 September'.

Denis Marshall, who was a New Zealand cabinet minister from 1990–96, took over on 2 January 2002 as Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. He entered Parliament in 1984. His predecessor, Arthur Donahoe of Canada, had held the post for nine years.