

## Eye on Washington by Stanley Ezrol

### State and friends go after Uganda

Recently staged hearings on Capitol Hill over "human rights" in an African country provide a revealing case study of how private groups actually run the U.S. State Department—to foster policies directly contrary to the stated objectives of the Executive.

A group of anthropologists tied to Cultural Survival, Inc., a pro-tribal group with international connections, is conspiring with State Department officials led by Assistant Secretary for Human Rights Elliott Abrams and some of the KGB's finest in the U.S. Congress, to create a campaign against alleged mass murder, illegal imprisonments, and starvation in Uganda.

The State Department has been circulating reports that hundreds of thousands of persons have either been killed by the Ugandan Army or starved due to an anti-guerrilla policy restricting food relief under the government of President Milton Obote. Obote, the first President of Uganda, was overthrown by Idi Amin, with British and Israeli support, in 1971. A year after Amin's collapse in 1979, Obote again took the presidency, and has been making efforts to unite the country.

The Ugandan government has called the reports "totally untrue." On Aug. 15, the British Foreign Office claimed there was "no evidence" to substantiate the reports.

Whatever the real situation in Uganda, the campaign itself has little to do with preserving human rights. Consider the company Cultural Survival keeps.

### IMF-World Bank agenda

Jason W. Clay, author of a Cultural Survival report on Uganda, told a journalist that he aims minimally to end all U.S. military assistance to Uganda. At best, Clay said, he wants to use the Uganda case to get the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to apply financial sanctions against "human rights abusers," and has already met with IMF and World Bank officials. Both these institutions, by strangling credit flows to developing-sector nations, are directly responsible for millions of deaths by starvation in Africa!

Clay claims responsibility for the State Department's public attacks on Obote before the hearings ever took place. Clay's work led Abrams to approach Rep. Steven Solarz (D-N.Y.), ex-chairman of the Africa subcommittee, to beg him to "do something to publicize the situation," sources close to Solarz claim.

Congress got into the act on Aug. 9. Two House subcommittees, that on Africa and that on Human Rights and International Organizations, held hearings on Uganda and other African nations. The hearings featured Abrams, speaking for the administration; John Healey, Executive Director of Amnesty International U.S.A.; and Felice Gaer, Executive Director of the International League for Human Rights, (ILHR) an organization which, according to its staff, "works with Cultural Survival."

Abrams put on a totally different facade for the public hearings than what he had presented in his private agitations. Possibly under pressure from the Pentagon, which is not at all pleased with the recent turn of events in U.S.-Ugandan relations, and has long-term plans for relations with a stabilized Ugandan army which it does not want to see jeopardized, Abrams

described the situation in the Ugandan military and government as a conflict between "hardliners" who regard anti-civilian violence as "unavoidable reaction to guerrilla attacks" and more moderate figures like President Obote.

Abrams responded to suggestions that aid be cut by saying that "we can work with this government in Uganda," or "the problem with this government is that it is too weak, not that it is too strong." He suggested that Congress legalize funding for U.S. training of police agencies as well as military to help improve the situation.

But while Abrams mouthed a line resembling actual administration policy, the rest of the hearings set off exactly the Uganda-bashing session Abrams himself had carefully scripted in advance! Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.), chairman of the subcommittee on Africa, testifying on the basis of media reports of the killings, noted that the Appropriations Committee had voted on Aug. 8 to cut U.S. development assistance to Uganda from \$7 million to \$2 million.

Then, the "KGB Democrats"—the crowd known for endorsing Moscow's attacks on Western security—had their say. Solarz questioned the wisdom of Abrams's suggestion that the United States train Uganda's police, asking, "Would we have wanted the U.S. to train the Gestapo in Nazi Germany?" Ted Weiss (D-N.Y.), noted as the sole opponent of a bill against child pornography, attacked Abrams for softening his criticism of Uganda.

Most explicit was Don Bonker (D-Wash.). "I worked with other members to bring down the Idi Amin regime," he said, "and I am not so sure I am pleased with what we have done."

Playing out his role to a "T," Abrams defended the Obote government against all charges. Some of the ultraliberal Democrats' aides claimed to be astonished by the "turnaround." Theatre is a specialty of the boys at Foggy Bottom.