

Africa gives Clinton a loud, warm welcome

ACCRA, Ghana (AP) — Buoyed by the biggest crowd of his presidency, President Clinton hailed "the new face of Africa" and its growing peace, prosperity and democracy as he opened a historic six-nation tour on Monday.

While poverty and war still trouble parts of the continent, Clinton said Americans must shake off "the stereotypes that have warped our view and weakened our understanding of Africa."

Dictatorships have fallen in many countries, Clinton said, and half of the 48 nations of sub-Saharan Africa now have elected governments.

Where business was once stifled, "now Africans are embracing economic reform," the president said on a mission to applaud political reforms and open the door for U.S.-African trade.

After waiting for hours in temperatures that hovered near 100 degrees, a massive crowd roared at the sight of Clinton in Independence Square, a sprawling parade ground alongside the Gulf of Guinea.

After weeks of sex-scandal publicity back home, the White House happily passed along Ghanaian government estimates of more than 500,000 people, although that number seemed high.

Clinton's press secretary said the audience was "the largest he's seen as president, maybe one of the largest any American president has ever seen."

Last July's visit to Bucharest, Romania, cheered by tens of thousands, had been the previous benchmark.

The huge turnout and intense heat brought problems.

Crowds surged toward Clinton to shake his hand, endangering people pressed against metal barriers.

An obviously alarmed Clinton waved crowds to stop, and he shouted, "Back up! Back up!" Spokesman Mike McCurry said Clinton was worried about the people in front being injured.

Fights broke out in the crowd over scarce bottles of water. Police and military security whipped people with belts and canes to keep order. Thousands of people drifted away from the square as the ceremony droned on.

Accra, once an Atlantic port for slave traders, was the gateway for Clinton's 12-day, 21,000-mile journey to Ghana, Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa, Botswana and Senegal. Over the course of the trip, he will spend about 42 hours on Air Force One.

The United States sees Africa as a huge potential market, with per capita income rising in 31 countries. The population of Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to double to 1.5 billion in 27 years.

Clinton's journey is the longest foreign trip of his presidency and the first time an American president has visited any of the six countries on his trip map.

"It is a journey long overdue," the president said. "I want to build a future partnership between our two people and I want to introduce the people of the United States through my trip to the new face of Africa."

Clinton and his national security aides were distracted by news from Moscow that President Boris Yeltsin had fired his Cabinet, though the president said there was no reason to believe that U.S.-Russian policy would be affected.

Sitting in oversized wing chairs under an umbrella protecting them from the midday sun, Clinton and President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana watched dancers in native costumes move to the pounding of African drums. Clinton's wife, Hillary, and Rawlings' wife, Nana, sat nearby on the red carpeted stage.

Rawlings has held power since a military coup in 1981.

He has run in two elections, winning easily both times. He assured Clinton that Ghana is committed to freedom and justice and — in terms of trade — is "ready and able to do busi-

ness in today's liberalized and competitive market place."

"Africa is not going to be found wanting as we approach the 21st century," said Rawlings, wearing a batahari, a smock-like shirt with leopard trim. Clinton posed for pictures draped in colorful kente cloth, and his wife wore a kente cloth shawl.

Clinton's Independence Square speech was a scene-setting address for the entire trip.

"My dream for this trip is that together we might do the things so that 100 years from now, your grandchildren and mine will look back and say this was the beginning of a new African renaissance," Clinton said.

"With a new century coming into view, old patterns are fading away," he said. "The Cold War is gone. Colonialism is gone.

Apartheid is gone. Remnants of past troubles remain, but surely there will come a time when everywhere reconciliation will replace recrimination."

Clinton acknowledged that Africa is not free from peril. He cited genocide in Rwanda, civil wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo and the Republic of Congo, a military dictatorship in Nigeria and continent-wide poverty, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy and unemployment.

Ghana is considered one of Africa's success stories, with a 3 percent economic growth rate.

A severe drought has caused an energy crisis resulting in regular power outages of 12 hours a day.

Clinton told Rawlings the United States will guarantee a \$67 million loan from the Transportation Department for the purchase of two barge-mounted power plants from the Westinghouse Corp.

After a daylong stay, Clinton headed for Uganda.

First the president visited with Peace Corps volunteers, noting that Ghana was the first country where Peace Corps worked.

Bertelsmann buys largest US publisher

NEW YORK (AP) — Putting best-selling writers John Michael Crichton on the same corporate bookshelf, conglomerate Bertelsmann AG struck a deal Monday to buy Random House, the biggest U.S. book publisher.

The purchase price was not disclosed. Bertelsmann is the world's third-largest media and entertainment company, with holdings that include Bantam Doubleday, Grisham's courtroom thrillers.

Random House has published the books of Crichton, Mailer and John Updike.

"Our new company will draw and build upon the strongest publishing traditions ... with an unprecedented diversity of publishing choices," said Peter Olson, current chairman of Book Group North America, who will head the new Random House.

The German company trails only Time Warner Inc. and Viacom among media giants.

It already owns the BMG music club, the RCA and Arista labels, and such magazines as McCall's and Family Circle.

Random House is being sold by Advance Publications, which wants to focus on its main businesses of newspapers, business journals and cable TV. Advance, which is owned by a family, also owns The New Yorker, GQ and Vanity Fair.

The new company will combine a variety of publishing divisions, including Bantam Books, Dell-Delacorte and Doubleday, Bantam Books, Dell-Delacorte and Doubleday from Bertelsmann, and Random House, Knopf, Crown and Avon from Advance.

Random House also will add its wealth of titles to an online book-selling venture that Bertelsmann is planning with Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble.

Bertelsmann has been moving to expand its English-language presence since purchasing Bantam Books in 1977.

Random House was founded in 1927 by Bennett Cerf and S. Klopfer, two friends who started by buying the Modern Library collection of classic reprints.

They then expanded into a wider range of books and company to suit their random interests.

Nigerians desperate for change, place hope on papal should

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — For Philip Akabue, a 9-year-old believer, the frail, stooped man in the gold-hued robes meant a better chance for food on his plate, a decent education and life in a free country.

The Rev. Ande Godwin, a 31-year-old Roman Catholic priest, saw improved odds for a return to human dignity in a deeply troubled country.

Many others wanted to see results before venturing a guess.

But the mood during Pope John Paul II's whirlwind visit to Nigeria was expressed by a headline writer in the daily Vanguard: "Pope — Our Last Hope."

A colorful sea of 100,000 people gathered Monday on a sweep of open bush near the Nigerian capital to hear the pope celebrate Mass, encourage Catholics to keep the faith and take a parting shot at Nigeria's dictatorship.

"Respect for every human person, for his dignity and rights, must ever be the inspiration behind your efforts to increase

democracy and strengthen the social fabric of your country," John Paul II said.

In the Catholic heartland of eastern Nigeria, near Onitsha, more than a half million faithful prayed with the pope on Sunday.

The Abuja mass attracted not only Catholics but also Muslims from nearby northern states.

"We see a growing return to religion," said the Rev. Maurice Henry, an Irish missionary in the north who has spent 27 years watching Nigeria rise from rags to riches and sink back to rags.

Muslims did not meet the pontiff when he last visited in 1982, the priests recalled.

A scheduled session was canceled when Muslim leaders could not decide among themselves who would attend.

This time, John Paul met at length with the Sultan of Sokoto and other senior Islamic leaders. He was greeted warmly at the airport by Gen. Sani Abacha, the head of state and a Muslim.

The pontiff called for freedom for political prisoners, respect for human rights and the creation of a higher standard of living for this oil-blessed but impoverished nation of 108 million.

The Vatican asked Nigeria to free from prison about 60 political opponents and journalists.

Abacha made no reference to that request in remarks he made at the pope's departure Monday evening.

Scenes at the pontiff's open-air Mass suggested that was a tall order.

Police controlled crowds by flailing people with whips made of long lengths of electrical wire, a practice inherited from past governments.

Gaunt pilgrims walked for hours to the site, 10 miles west of Abuja.

Those with cars waited in endless lines for scarce fuel, the result of dilapidated refineries and unpaid import bills.

The few outspoken newspapers still appearing urged the government to heed the

pope's words.

The *Sunday Concord* noted that after the pope visited Cuba, "It is remarkable that Fidel Castro has toned down his iron-fisted rule, even as he has caused to be released hordes of political adversaries."

The *Concord's* publisher, Moshood Abiola, has been imprisoned since 1993, when he received the most votes in what was regarded as a free and fair presidential election. Abacha has been in power since then.

Elsewhere in the paper, writer Adebayo Williams called the pope's beatification of a Nigerian monk "a haunting reminder of Nigeria's prodigious natural capacity to throw up heroic individuals."

He added, "In a country overtaken by greed, opportunism and short-termism, the priest from Eastern Nigeria, who died in 1964, is the noblest and purist expression of ... what ought to be."

Across this newly built, multiethnic capital, people lauded the papal visit. Whether responding to John Paul II's religious mes-

sage or his star quality, most said he could make a positive impact.

"I am Muslim, but I will give him a chance," said Bala Ali, a young tailor, said he bought bolts of cloth and piles of rags from Wuse market. "He is a great man, something for us all."

Down on Church Alley, a costals rather than Catholics, the joy was tinged with a caution.

"I love what he says," Pastor said outside his Dominion Church. "He has given a challenge to us, and I hope they will heed it for change."

A nearby worshipper, a man named Greg Yusuf, said his faith had not varied.

"It takes the grace of God to do things, not the coming of a man."

"Still, his coming is good. It draws people to God. It unites culture and tradition."

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