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The New Dawn

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TRULY INDEPENDENT

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2019 will be critical



Pres. George Weah



--Weah tells lawmakers



NLA activities hurting pro-poor?



Continental News

Former Ivorian leader seeks acquittal on war crimes charges

Former Ivory Coast President Gbagbo attends a confirmation of charges hearing in his pre-trial at the International Criminal Court in The Hague

Judges at the International Criminal Court will rule on Tuesday over former Ivory Coast president Laurent Gbagbo's request to be acquitted and released after more than seven years in custody.

Gbagbo, 73, and Charles Blé Goudé, a close ally and former political youth leader, have been on trial since 2016 for war crimes allegedly committed under Gbagbo's leadership.

He faces four counts of crimes against humanity, including murder, rape, persecution and other inhumane acts during post-electoral violence in Ivory Coast between December 2010 and April 2011, when Gbagbo refused to accept defeat by rival Alassane Ouattara.

Legal experts say that during the trial, which is roughly half over, prosecutors

presented a lot of evidence crimes occurred, but few witnesses could link the ex-Ivory Coast leader directly.

"The prosecutor had a lot of insider witnesses, but if you look at their actual testimony it seems like many were afraid to implicate themselves," said Thijs Bouwknecht, an Amsterdam University

researcher on genocide. "A real link between the former president and the alleged crimes is hard to make." An acquittal would be a major setback for the prosecution, stung by defeats in cases against Jean-Pierre Bemba, the Congolese ex-vice president released in June after his war crimes conviction

was overturned, and former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, who saw charges against him dropped in 2015.

"There is a lot of pressure on the ICC to make this case a success," said Bouwknecht.

A collapse of the case against Gbagbo, the first former head of state to stand trial at the ICC who has been in custody since November 2011, could bolster opponents questioning its effectiveness after just three war crimes convictions in 15 years.

If the court supports assertions by Gbagbo's defense team that prosecutors have failed to present evidence supporting the charges, judges could order his release.

Prosecutors argue the evidence shows Gbagbo and his inner circle hatched a plan to cling to power by whatever means necessary and that the trial should continue.

But the panel of three judges has been split over his ongoing custody, with one repeatedly insisting Gbagbo should be released provisionally while awaiting the outcome.

Provisional release can be granted if the judges are satisfied the suspect will return for trial and not obstruct or endanger the court's work. They will start reading their decision at 1000GMT in The Hague. - Reuters



Sudan's Bashir says protests will fail to change government

Defiant Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir said Monday that ongoing protests will not lead to a change in government, as crowds of supporters cheered him at a rally in war-torn Darfur.

Deadly protests have rocked Sudan since December 19 when angry demonstrators took to the streets in towns

and villages against a government decision to raise the price of bread.

At least 24 people have died in the protests, which swiftly turned into nationwide anti-government rallies, with protesters calling on Bashir to step down.

"Demonstrations will not change the government," Bashir told crowds of

supporters gathered in Niyala, the capital of South Darfur state, where a day earlier police broke up an anti-government demonstration, state television reported.

"There's only one road to power and that is through the ballot box. The Sudanese people will decide in 2020 who will govern them," said Bashir, who is planning to run for the presidency for the third time in elections to be held next year.

In the initial days of protests, several buildings and offices of Bashir's ruling National Congress Party were set on fire in towns and villages before the demonstrations spread to the capital Khartoum.

"Sudan has many enemies and those enemies have few people among us who don't want stability and security," said Bashir, with state television broadcasting footage showing him waving his trademark cane as supporters chanted "stay, stay". "We will not allow anyone to destroy our homeland by looting and burning our

Zimbabwe protests after petrol and diesel price hike

Protests have broken out in Zimbabwe's two main cities following the more than doubling of the fuel price.

Burning tyres and boulders are being used to barricade roads and block buses from carrying passengers.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa said the fuel price rise is aimed at tackling shortages caused by an increase in fuel use and "rampant" illegal trading.

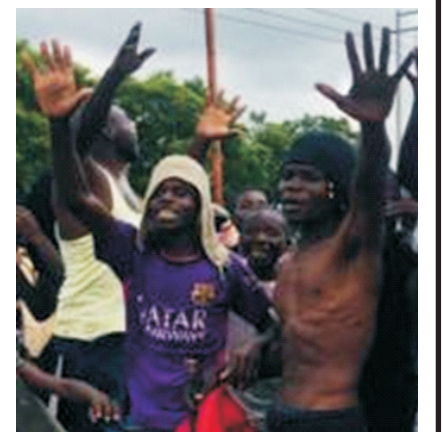
Zimbabwe's government is trying to resuscitate the country's struggling economy.

The southern African nation faces a severe shortage of US dollar cash and confidence in its bond notes, which are supposed to be worth the same as the dollar, is still low.

The bond notes, or "bollars", have lost value because of a lack of foreign currency backing the note, and are now worth much less than a dollar.

Zimbabwean companies are also not producing enough to satisfy local demand or to earn foreign currency by exporting goods. Instead, the country is importing more than it is exporting and struggling to pay.

In Harare, most businesses are closed following calls by



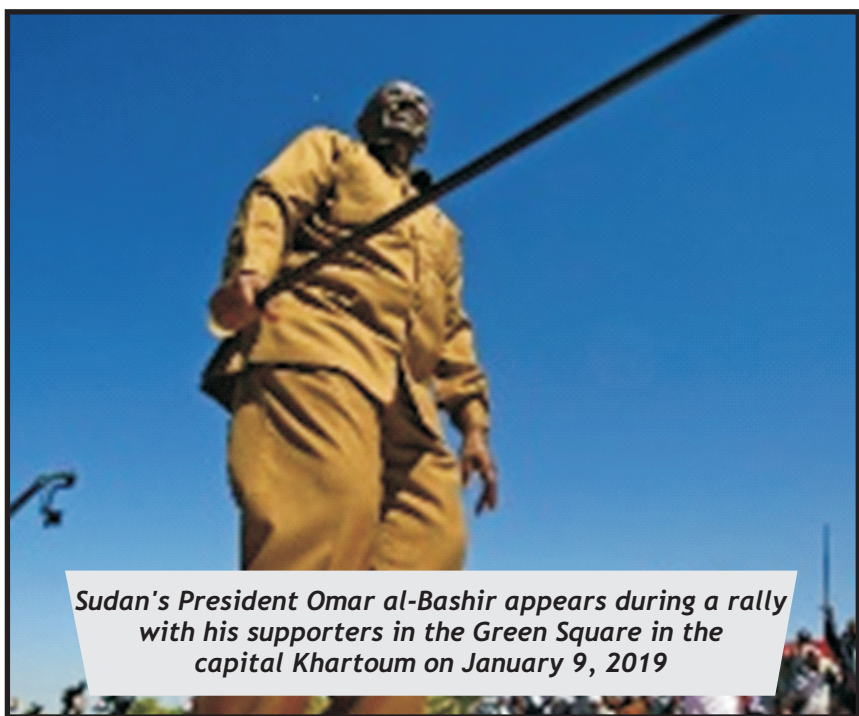
trade unions and the opposition for a three-day strike over the fuel price increase.

Riot police have been deployed in the capital and in the southern city of Bulawayo.

People 'sponsoring' unrest In a televised address on Saturday, President Mnangagwa said the fuel price hike would address the ongoing fuel problems, which have seen motorists queuing for hours at petrol stations.

He said the government would crackdown on "elements bent on taking advantage of the current fuel shortages to cause and sponsor unrest and instability in the country".

The hike means petrol prices rose from \$1.24 (£0.97) a litre to \$3.31, with diesel up from \$1.36 a litre to \$3.11. - BBC



Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir appears during a rally with his supporters in the Green Square in the capital Khartoum on January 9, 2019

properties," said Bashir as some supporters attended the rally on camels, while many heard him from tree tops.

On Sunday, the first anti-

government demonstrations were held by groups of protesters in Niyala and El-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur. -AFP

EDITORIAL

Chairman Morlu betrays Marketers' trust

IT TOOK NO lesser a personality than the Superintendent of the Joe Bar Market, Martha Banney, in the Monrovia suburb of Old Road to alarm that CDC Chairman Mulbah Morlu had diverted 150 bags of Pro-Poor Rice allotted for the market by President George Manneh Weah to his home before the consignment was taken back recently to the market.

SUPERINTENDENT BANNEY REVEALED in a radio interview recently that Chairman Mulbah Morlu took the consignment of 150 bags of rice at his house rather than to the market as he was directed by CDC Standard Bearer President George Weah during the Christmas season in a rationing exercise to enable every community have access to the Pro-Poor Rice, which is not sufficient for the population of Monrovia.

THE ROWDY-SPOKEN CDC Chairman is yet to explain why he took the rice at his house. But Mr. Morlu reportedly did return the rice after Superintendent Banney alarm, apparently in a bid to have President Weah informed that the rice he had allotted for the Joe Bar Market, was instead, at the residence of Chairman Morlu.

WE JUST DON'T understand what really was Morlu's motive in taking the rice home, but one thing that seems to be clear in the writing on the wall is the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change lacks accountability and transparency in its dealing with the Liberian people.

IT IS NOT only a disgrace but a shame that the Chairman of the ruling party would want to not just misrepresent the standard bearer, but steal rice from the people who voted the CDC to power.

THIS IS WHAT opposition leader Alexander Benedict Cummings terms "Broad day stealing of what belongs to the majority of the population." And then CDCians want to fight whenever the CDC-led government is criticized. These are nothing but the realities.

WHEN THE MANAGING Director of the National Housing Authority and his deputy are at each other's throats after soliciting and receiving bribes from investors that came to put money in our recessing economy by constructing housing units for low income citizens, who bears the burns or consequences of their corrupt and greedy attitude? No one else but the poor Liberian people whom the Coalition government says it came to empower.

CHAIRMAN MORLU AND his likes in the government should understand that leadership or governance is not about milking the state and its people, but honest service characterized by transparency and accountability.

MORLU WOULD HAVE gained the trust and respect of not only the marketers of Joe Bar Market in the Old Road community, but the CDC Standard Bearer President George Weah, who sent him to deliver the rice had he done so transparently.

BUT HE CHOSE to do something totally different by diverting the consignment to his residence, while the poor marketers and residents of Old Road yearn for the Pro-Poor Rice. Such unscrupulous behavior erodes public confidence and breeds distrust in the national leadership.

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COMMENTARY

By Minxin Pei

China's Perilous Taiwan Policy

China's tough stance toward Taiwan has so far proved counter-productive, bringing no concessions from the government in Taipei and exacerbating tensions with the US. Unless China changes course, an escalating battle of wills with the US could erupt into direct conflict.

WASHINGTON, DC - The unfolding geopolitical contest between China and the United States has been described by many as a new cold war. If it ever becomes a hot one, the flash point could be Taiwan, owing in large part to Chinese policy toward the island.

China's government suspended diplomatic contact with Taiwan in June 2016, because the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which had just returned to power, refused to recognize the so-called 1992 Consensus, the political basis for the One China principle. Since then, however, Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen has pursued a moderate policy, disappointing hardline DPP supporters.

That is not good enough for China, which has continued to tighten the screws on Taiwan. For example, it persuaded five other countries to follow it in severing diplomatic ties, reducing the number of countries that maintain formal relations with the island to just 17. China has also taken steps to stifle tourism from the mainland: whereas nearly 4.2 million mainland-Chinese tourists visited Taiwan in 2015, when the pro-Beijing Kuomintang government was in power, the total fell to just 2.73 million in 2017.

Taiwan's government has not blinked. But, last November, the DPP did suffer devastating losses in local elections, largely because of anemic economic growth - an outcome that drove the politically weakened Tsai to resign as party leader.

For China, this seemed like the ideal moment to turn up the heat. So, on January 2, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a major speech on Taiwan, in which he made it clear that China remains determined to seek reunification.

Xi dismissed the argument that China's autocratic political system is fundamentally incompatible with Taiwan's boisterous democracy, insisting that the "one country, two systems" formula, first applied to Hong Kong when it reverted from British to Chinese rule in 1997, would be sufficient to protect Taiwan's interests and autonomy. The formula is, however, now unraveling in Hong Kong, where freedoms have been eroding during Xi's tenure.

Nor did Xi indicate that he would offer concessions to entice Taiwan back to the negotiating table. On the contrary, despite declaring that "Chinese will not fight Chinese," he refused to renounce the use of force to prevent Taiwan from seeking formal independence. China must, in his words, "reserve the option to take any necessary measure," though he claims that the threat is aimed at "external forces and at an extremely small number of 'Taiwan independence' separatists."

Again, Taiwan's government was unfazed. Tsai

responded with a defiant speech of her own, in which she flatly rejected both the One China principle and the "one country, two systems" formula, and called for the international community to support Taiwan's de facto independence.

Although Xi's tough stance toward Taiwan may end up reinvigorating flagging support for Tsai and the DPP, there is no reason to think that he will abandon it any time soon. But nor is there reason to think that China's policy will stop backfiring. While inflicting economic pain and diplomatic humiliation on Taiwan may produce some short-term psychological satisfaction for China, the island will adjust over time, and Chinese actions will yield decreasing returns.

For example, after China cut the number of mainland visitors, Taiwan turned its attention to attracting tourists from other countries. Despite the decline in visitors from the mainland, 11 million tourists - a new record - visited the island in 2018. To reduce its economic dependence on the mainland, Taiwan has also been aggressively diversifying its overseas markets.

Moreover, although China's economy is far larger, Taiwan has some important sources of leverage. For example, restricting its electronics industry - which forms a vital link between China and global information-technology supply chains - from doing business with the mainland would significantly accelerate the exodus of export-oriented manufacturers from China spurred by rising US import tariffs.

Perhaps the most dangerous consequence of China's Taiwan policy is that it raises further tensions with the United States. As the ultimate protector of Taiwan's de facto independence, the US has already taken steps to convey the message that it will not just sit by and watch China bully the island into submission. Last February, the US Congress unanimously passed the Taiwan Travel Act, which will allow senior American officials to visit Taiwan and vice versa. Though the measure is largely symbolic, it has infuriated China, because it amounts to official recognition of the Taiwan government.

Furthermore, in September, the US recalled its ambassadors to the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Panama, in protest over these countries' decision to sever diplomatic ties with Taiwan. And proposals to strengthen US-Taiwan defense cooperation, including through the sale of more advanced weapons, are under discussion.

So far, China has responded to such challenges to its One China policy by ratcheting up the pressure on Taiwan - sustaining a highly dangerous dynamic at a time when US-China relations are already fraught. Unless China's leaders break the cycle, an escalating battle of wills with the US could erupt into direct conflict.

O-PED

By Ana Palacio

The Transatlantic Leadership Void

WASHINGTON, DC - Transatlantic security today looks a lot like a ghost plane. With the “crew” incapacitated - that is, bereft of ideas or leadership - it is flying on autopilot until it inevitably hits something or runs out of fuel and comes crashing down. To avoid disaster, those in the cockpit need to wake up - and soon.

Since the end of World War II, the United States, as the dominant European (and world) power, has piloted transatlantic security. But under President Donald Trump, the US isn't doing much leading. Indeed, it is not even clear who in Trump's administration is really in charge any more. Today, former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's apocryphal question - “Who do I call if I want to call Europe?” - can just as easily be tossed back across the Atlantic.

When Trump came to power, America's European allies (and much of the rest of the world) thought they knew the answer to that question. They hoped that, whatever bluster issued from the White House, the US would ultimately support the status quo. US policy, they told themselves, would be dictated not by Trump's tweet storms, but by the more reliable “adults” in his government - Rex Tillerson, Trump's first secretary of state; H.R. McMaster, Trump's second national security adviser; and James Mattis, Trump's secretary of defense.

All are now gone. Mattis, the most recently departed, left after Trump's abrupt announcement that he would withdraw all US troops from Syria - a major policy decision that was made flippantly and against Mattis's advice and that of his Department of Defense. His scathing resignation letter excoriated Trump for not “treating allies with respect” or “being clear-eyed about both malign actors and strategic competitors.” Mattis told Trump that “you have the right to have a Secretary of Defense whose views are better aligned with yours.”

Given Mattis's rationale for leaving, one might have imagined that his resignation would at least make US policy more predictable. Rather than wonder whether the US would abandon NATO, as Trump suggested, or stand by it, as his administration's senior officials promised, Europe could respond to a single message. That message might be unwelcome and dangerous, but at least others would know where they stand.

But the erratic, mixed messages have persisted - and even increased. On December 19, following a phone conversation with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Trump tweeted: “We have defeated ISIS in Syria, my only reason for being there during the Trump Presidency.” The next day, he tweeted: “Russia, Iran, Syria & many others are not happy...because now they will have to fight ISIS and others, who they hate, without us.”

Then, at the beginning of January, US National Security Adviser John Bolton was dispatched to the Middle East to reassure nervous allies - in particular, Israel - about Trump's decision. These countries are concerned that an abrupt withdrawal of US forces will permit ISIS to survive and even recover, leave Kurdish forces that have been integral in the fight against ISIS exposed to Turkish attacks, and allow for unfettered forward positioning by Iran in Syria.

These are legitimate concerns - so legitimate, in fact, that Trump's big Syria announcement was quickly walked back. A US withdrawal, Bolton declared, would be contingent on fully defeating ISIS and a Turkish guarantee not to attack America's Kurdish allies.

Yet, with no adults around to tell them what to do, Trump's administration failed to clear these new conditions with Turkey. An outraged Erdogan canceled a planned meeting with Bolton to discuss the withdrawal. The Trump administration's Syria policy is now an open question.

This was not the result of an oversight or disorganization in the Trump administration. Nor was it a case of ineffective or misguided leadership. What is happening to US foreign policy reflects a lack of any kind of leadership at all. At this point, no one knows what US policy is or even who is making it. Unsurprisingly, this has left the entire transatlantic community adrift.

Next month, the doyens of international politics and diplomacy will gather for the annual Munich Security Conference. While the event has grown over the years, and now covers global issues, its core remains the transatlantic community. The MSC thus represents an important opportunity to discuss openly the utter lack of leadership on transatlantic security.

Last year, the MSC chose as its theme the semi-hopeful “To the brink - and back?” This year, it should be “Is anyone at the wheel?” The Americans in the ballroom at Munich's Hotel Bayerischer Hof may say yes. But they are not the ones in the cockpit.

OPINION

By Mariana Mazzucato

Let's Get Real About Purpose

LONDON - One year ago, BlackRock chairman and CEO Larry Fink wrote a letter to 500 CEOs asking them to rethink their sense of purpose. “To prosper over time,” he wrote, “every company must not only deliver financial performance, but also show how it makes a positive contribution to society.”

Fink argued that companies' excessive short-term focus was hurting their ability to create more value in the long run. Some prominent politicians - including US Senator Elizabeth Warren and (until Brexit torpedoed her policy agenda) British Prime Minister Theresa May - have also advocated a more inclusive and less predatory form of capitalism.

But despite these calls to action, little has changed. The financial sector remains self-obsessed and invests mostly in other parts of finance, insurance, and real estate. Companies also are overly financialized, spending more on share buybacks and dividends than on human capital, machinery, and research and development. And the buyback mania is getting worse, including at companies like Apple, where falling innovation is not unrelated to the failure to reinvest. Many businesses talk soothingly about corporate social responsibility, impact, and social purpose, but very few put these at the core of their operations.

Fink claimed that companies should instead focus on a broader group of stakeholders: “shareholders, employees, customers, and the communities in which they operate.” But this would require corporate governance structures that maximize stakeholder value, not shareholder value - and neither Fink nor other business luminaries seem willing to go down this “Scandinavian” path.

Real change means putting purpose at the center of how value is defined by firms, governments, and the economic theory that informs policymakers. As I argue in my new book, Adam Smith and Karl Marx made the objective conditions of production - the division of labor, machinery, and capital-labor relations - central to their understanding of value. In neoclassical economics, however, value is merely a function of exchange. Only what has a price is valuable, and “collective” effort is omitted, because only individual decisions matter. Even wages are seen as outcomes of people's utility-maximizing choices between leisure and work.

In the neoclassical view, governments at best redistribute value created elsewhere. Furthermore, GDP doesn't account for the value of essential public services such as health care and education. It does, though, account for their costs (teachers' salaries, for example), so that civil servants cannot claim to be as “productive” as former Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein in 2009 infamously suggested his employees were.

Unsurprisingly, public officials, long accused of “crowding out” business, have internalized the belief that they should do no more than fix market failures. Yet the public organizations that put a man on the moon and invented the Internet did more than just correct market failures. They had ambition, a purpose, and a mission.

To get real about purpose, we need to recognize that value is created collectively and build more symbiotic partnerships between public and private institutions and civil society. In doing so, we must address three questions: what value to create, how to evaluate the impact, and how to share the rewards.

Paul Polman, the departing CEO of Unilever, has rightly tried to focus companies on creating value in line with substantial targets, especially the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Of course, neither the public nor the private sector alone can meet all 169 specific targets underpinning the SDGs. But governments can use the goals to create initiatives that require investment and innovation from many public, private, and civil-society organizations. I advocated this approach in a report that has become a key part of the European Commission's Horizon program.

Similarly, companies evaluating their social impact should ditch fuzzy objectives and focus on concrete steps to help solve problems. Financial institutions would no longer evaluate their loans on the basis of categories of firms or countries, but rather in terms of activities that help fulfill specific missions - such as removing plastic from the ocean or creating more sustainable cities. Likewise, governments should give fewer handouts to companies and instead rely more on procurement and prize schemes to nurture corporate innovations aimed at achieving the SDGs. In other words, there should be less picking winners and more picking the willing.

Finally, companies must share the rewards as well as the risks of creating value. Business has benefited enormously from public investment not only in education, research, and basic infrastructure, but also in technologies like those powering today's smartphones. Governments could, therefore, retain more of the upside returns to cover the downside losses that risk-taking involves. For example, they could take equity stakes in companies like Tesla, which received a similar amount of support as the failed company Solyndra, or generate non-monetary returns by setting conditions on the prices of goods (such as medicines) that receive heavy public investments, and on knowledge governance (to ensure that the patent system is not abused). Similarly, conditions on reinvesting corporate profits would reduce cash hoarding and share-buybacks. To cite one famous example, when Bell Labs was formed, monopolies like AT&T were pressured to reinvest their profits. That courage has been lost.

A more purposeful capitalism requires more than just letters, speeches, and goodwill gestures. Business, government, and civil society must act together, courageously, to ensure that their walk is as good as their talk.

LIBERIANS DEBATE

With Sally H. Gaye Cell#: 0886726282 Email:sh0770291004@gmail.com



The Administration of the University of Liberia recently suspended student politics on all its campuses with immediate effect until otherwise directed.

In this spot-check, the New Dawn samples views some members of the student community on the decision by the UL Administration.



Armand Tweh

“I think the blockade, we are aware that elements at the University are political pygmies of no weight who are against all vestiges of decency. It is even sadder that the University which should be the last conscience of our society would allow itself to stoop so low, to be used as a medium of political repression. We wonder what price had UL authorities paid

to allow themselves to degenerate into being pitiful echo chambers of the regime by putting out such ridiculous statement to the public. Sadly, this is a situation of dual calamity: that the highest institution of learning in the country which should uphold civilized standards has plummeted to the lowest ebb; secondly, that people of integrity have fallen so cheaply for the gimmick of the regime.”



Yanpu Folma

“I support the school [university’s] decision to suspend student politics on campus; I say this because those guys are just criminals, who called themselves students. The way they carry themselves in the name of student politics is not the right way. They will eat their school fees and some of them will not even come to school but they will be in the

streets, causing problem for us. Let them rest small since the only thing they know as student leaders is to take the streets and cause problem for us. Violence is not the way forward; we all need to embrace this peace and leaders of student groups on campus should dialogue.”

Amb Peal Nyenkan

“It is totally wrong to ban student’s political activities Even with its tacit intrigue, suspending student politics on the campuses of the University is the mildest reaction of the regime which has all the trappings of black fascism; the statement seeks to prepare the way for other vicious attacks on popular forces and deliver dual victories: a respite to save the neck of the regime from the fighting students, and a sort of imprimatur from authorities of the University to President George M. Weah and his officials to loot the people’s resources and keep them in conditions of poverty, mystery and ignorance.”



James Kapel

“Some of the money was for ULSU scholarship. Certain individuals will collect money from students to be placed on scholarship. These were some dark days in the lives of many students. Declaring free tuition is like taking chopping from the mouth of the few, who have been using their fellow students for personal aggrandizement. So, those guys will do nothing to still be getting money for themselves. Not a good sign from the end of our expected future leaders. The University of Liberia is not a military barracks, please. Rebels belong in the bushes, not on UL campuses. May God in his wrath, root you all out from the campuses.”



Augustus Weah

“This government needs to be more serious than this. The same way you reduced national agenda to community agenda, you again want to reduce government to student politics. This is how some of our current government officials used to be during their days. No government has fought or can fight student politics and survive. The CDC government should be mindful of history. You



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Welcome To The New World

don't know the University of Liberia and its history, but because of this history you can now speak or enter the University. So, dressing like that is nothing wrong. Let them do something about this.”

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Gov't is robbing Margibi County

-Rep Ivar K. Jones
By Ramsey N. Singbeh, Jr.
in Margibi

Margibi County District Two Representative Ivar K. Jones claims government is robbing the county by collecting taxes from there, but remitting nothing for development.

He argues that considering huge revenue being generated from Margibi and brought to

International Airport and Firestone Rubber Plantation Company, among others, recalling that it is because of the presence of Firestone in Margibi the Freeport of Monrovia was built.

He further claims in 2018 the Freeport along generated around three to five million US Dollars.

Not naming China Union and Salala Rubber Corporation, two other concessions in the county, the Representative

monthly withholdings far beyond US\$70,000.

The Margibi Lawmaker further alleges the county was robbed of land rental, totaling over US\$200,000, arguing that Margibi County should have received more than US\$160,000 of said amount, but only got US\$25,000 from government, which he describes as unfair.

"We were robbed of our money, the land rental fee. If you go to the agreement of Firestone, it tells you that we were supposed to receive two hundred and sixty some more thousand dollars; I am saying we were robbed because if Margibi, of the two hundred and some more thousand dollars should have received one and sixty three or one hundred and sixty five thousand dollars for social development and in this gone budget, we only had twenty five thousands, we believe that was unfair on the part of the government to the Margibians."

He says by law, these funds should come to the county, but government is robbing Margibi by not providing its deserved benefits.

Meanwhile, Representative Jones promises to take the issue up at the National Legislature to make his colleagues understand that Firestone is contributing huge amount to the national budget from Margibi County, but remittance to the county is small, which is unfair. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Jones continues that as part of Margibi's contribution in 1926 when the Head of Firestone, the late Harvey S. Firestone lent US\$5 million to the government.

He explains that as the second largest employer in Liberia, the company has about 7,000 workers and



central government, the county deserves attention in terms of development.

Speaking recently in an interview with reporters in Cotton Tree, Lower Margibi County, Representative Jones notes there are several sources of funding from the county, including Roberts

CDC replies Cummings

Starts from back page

US\$200,000 into the party's account thereby, rendering the party as the lowest performer from the elections that won no legislative seat.

Responding to Cummings statement of 'leaders eat last, Morlu argues the assertion is a clear indication that the ANC leader's plan for Liberia is to loot the country, saying, "For our President does not eat first or last; instead, his desire is to serve and provide the needs of the Liberian people. Those who want to eat last are already being corrupt and [it is with] criminal mindset they're coming. Thank God they and their followers were rejected by the Liberian people at the ballot box during the elections."

He says while Liberia has made great strides in fostering an environment of free press, free speech and free assembly over the past decade, an unfortunate outcome of this positive evolution is attempt to ground public discussions and debates on falsehood, unbalanced news coverage and unwarranted allegations against the Government and some of its senior officials, noting "In a free democracy and media culture such as ours, the only policy response against this creeping menace is to alert citizens and devise vigorous mechanisms to buffet untruth, propaganda and lopsided news coverage. The Government will continue to uphold and sustain an environment of free press and free expression."

Five days ago, Mr. Cummings said, "The stealing has got to stop. You cannot have a leaking pocket and try to add more water. There is a leaking pocket because of the stealing and corruption in government and that has to stop. By every economic measurement, the economy is failing. It is not

working for the people of Liberia. Inflation is everywhere. Prices are going up. This government has made an 'F'. I don't have to say it for the Liberia people, they are feeling the pinch and what makes it worse for me, there seems to be no plan to fix it by the government."

However, the governing CDC says it will no longer officially dignify lies, baseless allegations, and unprovable assertions from political leaders who do not hold any legislative seat.

Morlu says the Montserrado County Youth League of the Coalition for Democratic Change has been designated to respond to lies and rumors, and that journalists and media organizations asking questions on baseless claims from politicians will be directed to the Montserrado County Youth Wing for official response.

"To the extent that these false claims purport to injure and malign the reputation of Government officials, such officials will minimally debunk the lies and refer the press and other interested persons to the Montserrado Youth Wing for more detailed discussion", he concludes.

The Weah administration is under increased pressure to demonstrate transparency and accountability in the governing process amid reports of missing money, financial transaction outside the banking system and rapid depreciation of the Liberian dollar against rising prices.

Suspicious are even exacerbated by the President's simultaneous construction of several private properties, including resort, multiple duplexes and a family church edifice as well as acquisition of lands across the country in less than a year. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

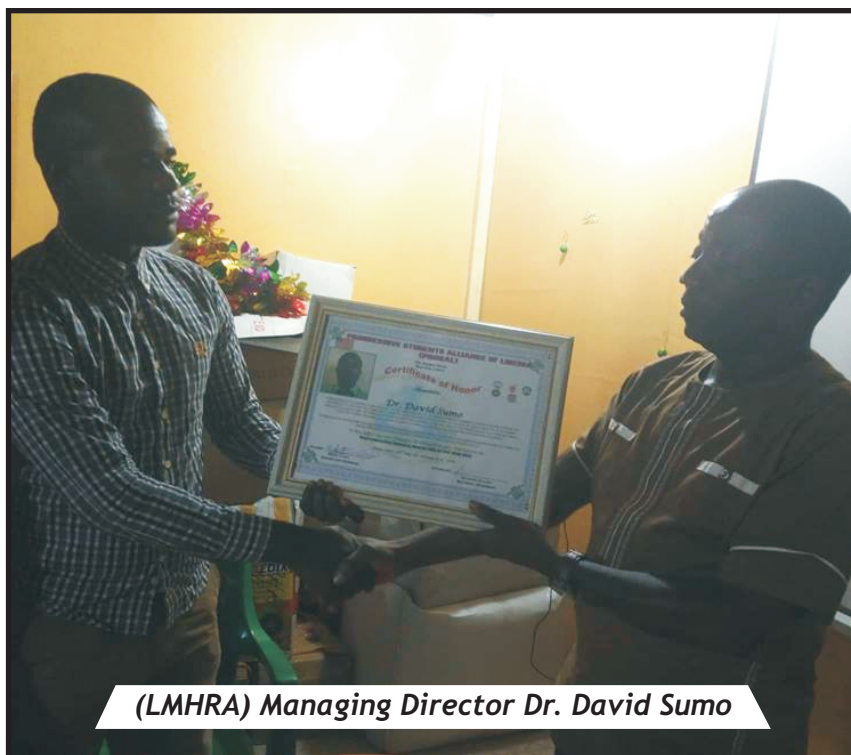
Regulator vows to go after fake drugs importers

By Lewis S. Teh

Liberia Medicine and Health Regulatory Authority (LMHRA) Managing Director Dr. David Sumo has vowed to run after individuals that are in the constant habit of bringing fake drugs on the Liberian market to sell to citizens.

"We want to send this message out to all unscrupulous individuals who are involved in the illegal proliferation and circulation of medicine into the market for economic gains at the detriment of the people. We will run after you, and there will be no barrier to stop us," Dr. Sumo warned over the weekend.

He sounded the warning while being honored as the best Managing Director of the year 2018 by the Progressive



(LMHRA) Managing Director Dr. David Sumo

Students Alliance, a conglomeration of universities and colleges in Liberia.

"As you take this decision to honor us, we can assure you we will not let you down, we will

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continue the watch and do more in terms of moving forward and be aggressive in our duties," Dr. Sumo says.

He assures that his institution will protect Liberia against the proliferation of counterfeit medicine.

Presenting the certificate to Dr. David Sumo, the Secretary General of the Progressive Students Alliance

Mark Chea said the decision to honor the LMHRA MD was based on work carried out by a vetting committee, where they followed the working of Dr. Sumo.

"We followed his track record, and he was selected based on his performance," he says. **--Edited by Winston W. Parley**

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Human seller convicted

By Winston W. Parley

The Sierra Leonean woman Hawa Bangura has been convicted in Monrovia for trafficking in person, after community dwellers in Banjor, Montserrado County frustrated her efforts to sell two of her compatriots for US\$3,500 by planting securities on her during the attempted sale of the victims.

Following her conviction on Monday, 14 January, Criminal Court "A" Judge Roosevelt Z. Willie scheduled her sentencing to Thursday, 17 January at 10:00A.M.

Hawa was convicted at the end of a bench trial (trial by judge) for selling Famata Kanu and the latter's 4-year old daughter Kadiatu Kromah for US\$3,500.00 in 2017.

The Judge has ordered that a background investigation be conducted on Hawa and a report be submitted to him this Thursday to inform his decision in sentencing the convict comes 17 January.

She declined to testify during the trial to disprove the charges levied against her by



Liberian prosecutors.

The State says commercial motorcyclist Lahai Kamara whom Hawa had asked to find buyers for the trafficked victims had informed Banjor Community Chairman Molley Passawe before later hinting securities personal.

Prosecution say photographs were taken at Passawe's house while Hawa

was there.

According to Prosecution, Mr. Molley had pretended to enter agreement with Hawa to buy the trafficked victims from her, after being informed that she was looking for buyer for Famata and Kadiatu.

Judge Willie rules that prosecutors proved their case beyond all reasonable doubts to convict Hawa for the crime

charged.

He adds that Hawa did not take the witness stand to rebut prosecution's six witnesses that linked her to the crime.

The Judge recalls from the hearing of the case that witness Famata testified how she was selling for Hawa in Sierra Leone, but they later found themselves in Liberia.

The Liberian Government say Hawa deceived Famata and her daughter that they were going to Bo-waterside, a border point with Liberia, but she brought them into Liberia for alleged business purpose.

The State says it has proved its case beyond reasonable doubt.

On 9 January, the former head of the Liberia National Police (LNP) Anti Human Trafficking Division Sup. Anthony S. Tugbeh said during the probe, investigators discovered that Famata and Kadiatu were deceived on grounds that they were coming to Liberia to purchase used clothes.

Her lawyer Cllr. Joseph B. Debblay from the office of the Public Defenders for Montserrado County has taken exception against the ruling.

He requested Judge Willie earlier on Monday to acquit Hawa for incorrect evidence, reasonable doubt, violation of her miranda rights, and lack of FOC [fruits of the crime] to establish crime.

Cllr. Debblay claims that the entire indictment is based on speculation, the whole evidence was fabricated and concocted.

Following Hawa's conviction, journalists had so much difficulties to photograph her because Correction Officers made all efforts to shield her face from the camera.

The officers began shielding the convict from the hallway on the ground floor of the Temple of Justice outside Criminal Court "A" down to the basement of the building where they had a vehicle waiting to whisk her away to Central Prison.

CSOs push for a lone law on management of social dev't fund

Civil Society grouping under the banner the Natural Resource Management Coalition (NRMC) is highlighting the need for the government, especially the National Legislature, to pass a Stand-Alone County Social Development Fund Management Law. The law will aid stakeholders in decentralizing developmental initiatives around the country.

Speaking to reporters in Monrovia over the weekend, Mr. Peter Dolo, Deputy Director for Program at the

Development Education Network Liberia (DEN-L), said the coalition of eight civil society grouping with funding from USAID through the Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiatives (LAVI) "conducted a nation-wide research to identify challenges that are slowing down development at the county level regardless of the fact that funding are allocated annually."

Mr. Dolo went further to say that the findings from the nation-wide research identified several challenges

confronting the management of the Fund. These challenges included poor information dissemination before and about the county sitting, hand picking delegates to attend the county sitting and limited participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in the counties. Other challenges were people who allegedly misappropriate the funding go with impunity, huge percentage of the funding was used on county administration and lack of proper reporting on how the funds were used.

The DEN-L Deputy Director for Programs mentioned that following the research, a launching program was held in Monrovia at which some members of the National Legislature and other national stakeholders were present and these findings were presented with a proposal for reform Section 9 of the Budge Law which speaks about the use and administration of the funds.

Following the interaction, the NRMC began the advocacy around the reforms. These reforms include at least 25% of the total delegates attending the county sitting should be women, county sitting should be done when lawmakers are on their annual break and lawmakers and other county

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authorities are to only serve as observers at the county sitting. Other reforms include the presiding must be elected from the delegates, the funding should be placed in an extra county account and disbursement can be made after proper expenditure report for the previous funding has been made and only 10% of the funding should be used for administration annually.

Mr. Dolo concluded by saying that it is the aspiration of the Coalition that the government of Liberia will see the need to pass a CSDF Management Stand-Alone Law that will not be changed annually as the National Budget is done, noting lawmakers' support is prime to

ensure the passage of the proposed Bill.

It can be recalled that in 2006, Former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in an effort to decentralize development allotted US\$200,000 annually to each county regardless of the size and population to support developments initiatives such as roads, education and health.

The Natural Resource Management Coalition is a combination of eight civil society groups that include the Liberia Media Center, Sustainable Development Institute, NAYMOTE, RHARP, Platform for Development and Peace, Development Education Network Liberia, among others. -Press release

Français

Winston W. Parley du NewDawn nommé journaliste de l'année par la police

Le département de la presse et des affaires publiques de la police nationale du Libéria (LNP) a honoré Winston W. Parley de NewDawn comme journaliste de l'année 2018/2019.

C'est en reconnaissance des contributions énormes du journaliste Parley à la section des relations avec les médias du secrétariat de la presse et des affaires publiques de la Police nationale du Libéria que le certificat d'honneur lui a été décerné à la plage Sophie, à Congo Town, le samedi 12 janvier, dans l'après-midi.

Lors de la première soirée de fin d'année organisée par la division des relations extérieures de la police nationale du Libéria depuis sa création en 2004, l'inspecteur général de la police, le colonel Patrick Sudue, et plusieurs commandants de comtés et de zones ont également été honorés pour leurs prestations exceptionnelles.

M. Parley est un rédacteur au journal NewDawn. Il est



également chargé de couvrir notamment le palais présidentiel, la police nationale, la défense et le pouvoir judiciaire.

La journaliste Fabine Kwiah de la chaîne de télévision publique ELBC a également été honorée par contumace.

Après l'événement, M. Parley a déclaré au NewDawn à quel point il était fier d'être honoré par la police.

Il a profité de la reconnaissance de son travail par la police pour faire passer le message suivant : « Nous devons nous embrasser quelle que soit la profession dans laquelle nous nous trouvons, dès lors que cela sert à lutter pour le bien de la société. En violation flagrante du droit des peuples à l'information sur le fonctionnement des institutions de leurs États,

certaines concluront à tort que les journalistes qui posent des questions difficiles pour obtenir la vérité cherchent des ennuis », a fait observer M. Parley. Décernant le certificat d'honneur à notre collègue, le colonel Patrick Sudue a déclaré : « la division de la presse et des affaires publiques de la police nationale du Libéria reconnaît votre travail et vous souhaite une meilleure année 2019 ».

Le colonel Sudue a fait remarquer qu'il fait de plus

en plus l'objet des critiques des médias aussi négativement que positivement, mais à aucun moment il n'a attaqué des journalistes pour leurs critiques. Il a remercié la presse et son organisation faitière, l'Union de la Presse du Libéria (PUL), pour son rôle, affirmant que les critiques l'avaient aidé à trouver le courage de retourner au travail et de faire mieux.

Selon le colonel Sudue, la presse n'est l'ennemi de personne, « ce qui laisse supposer que si les journalistes parlent de vous négativement, ils vous permettent de réparer vos erreurs ».

Le chef de la police a indiqué que révolus sont les jours où la police brutalisait ses propres citoyens, tout en se félicitant qu'aucun prisonnier politique ne séjourne dans les prisons du pays et que, sous son administration, la police a juste eu à surveiller les manifestations et les protestations sans brutaliser personne.

Faut-il privatiser l'enseignement public en Côte d'Ivoire ?

L'actualité scolaire en Côte d'Ivoire est marquée par la question des frais d'inscription. La Fédération Estudiantine et Scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire (FESCI) a dénoncé les frais annexes

d'inscription (5 000 à 200 000 francs CFA) dépassant les frais officiels fixés à 6 000. Au lycée moderne d'Anyama, le Comité de Gestion des Établissements (COGES) s'est opposé au proviseur qui voulait détourner les 40

millions générés par les frais annexes. Comment faire cesser ce scandale et améliorer ainsi la gouvernance des établissements scolaires ?

RENFORCER LA TRANSPARENCE DE LA GESTION

À court terme, le ministère de l'Éducation nationale devrait commencer par veiller à la bonne répartition des frais officiels aux composantes du système éducatif. Ainsi, chaque COGES devrait percevoir la somme de 1 700 francs par élève inscrit, conformément à la clé de répartition avant la fin du premier trimestre ; des COGES affirment percevoir 700 francs par élève inscrit, et parfois au dernier trimestre scolaire.

Les frais annexes devraient être plafonnés sans excéder le montant des frais officiels. La gouvernance de ces fonds devrait se conformer aux normes comptables de bonne gestion. Pour cela, le

ministère devrait prendre des mesures de suivi et de contrôle de la gestion en s'appuyant sur les différentes directions régionales de l'éducation nationale (DREN). Ainsi, les DREN pourraient effectuer dans les écoles des contrôles inopinés des réalisations, des appels d'offre et des documents comptables de gestion des COGES.

De même, il faudrait renforcer la reddition des comptes via les COGES. Ces derniers devraient avoir un compte bancaire dont les chèques seraient contre-signés par trois personnes, notamment un représentant des associations des parents d'élèves, un représentant des enseignants et un représentant de la direction de l'école. Au terme de

chaque année scolaire, d'une part un audit financier devrait être fait et rendu public et d'autre part les COGES devraient envoyer un rapport financier aux parents d'élèves et à la DREN. Les mauvais gestionnaires seraient traduits devant les tribunaux.

EN FINIR AVEC LE MYTHE DE GRATUITÉ DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT PUBLIC

Sur un horizon temporel de moyen et de long terme, la question des frais d'inscription pose la problématique du monopole de l'État dans l'enseignement, surtout avec l'encombrement, l'abandon scolaire, la faible qualité du contenu. Pour masquer les défaillances, les taux de réussite au Baccalauréat et au Certificat d'Études Primaires Élémentaires (CEPE) sont gonflés artificiellement.



Articles traduits

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Français

Éditorial

Le président Morlu trahit la confiance des commerçants

Il a fallu qu'une personnalité comme le surintendant du marché de Joe Bar Community, Martha Banney, à Old Road, dans la banlieue de Monrovia, tire la sonnette d'alarme pour que le président de la coalition au pouvoir, Mulbah Morlu, ramène récemment de chez lui les 150 sacs de riz Pro-Poor qui lui avaient été confiés par le président George Manneh Weah afin de les distribuer aux commerçants de ce marché.

En effet, le surintendant Banney a récemment révélé dans une interview sur une radio que le président Mulbah Morlu avait détourné 150 sacs de riz chez lui, au lieu de les transporter vers le marché, comme l'avait ordonné le président George Weah pendant la période de Noël, dans le cadre d'un exercice qui consistait à approvisionner les marchés en riz « Pro-Poor » auquel la population de Monrovia n'avait pas suffisamment d'accès.

Le président du CDC, qui est très éloquent, n'a pas encore expliqué pourquoi il avait transporté le riz chez lui avant de le restituer après l'alarme du surintendant Banney qui, apparemment, avait l'intention de faire savoir au président Weah que le riz qu'il avait attribué au marché Joe Bar n'était pas arrivé à bon port et qu'il se trouvait plutôt à la résidence du président de son parti Mulbah Morlu.

Nous avons du mal à comprendre tout simplement ce qui a poussé Morlu à transporter le riz chez lui à la maison. Cependant, une chose semble très claire, la Coalition pour le changement démocratique au pouvoir n'a jamais fait preuve de transparence dans ses relations avec le peuple libérien.

C'est non seulement une honte, mais aussi une bassesse de la part du président du parti au pouvoir de ternir l'image du leader politique de son parti et président de la république du Libéria en volant du riz aux gens qui ont voté pour qu'ils arrivent au pouvoir. C'est ce que le leader de l'opposition, Alexander Benedict Cummings, qualifie de « vol au jour le jour de ce qui appartient à la majorité de la population ».

Et avec tout ça, les militants de la coalition au pouvoir veulent se battre chaque fois que ce gouvernement est critiqué. Pourtant les gens ne font que dire la réalité.

Quand le directeur général de l'Autorité nationale de l'habitat et son adjoint se prennent au collet après avoir sollicité et reçu des pots-de-vin des investisseurs qui étaient venus verser de l'argent dans notre économie en récession en construisant des logements pour les citoyens à faible revenu, qui subissent les brûlures ou les conséquences de leurs actes corrompus et de leur gourmandise ? Hélas, ce n'est personne d'autre que le pauvre peuple libérien auquel le gouvernement de la coalition pour le changement démocratique avait fait la promesse d'améliorer les conditions de vie.

Que le président Morlu et ses camarades qui sont au gouvernement comprennent que le leadership ou la gouvernance ne consiste pas à traire l'État et ses citoyens, mais à offrir un service honnête caractérisé par la transparence et la reddition des comptes.

M. Morlu aurait pu gagner la confiance et le respect des commerçants du marché Joe Bar et du président George Weah qui l'a envoyé livrer le riz s'il avait fait preuve de transparence. Hélas, il a choisi de faire quelque chose de totalement différent en transportant le chargement du riz à sa résidence privée, pendant que les pauvres consommateurs et les habitants d'Old Road étaient désespérément à la recherche du riz Pro-Poor. Un tel comportement peu scrupuleux mine la confiance du public et suscite la méfiance envers le leadership national.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Minxin Pei

La politique périlleuse de la Chine envers Taiwan

WASHINGTON, DC - La lutte géopolitique qui se déroule entre la Chine et les États-Unis a été décrite par beaucoup comme une nouvelle guerre froide. Si cette dernière devait se réchauffer, le détonateur pourrait être Taiwan, en grande partie à cause de la politique chinoise envers l'île.

Le gouvernement chinois a suspendu les contacts diplomatiques avec Taiwan en juin 2016, parce que le Parti progressiste démocratique (DPP) indépendantiste, qui venait tout juste de revenir au pouvoir, avait refusé de reconnaître le soi-disant Consensus de 1992, la base politique du principe d'une seule Chine. Depuis lors, toutefois, le président taiwanais Tsai Ing-wen a poursuivi une politique modérée, décevant les partisans de la ligne dure du DPP.

Ce n'est pas assez pour la Chine, qui a continué à augmenter la pression sur Taiwan. Par exemple, elle a convaincu cinq autres pays à rompre les liens diplomatiques à sa suite, ce qui réduit le nombre de pays qui entretiennent des relations officielles avec l'île à seulement 17. La Chine a également pris des mesures pour étouffer le tourisme au départ du continent: alors que presque 4,2 millions de touristes chinois continentaux ont visité Taiwan en 2015, lorsque le gouvernement pro-Pékin du Kuomintang était au pouvoir, le total est tombé à seulement 2,73 millions en 2017.

Le gouvernement de Taiwan n'a pas cligné des yeux. Mais, en novembre dernier, le DPP a subi un échec retentissant aux élections locales, en grande partie en raison de la croissance économique anémique - un résultat qui a poussé Tsai, politiquement affaibli, à démissionner en tant que chef du parti.

Pour la Chine, cela semblait être le moment idéal pour faire monter la pression. Ainsi, le 2 janvier, le président chinois Xi Jinping a prononcé un important discours sur Taiwan, dans lequel il a clairement indiqué que la Chine reste déterminée à rechercher la réunification.

Xi a rejeté l'argument selon lequel le système politique autocratique de la Chine est fondamentalement incompatible avec la démocratie tumultueuse de Taiwan, insistant sur le fait que la formule « un pays, deux systèmes », d'abord appliquée à Hong Kong quand elle est passée de l'administration britannique à celle chinoise en 1997, serait suffisante pour protéger les intérêts et l'autonomie de Taiwan. Cette formule est cependant de moins en moins effective à Hong Kong aujourd'hui, où les libertés ont été progressivement érodées au cours du mandat de M. Xi.

Xi n'a pas non plus indiqué qu'il offrirait des concessions pour attirer Taiwan à la table de négociation. Au contraire, en dépit d'avoir déclaré que « des Chinois ne combattent pas des Chinois », il a refusé de renoncer à l'usage de la force pour empêcher Taiwan de chercher l'indépendance formelle. La Chine doit, selon ses mots, « se réserver la possibilité de prendre toute mesure nécessaire », bien qu'il affirme que la menace ne vise que « les forces extérieures et un très petit nombre de séparatistes du mouvement 'Taiwan indépendance' ».

Encore une fois, le gouvernement de Taiwan est resté imperturbable. Tsai a répondu par un

discours provocant à son tour, dans lequel elle a catégoriquement rejeté à la fois le principe d'une seule Chine et la formule « un pays, deux systèmes », et a appelé la communauté internationale à soutenir l'indépendance de facto de Taiwan.

Même si la position ferme de Xi envers Taiwan pourrait finir par raviver le soutien affaibli à Tsai et au DPP, il n'y a aucune raison de penser qu'il puisse en changer dans un avenir proche. Mais il n'y a pas non plus de raison de penser que la politique de la Chine cessera de se retourner contre elle. Bien que les préjugés économiques et l'humiliation diplomatique imposés à Taiwan puissent produire une certaine satisfaction psychologique à court terme en Chine, l'île s'ajustera au fil du temps et les actions chinoises donneront des rendements décroissants.

Par exemple, après que la Chine ait réduit le nombre de visiteurs en provenance du continent, Taiwan a tourné son attention vers l'attraction de touristes d'autres pays. En dépit de la baisse du nombre de visiteurs du continent, 11 millions de touristes - ce qui représente un nouveau record - ont visité l'île en 2018. Dans le but de réduire sa dépendance économique au continent, Taiwan a également cherché très activement à diversifier ses marchés d'outre-mer.

Par ailleurs, bien que l'économie chinoise soit beaucoup plus grande, Taiwan a des sources de levier importantes. Par exemple, limiter les possibilités pour son industrie électronique - qui forme un lien vital entre la Chine et les chaînes d'approvisionnement mondiales dans le domaine des technologies de l'information - de faire des affaires avec le continent accélérerait considérablement l'exode des fabricants chinois tournés vers l'exportation déclenché par la hausse des tarifs d'importation des États-Unis.

Peut-être la conséquence la plus dangereuse de la politique chinoise envers Taiwan est qu'elle soulève de nouvelles tensions avec les États-Unis. En tant que protecteur ultime de l'indépendance de facto de Taiwan, les États-Unis ont déjà pris des mesures pour faire passer le message qu'ils ne se contenteront pas d'observer en silence la Chine intimider l'île dans le but de la soumettre. En février dernier, le Congrès américain a adopté à l'unanimité la Loi Taiwan Travel, qui permettra aux hauts fonctionnaires américains de visiter Taiwan et vice versa. Bien que la mesure soit largement symbolique, elle a provoqué la colère de la Chine, parce que cela revient à une reconnaissance officielle du gouvernement de Taiwan.

De plus, en septembre, les États-Unis ont rappelé leurs ambassadeurs en République dominicaine, à El Salvador et au Panama, afin de protester contre la décision de ces pays de rompre les liens diplomatiques avec Taiwan. Et des propositions visant à renforcer la coopération militaire entre les États-Unis et Taiwan, y compris par la vente d'armes de pointe, sont en discussion.

Jusqu'à présent, la Chine a répondu à ces défis pesant sur sa politique d'une Chine unique en augmentant la pression sur Taiwan - continuant une dynamique très dangereuse à un moment où les relations sino-américaines sont déjà tendues. À moins que les dirigeants de la Chine brisent ce cycle, un bras de fer de plus en plus dur avec les États-Unis pourrait dégénérer en conflit direct.

FEATURE ARTICLE

Visionaries Then and Now

By Thomas Kimmell

In the 1980's, a solo American made a huge impact on Ouaouizerth, Morocco, an Amazigh village, located in the western High Atlas Mountains. His name was J. Christopher Stevens, a Peace Corps Volunteer and yes the same J. Christopher Stevens, who as American Ambassador in Libya, was killed in the raid on Benghazi in September 11, 2012.

Chris is still remembered here as the husky American that lived by the community's Muslim traditions even though he wasn't a Muslim. He was well known locally because he always was respectful and open to the town's people.

He learned Arabic from Lhoussin Waali, at the time a local grocery owner, who he in turn taught English. One of the ways he taught Lhoussin English was having him listen to BBC radio broadcasts. Lhoussin remembers how he and Chris would often discuss the similarities between the Muslim and Christian faiths. The Arabic that Chris learned here helped inspire his career in the Arab world. Chris also was active with kids, teaching English at the local youth center. He was so dedicated to helping the people of Quaouizerth he stayed with them an extra year in the Peace Corps.



He was known locally principally by his last name, Stevens. People recall how Stevens would be invited to tea at someone's house and he'd walk there regardless of the distance. He left behind the gift of knowledge. There was great sadness in the village of Ouaouizerth when they heard about Stevens's death on television.

Thirty years later an American nonprofit organization founded by former Peace Corp veterans has honored Chris's memory by bringing farming solutions to mostly agricultural Ouaouizerth. The High Atlas Foundation, founded by Yossef Ben-Meir of New Mexico, recently dedicated a tree nursery, just outside of town, to the memory of Chris Stevens. The nursery grows almonds and olive seedlings for transplanting. The High Atlas grows these



seedlings to give to local farmers at no cost. The farmers' Cooperative (called Adrar, or mountain) provides the land for the new orchard and High Atlas supplies the trees and expertise to successfully start the new Orchardists on their way.

While the Stevens-inspired nursery serves the Ouaouizerth area; the High Atlas Foundation currently maintains eleven tree nurseries all over Morocco, partnering with the social business, Ecosia, to replicate this activity to most regions of the country. This is the modern version of "Give a man a fish with the he'll eat for a day, teach a man to fish he'll be fed for a lifetime".

In Ouaouizerth village the High Atlas Foundation nursery caretaker is Hicham Farhat and he has become the pied piper of tree growing to the town's people, especially the school children. This week Hicham showed up at the grade school and he and the kids planted olive trees to enhance the school's courtyard. His enthusiasm was only exceeded by the kid's joy and excitement as they helped to plant the trees.

The High Atlas Foundation is dedicated to the single mission of growing seedlings and distributing them to growers who can use them but can't generally afford them. Since each different region has its own growing conditions a variety of trees are grown in the High Atlas nurseries and include carob, walnut, pomegranate, cherry, fig, Argan, and date palm in addition to the previously mentioned almonds and olives. High Atlas has become the "Johnny Appleseed of Morocco" except with more than just one tree to choose from.

As you can imagine, the Moroccan government is an enthusiastic supporter with land contributions to this program, but does not contribute financial support. The primary financial support comes from individual donors and grants (such as from Ecosia). The Ouaouizerth nursery's establishment in 2013 was appropriately made possible by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Scientific Research. The nurseries use drip irrigation, a 21st century

The obvious benefits are to the growers who plant the trees but the hard to quantify "Green" contributions are substantial. Creating "forests" of orchards creates a carbon displacement mechanism to go along with oxygen generation and erosion prevention. All the nurseries use drip irrigation, a 21st century technology, which is right at home in an arid nation with no water resources to spare.

The actions of the High Atlas Foundation fulfill the spirit of what J. Christopher Stevens stood for thirty plus years ago. He had the desire to make things better for Moroccans. The concept of growing and giving away trees is a unique effort, happening only in Morocco. Just as "Stevens" did his best for Moroccans so does High Atlas with its ambitious goal of covering the country with fruit and nuts trees.

Writing this article I realized I too had joined the work of other Americans who have acted in Morocco. My career was spent in irrigation and in Morocco no orchards grow without water. Adding a water component to High Atlas efforts means that the orchards will survive and thrive.

Tom Kimmell is the retired Executive Director of the Irrigation Association, who now volunteers for the "Farmer to Farmer" program created by the US Congress. Morocco is part of the program and is managed by Land O' Lakes International Development.

On the 7th of March 2018, Tom Kimmell, a USAID Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteer, planted almond trees with students of Ouaouizerth Middle and High School (Morocco), where the late Ambassador Chris Stevens taught English when he was a Peace Corps Volunteer in the early 1980s. (Photo by the High Atlas Foundation)

#Stop prioritizing foreign businesses over Liberian businesses!#

2019 will be critical

By Bridgett Milton

President George Manneh Weah has told lawmakers on Capitol Hill that 2019 will be a very critical year in terms of national objective of consolidation of the peace and taking Liberians from poverty.

His comment came Monday, 14 January at the opening of the Second Session of the 54th Legislature in Monrovia.

Mr. Weah recalls that during the launch of the national development plan, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), he asked for the collective effort and cooperation of all Liberians, particularly from those in leadership so that together as a people they can transform Liberia into a modern nation.

He reminds lawmakers here that they were elected by the people to serve and they must therefore work together to ensure that they deliver to their expectations in all areas such as education, health, infrastructure, peace and security and agriculture.

He has commended the lawmakers for the excellent work that they completed



during the First Session of Legislature last year.

For his part, House Speaker Bhofal Chambers told members of the House of Representatives that as the year 2019 endures, it is his hope that legislators brace themselves for the challenges ahead.

He says their constituents which placed huge public trust

in them expect a lot from them in their desire to have good laws.

He urges that they exercise their functions to the best of their abilities in their best interest so that the plans and promises intended for them come to fruition.

Speaker Chambers recalls that during the 2018 Session of the 54th Legislature, the

House of Representatives recorded 57 regular sittings, 43 executive sittings, 6 special sittings and 15 extraordinary sittings, totaling 121 sittings.

According to him, they were able to pass 26 bills and 8 resolutions in the best interest of the Liberian people during the year 2018.

Amongst those bills and resolutions acted upon, he says nine originated from the House of Representatives, five bills were received from the Liberian Senate and concurred with; 12 bills were passed out of 17 bills originating from the Executive and eight Legislative resolutions were acted on.

Speaker Chambers says in 2018, the House of Representatives was presented with some hard facts on a sitting Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Liberia, which detailed abuse of office and several

violations of the principles upon which the laws of the land are based.

Having exhaustively deliberated on the matter surrounding the Associate Justice, Kabineh M. Ja'neh, he says the House of Representatives proceeded to pass an Impeachment Bill by a majority vote and forwarded it to the Liberian Senate for trial.

He says the Legislature will ensure that harmony and coordination with the other branches of government will be a priority.

He adds that it will be their duty to fully support the Pro-Poor Agenda under the leadership of President Weah and they will always be prepared to offer suggestions for alternative programs, policies through dialogue or enact laws so that the best interest of the people is served.--Edited by Winston W. Parley

Mass rush at Liberia Business Registrar

-After restoration of IT system

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Owners and expeditors of Liberian and Foreign-owned businesses here are on a mass rush to Liberia Business Registry following restoration of the entity's IT system, which experienced technical problem.

LBR employees Friday, 11 January were seen working overtime to meet demands of customers, who overwhelmed the offices of the Registry situated in the old France Cable building on Front Street, Monrovia.

Cashiers and clerical staff assigned at the various windows were busy processing and releasing business documents to the intended business institutions.

Speaking to the New Dawn, some of the business representatives, including the Human Resource Manager of the Malasha/Liberian Logging Company, who had gone to make an amendment on his company's business document, expressed joy for the timely

restoration of the system after waiting for several days.

An expeditor for a Liberian-owned business in central Monrovia Mrs. Patricia Thomas, revealed that she was troubled when she initially visited the Registry and was informed that the entity's system had suffered technical breakdown, but was relieved when she returned on 11 January and received her documents with ease. She notes that the Registry is one of government's focus points where huge taxes are generated to promote its Pro-Poor Development Agenda, adding that government should provide necessary logistics to keep the system functional.

Customers going to at Registry are in various categories, including those going for new business registration, renewal of business papers, making amendments in their business documents and renewal of certificates, among others. - Editing by Jonathan Browne

NLA activities hurting pro-poor?

By Ben P. Wesee

Information available to this paper suggests that activities at the National Lottery Authority (NLA) under Director-General Martin Kollie appear to be detrimental to the well-being of the Pro-Poor Agenda of President George Manneh Weah.

The information further indicates that the NLA continues to allegedly grant licenses to gaming entities without the NLA Board's resolution as provided for by law.

But the NLA Director General Kollie has denied the claim in a follow up Monday, 14 January.

This paper was re-informed that entities that are insolvent are being given sports betting license to operate in Liberia.

One of such cases, the paper learnt is GoBet231, owned and operated by the Palm Springs Resort, a resort that is said to be in deep financial troubles.

Under the law, entities applying for gaming licenses must be financially viable and must pay all of the required fees into the government's account.

According to the information GoBet231 does not have the financial strength to pay for the license for sports betting and did not pay.

Rather, it is reported to have entered into an alleged illegal deal with the Management of the NLA to receive the license and to pay the government fees by installment which is to as 'sell pay' in the local Liberian parlance.

It was further learnt that GoBet231's owners, Palm Springs Resort that operates a Casino in Congo Town is known for allegedly negotiating with winning patrons at the casino to pay their winnings in installments, some which go contrary to the rules and regulations governing the gaming industry in Liberia.

In the wake of this situation, others are recommending that the NLA immediately revoke the license issued to GoBet231 on grounds that the process leading to the issuance of the license was allegedly faulty.

There are claims that GoBet231 does not have the financial strength to become a legitimate player in the Liberian market, evidenced by its plea to receive the license and pay the fees by installment.

There are also calls for Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor to institute an investigation into this alleged irregularity which is an affront to the success of President George Manneh Weah's Pro-poor

Agenda.

Officials of GoBet231 could not be reached immediately for comment, however when the NLA was contacted Monday, 14 January, the Director General Martin Kollie disclosed that it's impossible for the Director to single handedly issue a permit or license without the approval of the board.

Director Kollie asked our reporter to do an in-depth investigation or request the permit that was issued to find the signature of the board on it. Director Kollie who says he was in rush for a Church service, narrates that "We need to graduate from the stage of politicizing everything when it's not in your favor."

He says our reporter should ask the other people how they got their licenses or he should go to the office of the vice president where he can find the board chairman and ask him about the permit.

When President Weah took the Oath of Office on January 22, 2018, he promised, among many other things, to improve the lives of all Liberians, the disabled community inclusive.

Under the governance structure of Liberia, the arm of the government of Liberia responsible to generate revenue and as well provide support to the disabled community is the National Lottery Authority headquartered in Sinkor, Monrovia.

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#Revoke rock and sand mining licenses from Chinese and Lebanese#

CDC replies Cummings



By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

The ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) responds to recent criticism against the CDC-led government by opposition leader Alexander Cummings, describing the former presidential contender as a “corporate ganister” and someone whose sole intent is to steal hugely from the country if entrusted with state

power.

Mr. Cummings, a former Coca Cola executive and leader of the opposition Alternative National Congress sharply criticized the government of President George Manneh Weah, accusing the administration of broad day corruption and amassing personal wealth at the expense of the people less than a year in office.

He specifically accused President Weah and his officials of looting state coffers.

But the chairman of the ruling CDC Mulbah Morlu says attention of the ruling Coalition and the Government of Liberia has been drawn to degeneration of public discourse by recourse to non-factual, baseless, unsubstantiated and unprovable allegations, comments and statements emanating from some political personalities and media surrogates and sponsored commentators.

Addressing a news conference in Monrovia on Monday, 14 January chairman Morlu counters that if anyone should be branded as criminal or looter, said individual is instead, the ANC political leader.

He claims Cummings raised US\$10 million from corporate partners for his 2017 Presidential bid with the ANC but deposited only



Messi creates La Liga goal record

Lionel Messi became the first player to score 400 LaLiga goals on Sunday as Barcelona cruised to a 3-0 victory over Eibar at Camp Nou.

After an unusually quiet first 45 minutes, Messi burst into life after the restart and claimed his milestone goal - his 13th in eight appearances against Eibar.

Luis Suarez had given Barca the lead with their only shot on target in the first half, and he

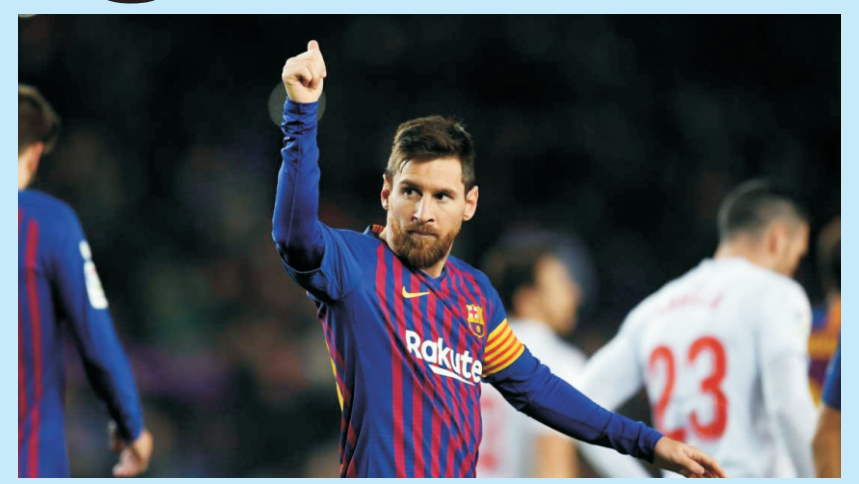
doubled his tally six minutes after Messi's moment in the spotlight with a composed finish from a tight angle.

That was enough to seal a sixth win in a row for Barca in the league, and a ninth successive over Eibar since their promotion to the top flight.

Messi took up more of a playmaker role in the opening exchanges and created half-chances that Gerard Pique and Jordi Alba were unable to convert.

Suarez showed them how it should be done in the 19th minute after a slick interchange with Philippe Coutinho opened up the Eibar defence, the Uruguay international finding the bottom corner with unerring accuracy.

Despite falling behind, Eibar continued to push forward and Sergi Enrich should have done better from Ruben Pena's cross, however the striker headed wide of Marc Andre ter Stegen's goal.



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#Revoke rock and sand mining licenses from Chinese and Lebanese#
#To empower Liberians, enforce the exclusive Liberians business act. #
#It's shame that only in Liberia foreigners are siphoning billions thru sand and rock mining.#
#For the Pro-Poor Agenda to succeed undo the errors by your predecessors. #
#Stop prioritizing foreign businesses over Liberian businesses!#