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The New Dawn

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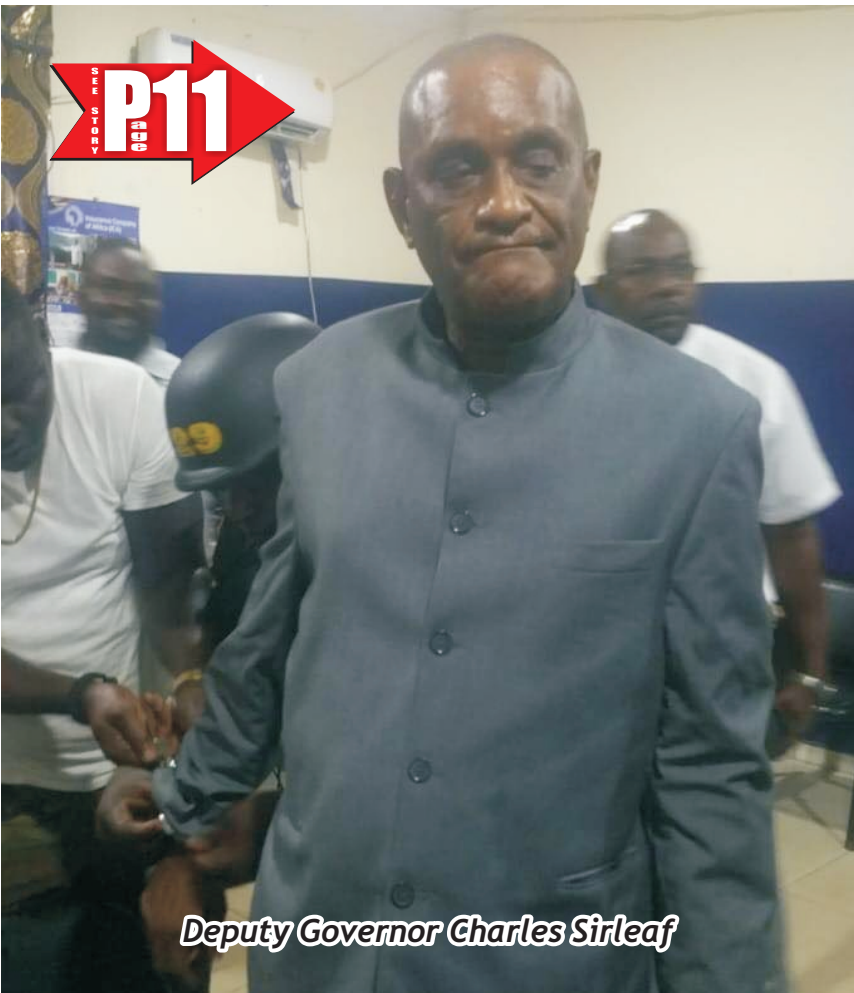
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MONDAY, MARCH 04, 2019

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Continental News

Algeria's leader to run for 'last time'

Algeria's veteran President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has defied protesters by confirming he will run again - but says he will not serve a full term.

In a letter he said if he won April's vote he would oversee a national dialogue leading to fresh elections that he would not contest.

His decision to seek a fifth term in office sparked nationwide protests.

Mr Bouteflika, 82, has rarely been seen in public since suffering a stroke in 2013. Fresh demonstrations broke out on Sunday as a midnight deadline loomed for candidates to submit their papers.

Mr Bouteflika's campaign manager filed papers on behalf of the ailing president, who is undergoing medical treatment in Switzerland.

The electoral commission has said candidates need to submit them person, but the Constitutional Council ruled

that he did not have to be physically present.

How does the president's idea work?

The proposal came in the form of a letter to the Algerian

people read out on state television.

Should he be re-elected. Mr Bouteflika said he would hold an "inclusive national conference" followed by a vote

to determine the next president.

He said he would not run again and acknowledged the protests that have rocked Algeria. "I listened and heard the heartfelt cry of protesters and in particular of the thousands of youth who asked me about the future of our country," the letter said, read by a presenter on ETV.

"These youth express an understandable concern about the uncertainties they face. I have the duty and will to appease the hearts and spirits of my compatriots. Who else is challenging for the presidency?"

So far, six other candidates have formally registered, among them a retired general, Ali Ghediri, who has promised to bring "change" to Algeria.

Businessman Rachid Nekkaz, who has a sizeable Facebook following and is said to be popular among Algeria's young, also plans to join the race.

Two opposition parties, the Labour Party, and the Islamist Movement of Society for Peace, have said they will boycott the election.

A key challenger in previous elections, Ali Benflis, also is not running.

Are these protests unusual?

Yes - public shows of dissent in Algeria are rare, and the protests have been the biggest since Mr Bouteflika came to power 20 years ago.

Demonstrations broke out about 10 days ago after Mr Bouteflika announced his plans to run for office again. On Sunday, people again took to the streets of the capital Algiers and other major cities.

Police reportedly used water cannon to disperse students rallying in Algiers. There have also been demonstrations in France, the former colonial power, which is home to a large Algerian community. BBC



First African fighter to win MMA title

Kamaru Usman has become the first African fighter to win a Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) title.

He won the mixed-martial arts (MMA) bout against American Tyron Woodley.

The fighter, known as the "Nigerian Nightmare", dominated the Las Vegas contest for the welterweight title. The UFC is the biggest competition in MMA, where competitors combine boxing,

kickboxing, jiu-jitsu, wrestling and other disciplines while fighting in an octagonal cage.

Usman, 31, produced the performance of his career to dominate long-reigning welterweight champion Woodley.

He extended his winning streak to 14 and maintained his unbeaten record in the UFC. In his post-match press conference he revealed that before the match he had fractured his foot and had

been walking around in a supportive boot all week.

He started off the press conference by greeting journalists in Arabic before switching to Pidgin.

"Nigeria, I have told them, we would do it, I told them we never fail. And we have done it today," he said in Pidgin. Usman was born in Nigeria, but left Benin City for Arlington in Texas as a young child when his family migrated to the US.

Twenty-three years later, he is proud of his nickname, the Nigerian Nightmare, he told BBC World Service's Sportsworld.

But he is not the only sportsman known as the Nigerian Nightmare - something he is aware of.

He invited two others with the moniker to his match - the former professional boxer Samuel Peter and the former Kansas City Chiefs American Football, Christian Okoye.

Usman, a former winner of the Ultimate Fighter TV show, began wrestling at high school in Texas and was a top prospect throughout college.

"It was kind of time to make a switch and not just be a wrestler any more, but to be a

Shock as govt hikes duty threefold

CUSTOMS and excise duties shot up threefold to the bond note value yesterday following government's gazetting of Statutory Instrument 32 of 2019, ushering in the new currency, RTGS dollar (ZWL).

The central bank last week devalued the local RTGS currency and pegged it at 2,5 against the United States dollar from 1:1 and Zimra moved to effect the changes in its systems.

The new duty regime is likely to see an increase in the prices of goods by 300%. Zimbabwe imports most consumer goods and their prices are also likely to rise three-fold after the new duty regime came into effect yesterday.

Shipping agents and private importers said they were caught unawares after the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (Zimra) effected the new duty yesterday.

fighter and to go and make a living for not just myself but my family as well," he told Sportsworld.

Athletes like Usman have been switching over to UFC from other disciplines as the competition experiences a

A statement by Zimra yesterday explained how the new duty regime works. "The new currency affects clearance of designated goods by converting current balances in the nostro FCA prepayment account to ZWR at the prevailing exchange rate with the US\$."

"All foreign currency payments then appear on the payment receipt or prepayment receipt as ZW RTGS dollars," the statement read.

Zimra added that the prepayment account would be used to clear designated goods. All values on the bill of entry and form 49 would be reflected in RTGS dollars although payment would be made in forex.

"It is hoped that the above information will assist in the clearance process after introduction of the ZW RTGS currency," added the statement. AFP

phenomenal rise in popularity.

The trend is illustrated in



The 'Nigerian Nightmare' wore Nigerian colours on his mouthguard in his winning match

EDITORIAL

GoL should draw on international best practices

THE LONG-AWAITED FINDINGS from investigations into the alleged 'missing 16 billion' newly printed Liberian bank notes have been released to the public with no clear clue whether money did go missing. But one thing that seems clear from the investigators is that Liberia's fiscal and monetary management processes are beset by systemic long-standing vulnerabilities that need to be addressed.

IN FACT, THE USAID's report released by the United States Embassy near Monrovia draws the Government of Liberia's attention to the importance of drawing on international best practices in the conduct of economic affairs, including thoroughly documenting transactions to ensure credibility and transparency.

IN THE ENTIRE U.S. Embassy-sponsored investigation conducted by Kroll Associates Inc., findings point to systemic and procedural weaknesses at the Central Bank of Liberia that leaves room for compromise at nearly all levels.

NOW THAT THE findings are public, we believe while it is important to go after individuals who supervised and handled transactions concerning the printing of new banknotes that has plunged the economy into serious inflation and rapid depreciation of the Liberian dollar, the real challenge now is correcting the system.

THE LACK OF credibility and transparency in our governing system is systemic and should be addressed as a fundamental problem. Officials take pleasure in conducting the public business in secrecy, and they care less about being accountable.

WE APPLAUD KROLL Associates Inc. for doing an excellently independent job under the circumstances, where officials did everything in erasing trails of their corrupt deals, including withholding communications with external partners that could have helped with the investigation in many ways.

SURELY, THE REPORTED request or order from the CBL to Crane AB to print excess LRD2 billion plus which was infused in this little economy was not only devilish, but unpatriotic.

SOMETHING IS FUNDAMENTALLY wrong with us Liberians; the greed for personal wealth and power at the expense of the majority is killing this nation. Those involved should beware that stolen wealth is a curse that affects even a third generation.

WE CALL ON the current administration to work with international partners in putting in place best practices that would protect our finances and natural resources. However, we know that partners can do only their best and nothing else.

IT IS LEFT with Liberians themselves, to demonstrate love for country and fellow compatriots, by serving with transparency and accountability in whatever public offices or positions they occupy in order to leave behind high standards for those who would come after in order to preserve the Motherland.

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COMMENTARY

By Andrea Peto

Intellectual Freedom and Its New Enemies

Recent measures by governments across ex-communist Europe have created an increasingly oppressive intellectual climate. And the de-democratization of higher education and of science in general are just the first step toward putting experts in the service of broader anti-democratic goals.

BUDAPEST - The World War I exhibit at the House of European History in Brussels offers visitors an arresting sight. In a simple yet dramatic gesture, the museum has placed the pistol used in the June 1914 assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in a glass-paneled cabinet right in the center of the room.

The tour guide informed our group that, following much heated debate, the museum had agreed to change the objects on display from time to time, so that different countries could exhibit their most precious historical relics. But when I peevishly remarked that the pistol Gavrilo Princip used in Sarajevo is irreplaceable, the curator replied that four European museums claim to have the authentic pistol on display.

As much as I respect and defend the plurality of European national traditions, only one pistol, not four, triggered the outbreak of World War I. We cannot be "pluralistic" and "inclusive" when historical facts dictate a single right answer to a question. And such questions must be decided by experts who have been rigorously educated in the history (and trained in the historical sources) of a given era, not by those with a political agenda.

Such a view may seem like common sense. But scientists, their institutions, and the legitimacy of scientific knowledge itself are under increasing threat in several European countries. Freely elected governments have recently blocked financial support for research projects with no official explanation (Bulgaria), removed educational programs from the list of accredited university subjects (Hungary), and even eliminated entire disciplines (Poland).²

These governments are disregarding centuries-old university traditions that were respected even during the communist era. But the powers behind such decisions are not interested in establishing historical or scientific facts. And they are ready to criticize, ridicule, or even threaten those who have already acquired such knowledge, or wish to do so.

We should reject the notion that the instigators of these attacks are ignorant and uneducated, and do not respect knowledge. Senior members of the Hungarian government that forced the Central European University, founded by the financier George Soros, to move to Vienna, and banned gender studies, had

previously received scholarships from Soros's Open Society Foundation to study in Oxford, New York, and elsewhere. These are highly educated people who know that knowledge is power, have a clear agenda, and are taking advantage of the fact that education in the European Union is the responsibility of national governments, not Brussels-based institutions.

These governments want to establish an educational system according to which the state alone decides which fields of research are necessary and socially important. In the long run, they probably also want the state to grant political loyalists the right to produce and transfer knowledge.

In other words, access to knowledge will cease to be a civil right. Political trustworthiness will determine who can teach and study what about a country and its past. This would mean the de-democratization of higher education and of science in general and putting "experts" in the service of broader anti-democratic goals. To prevent the latter, we must resist the former.

Democratic science policies build on the principle that access to science is a human right. Furthermore, they assume correctly that the knowledge produced through a democratic spirit of inquiry is of higher quality than that produced by someone who became an "expert" through political connections.

Many questions in the social sciences and humanities have straightforward answers. Ultimately, we should accept the verdicts of experts who have devoted their careers to a particular issue, and not those with political axes to grind.

We must, therefore, fight the disturbing trend of European governments giving themselves the right to decide scientific questions, and appointing loyal supporters to act as arbiters of truth. And we should question whether the new, ideologically-based governmental research institutes and universities in some of these countries have a rightful place in the network of European universities and research institutions.

Social scientists and other academics across ex-communist Europe are once again working in an increasingly oppressive intellectual climate. It must not be up to them alone to defend the democratic quest for knowledge against those who would decide by government decree which pistol was fired in Sarajevo.

OPINION

By Simon Johnson

Puerto Rico on the Brink

WASHINGTON, DC - More than three million Americans, residents of the US commonwealth of Puerto Rico, could be plunged into economic turmoil unless President Donald Trump's administration acts quickly. Unfortunately, there is no sign that Trump is paying attention to the problem; he is distracted by other matters. And, because no one else has the authority or will to take action, a tragedy looms.

Puerto Rico borrowed too much money in the boom years and has struggled with an overwhelming debt burden over the past decade. When a company is in this situation, the outcome is some form of bankruptcy: the debt is restructured or the company is wound down. The same logic applies at some levels of government in the United States, with court supervision of debt restructuring ensuring relatively orderly outcomes - invariably after a great deal of argument about debt levels and how to reduce payments to an affordable level.

But, because of Puerto Rico's particular legal status as a US territory, it is not eligible for any kind of standard court-run debt restructuring process. Recognizing this, in 2016 Congress passed the PROMESA Act, which enabled a form of court-supervised bankruptcy, along with an oversight board in charge of monitoring and approving fiscal plans in Puerto Rico. This was a pragmatic political compromise worked out by the US Treasury and congressional Republicans and Democrats. (I supported PROMESA at the time, including in congressional testimony.)

But now this entire arrangement has been called into question by a recent court decision that invalidates the legal authority of the oversight board. At issue is a purely procedural issue - whether the board was appointed properly as specified in the legislation, or whether its members should have gone through a Senate confirmation process.

The main plaintiff is a hedge fund that is not happy with the current arrangement. But, as David Skeel, a highly respected bankruptcy expert and member of the oversight board, notes in a recent commentary, "Puerto Rico would collapse into chaos if the ruling took immediate effect."

Skeel is not exaggerating. If the oversight board is deemed unconstitutional, the most likely result will be the collapse of the court-run process and a mad scramble by all of Puerto Rico's creditors to seize its assets in any way they can. As a result, it would be very hard for any local government to operate. Supplies of essential goods, including fuel, could well be disrupted. The ability to generate electrical power on the island could also be jeopardized.

The precise legal situation remains in flux. One court has determined that the board is unconstitutional, but granted 90 days for board members to be appointed (in its view) appropriately. Another court, hearing a different case, has upheld the board's appointment. The Supreme Court may or may not get involved.

This is a mess with an easy solution. Trump could immediately nominate, and the Senate could confirm, the current oversight board members, or, as Skeel points out, a new set of board members could be chosen. Such a process normally takes many months (or longer), but in this instance there is a strong case for expeditious action.

Sadly, there is no sign that the Trump administration is taking the situation seriously. After Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico in 2017, Trump made a show of delivering aid, but the reality was that the island received too little assistance - and too late - to make a difference for many people. The death toll from the hurricane was significantly understated by the administration for far too long.

More recently, Trump has even talked of diverting funds from rebuilding Puerto Rico to constructing his pet project - a wall on the US-Mexican border. The legality of this has been challenged, but, given the suffering and continued vulnerability of Puerto Rico's people, it is shocking that Trump would even consider such a move.

Trump's cynical and cruel calculus is, however, understandable. Although Puerto Rico's people are US citizens, the island is not a state, and therefore has no representation in the Senate and only one representative (with limited voting rights) in the House. This lack of political voice in Washington, DC, has hurt for a long time - and now threatens to destroy Puerto Rico's prospects for economic recovery.

Puerto Rico needs a lot more than just debt restructuring. The island has substantial economic potential, but realizing it requires putting essential public services like education and health care back on their feet. To do that, the payments due on the outstanding government debt need to be reduced - and in a way that does not involve a mad scramble by creditors to seize assets.

The Trump administration needs to pay attention, before it's too late.

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O-P-E-D

By Noëlle Lenoir

France's Big Hate

PARIS - Emmanuel Macron's unexpected victory in the 2017 French presidential election, with 66% of the vote, made France seem, at least to some, a safe haven from the populism roiling European politics. His triumph came as a relief to a large majority of the French, as well as to other governments in the European Union and around the world.

But Macron's victory incited a form of near-hysterical derangement among his opponents on the extreme right and left. The increasingly violent, racist, and anti-Semitic "Yellow Vest" protests are the visible manifestation of that rage.

True, some of the blame for this lies with Macron, and with the technocratic tin ear of some of his team. In particular, the sharp increase in taxes on fuel announced in November 2018 - a move intended to advance the president's climate agenda while helping, at the margins, to balance the budget - disproportionately hit rural and suburban voters, who were already feeling squeezed economically. This triggered the Yellow Vest rebellion.

But as the protests have shrunk in size and intensified in violence, Macron and what he represents have become the focus of the extremists' hate. For starters, Macron stands out nowadays for his commitment to revitalizing Europe. He rejects the emerging consensus that mainstream politicians can defeat populism only by downplaying their support for the EU. Instead, Macron relentlessly asserts his belief in a strong, democratic, and prosperous Europe that is capable of acting with authority in the world.

Moreover, Macron has so far pressed ahead, despite the protests, with the reforms he promised during his campaign. Laws to increase labor-market flexibility, ensure ethical behavior by elected officials and civil servants, and modernize the country's obsolete university entrance system were adopted in less than a year. But Macron underestimated the difficulty of reducing France's budget deficit and public debt to comply with eurozone rules, contributing to his decision to raise fuel taxes last November.

Today, Macron's opponents from across the political spectrum portray themselves as part of some spontaneous popular movement. But the truth is that many of the politicians Macron defeated in his victorious campaign are now out to undermine him. To the astonishment of many, former President François Hollande, whom Macron once served, now openly encourages the Yellow Vests to harden their protests. Laurent Wauquiez, leader of the center-right Republicans, has actually put on a yellow vest. Meanwhile, far-right leader Marine Le Pen and far-left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon both sense revolutionary possibilities in the protestors' rage.

The Yellow Vests may seem to resemble other populist forces in Europe, in particular Italy's Five Star Movement. But the French protesters are extremely violent in both word and deed. Macron and his wife are threatened with death almost daily. This is reminiscent of the vicious attacks against Léon Blum, France's Socialist prime minister in the mid-1930s, who was later sent to Buchenwald by Marshal Philippe Pétain's collaborationist World War II government.

Charles Maurras, a prominent Catholic essayist and journalist of the interwar years who became a member of the prestigious French Academy, called Blum "a monster" and "a man who deserves to be shot, but in the back." Today, the far-left deputy François Ruffin vents his hatred of Macron in similar terms. Not since the 1930s has France experienced such hysteria against a political leader in office.

Violent words go hand in hand with violent deeds. Stores have been smashed and looted. Public buildings, parliamentarians' offices, and even the private property of the President of the National Assembly have been destroyed by fire. Deputies have been threatened (including with a gun), newspaper headquarters have been ransacked, and more than 1,500 police officers have been injured.

How did France get to this point? It is no secret that Kremlin-funded television channels RT and Sputnik - followed by social networks and other TV stations - have provided platforms that encourage the incitement of rage, anti-parliamentarism, lies, disinformation, racism, and anti-Semitism. France seems to be living daily through the "Two Minutes Hate" of Orwell's 1984.

The material and moral damage to the country is considerable. But there will not be a civil war. A clear and broad majority of the French are exasperated and shocked by rising violence and intolerance. The CFDT, the country's most important labor union, has taken a stand against "all forms of violence." Laurent Berger, its leader, has argued that, "If a trade-union organization had been responsible for as much violence in a movement that it triggered, it would be banned for at least 20 years." And Macron himself is gaining renewed legitimacy for facing down the crisis with self-control and sticking to his reform agenda.

But the Yellow Vest movement is far from over, and the clock cannot be turned back. First and foremost, the authorities must punish the perpetrators of violence and vandalism severely, beginning by requiring them to compensate victims, and eliminate all forms of impunity. Ideologically motivated assault and destruction must be treated like any other violent crime. Anything less would encourage those who would embrace violence in pursuit of their aims.

Second, fake news and abuse of social media, which is endangering social cohesion and democracy itself, must be confronted head-on. Macron's great "National Debate" via local meetings and the Internet is providing a useful counterweight. He continues to assert himself as a truly outstanding debater. But this unique experiment will end on March 15. For the sake of French and European democracy, one hopes it will give a new impetus to the much-needed reforms that France has been awaiting for decades.

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

EPA pledges strong partnership

The Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Nathaniel T. Blama, reiterates commitment to working with Civil Society Organizations that support government's programs, especially works of the EPA that are strictly in adherence with environmental safety.

He made commitment Wednesday, February 27, at program marking the official launch of the Liberia chapter of the Global Environment Facility and CSO Network (GEF-CSO Network) in Monrovia.

The GEF-CSO Network is an independent global alliance of CSOs working to address global environmental challenges in areas linked to the six GEF focal areas.

The Network dates far back to 1995 when the then GEF Network of Non-Governmental Organizations, was formed as a voluntary structure of environmental CSOs working in at least one of the GEF focal areas.

"CSOs are very important partners to government. We will support initiative of CSO aimed at promotion of government programs. Our commitments are not in words, but deeds," Blama



Members of the GEF-CSO and EPA boss, Nathaniel Blama



communities, business and industry, workers and trade unions.

"Effective public involvement at all levels of the GEF is critical to its success, as the skills, experiences, and knowledge of the community of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) plays a key role in the development of GEF policies and practices, in the formation and implementation of sustainable development GEF projects and in the maintenance of partnership with key stakeholders," she asserts.

She says the overriding objective of engagement between the GEF and civil society is to achieve greater results and impact through improving its collaboration with civil society organizations (CSOs).

Kona also indicates the group will create awareness of the GEF in local communities, disseminate information to stakeholders and engage the Liberian government. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

assures.

However, he says CSOs wanting to partner with the EPA in implementing programs must meet the requirement set.

"You have the challenge to meet with the project requirements in the execution of EPA's programs and projects. The EPA can't be everywhere and you are into the various communities; it is you that can speak and the people listen. This is why we think that this is a going to be a strong partnership between us."

"Let us not abuse the network. As part of that partnership, the EPA is Keen on getting the CSO involved in its many programs and projects. We will not deal with any hand bags NGO. The work you are going to do is aimed at creating awareness for environmental safety," he adds.

In remarks, the National Coordinator of the GEF-CSO Network, Madam Kona Kollie, notes that as part of its duty and responsibility, the organization is geared towards educating the population on some key environment issues,

especially, harmful effects of mercury, a substance.

According to Madam Kollie, the group comprises non-state actors, including not-for-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), farmers, women, the scientific and technological community, youth, and children, indigenous people and their

Senate ratifies Hummingbird deal amidst protest

By Ethel A. Tweh

The Liberian Senate has ratified a mineral development agreement between Hummingbird Resource and the Government of Liberia, estimated at US\$250 million, amidst a walkout protest from four senators.

The four Senators Gbleh-bo Brown of Maryland County,

Prince Johnson of Nimba County, Sando Johnson of Bomi County and Oscar Cooper of Margibi County walked out of session on Thursday, February 28, in protest arguing that the deal should have been debated on the floor before its passage into.

The agreement is intended to develop gold in Sinoe County and other parts of the

Southeast. Maryland County Sen. Gbleh-bo Brown argues that the report authorizing the passage was given to Senators a day before it was passed, adding that it was the day coincided with ongoing impeachment hearing against Associate Justice Kabineh M. Ja'neh, therefore not many senators had the opportunity to read it.

He complains that there was no time to go through the report for a debate.

The Maryland County Senator further argues that the Senate's rules require that a report should be brought during the second hearing for debate before senators can decide on passing it or not.

He laments that they were denied the opportunity to debate the issue on the floor, expressing his disappointment in the process and those that even signed the report.

Sen. Brown complains that the Mineral Development Agreement (MDA) is for 25 years and it's not something that can be passed so fast without debating it.

Also giving reason for his walkout, Bomi Senator Sando Johnson says the Senate is

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proceeding wrongly. He says issues of this nature should have been given due diligence, order than to pass the agreement in haste.

"I'm worried that the country is going to suffer because passing laws of such is worrisome. We can see people are now in the street demonstrating. We should be making laws to stop all these," Sen. Johnson continues.

He notes that whenever reports are sent to their various offices, they should be brought on the floor for discussion so that the public can be informed of what they are discussing.

Meanwhile, Hummingbird is expected to pay a signature fee of US\$3 million to the Government of Liberia, with US\$1.5 million to be paid within 15 days of the effective date.

US\$1.5 million will be paid to obtain the license.

Under the agreement, is expected to retain 3 percent of revenue generated from the gold found.

The agreement further allows 10 percent shares for Liberians.

Hummingbird is expected to pay all other taxes and duties as set out in a fiscal agreement.

The key benefits in the Hummingbird Agreement include jobs which comprise over 1,000 direct jobs and around 2,500 indirect jobs that are to be provided.

The Agreement is expected to be forwarded to the House of Representatives for concurrence and subsequently submitted to President George Manneh Weah for his approval. **--Edited by Winston W. Parley**



MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Protesters storm Capitol

By Ethel A. Tweh

Protesters opposing the ongoing impeachment trial of Associate Justice Kabineh M. Ja'neh have stormed the Capitol, demanding the trial to be abolished.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFFL) and the "Coalition of Islamic Organizations in Liberia"

Legislature violated constitutional requirements in the processes leading to Justice Ja'neh's impeachment, but the counsels have unsuccessfully requested the dismissal of the trial.

One of the cases which triggered his impeachment trial relates to a land dispute involving the embattled

allegedly manipulated the Supreme Court to rule in his favor in the property case questions the credibility of Chief Justice Korkpor who serves as the head of the Supreme Court and also signed the very ruling that is one of the counts against the Associate Justice.

Chief Justice Korkpor is the presiding officer in the impeachment trial of Justice Ja'neh.

The protesters called on the Liberian Senate to put stop to the ongoing impeachment of Justice Ja'neh.

According to the protesters, the impeachment trial is unconstitutional and allegedly politically motivated by the Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC) - led government.

The protesters suspect that the CDC - led government has different motive that allegedly prompted the impeachment of Justice Ja'neh.

They stress the need to protect and respect the rule of law, lamenting that the law has been violated.

Receiving the petition on behalf of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Gbarpolu County Sen. Armah Jallah thanked the protesters for being peaceful.

He promises to present the full petition to plenary for legislative action. Sen. Jallah assures that the Senate will act accordingly. --Edited by Winston W. Parley



stormed the entrance of the Capitol Thursday, 28 February amid heavy joint security deployment.

Justice Ja'neh is standing impeachment trial at the Liberian Senate for alleged proved misconduct, abuse of public office, wanton abuse of judicial discretion, frauds, misuse of power and corruption.

His lawyers say the

justice and a private citizen, one Madam Annie Yancy Constance.

Ja'neh has been accused by lawmakers for abuse of power, using his influence as Associate Justice to secure a ruling in his favor at the Supreme Court to take possession of the land.

But Ja'neh's lawyers have repeatedly maintained that the claim that their client

Families seek support for mentally-ill people

By Roosevelt G. Jabah

Families of mentally-ill (MI) persons in Liberia are calling on government to provide essential drugs for them, noting that mental illness poses serious threat to the normality of said individuals.

Speaking at a three-day intensive training on Anti Stigma & Discrimination for people living with Mental Illness sponsored by Carter

has now recovered but, at times relapses or goes back in crisis.

According to her, with the pieces of family advice, coupled with her personal thoughts, she had thought to refuse his quest, but later decided to agree on grounds that he was not born with such situation.

Ms Jallah notes that her husband behaves abnormal



Center in collaboration with the Mental Health Reporter Network (MHRN), students studying Mass Communication stresses that Mentally-ill persons have equal rights like any ordinary citizen.

Mrs. Catherine Jallah, wife of a consumer user laments her husband was not born mad.

A consumer user is a person, who was once mentally-ill and

when he is not taking his medication, but adds that she always played her supportive role whenever he experiences a relapse.

"My husband is educated, but he was denied job opportunity on countless occasions because of his situation. With the prevailing situation, he



Liberian makes SOS call to get treated abroad

By Bridgett Milton

The family of a Liberian man sickened by a reddish growth, Mr. James P. Doe are seeking financial assistance from the public, government officials, humanitarians, and good will institutions to help him attend to medical treatment abroad.

James is experiencing a reddish growth on the left side of his back that was initially seen as a birthmark, but later turned into a serious health problem.

According to the mother of James, Theresa Bestman, the growth on her son is causing him sleepless nights and making life unbearable for him by the day.

She explains that a doctor contacted from India has

agreed to conduct an operation on her son, but the medical bill is put at

US\$9,800.00.

She explains further that the Indian doctor told her that if nothing is done to take James out of Liberia after the middle of this year, his



condition could worsen.

Madam Bestman indicates that out of the US\$9,800 needed, they were able to raise US\$2,217 through the help of a friend in the US when she hosted a live show to assist in generating funds for her son.

She adds that due to the family's inability to raise the amount, they launched a campaign using various media outlets to solicit support from good will individuals and institutions.

She appeals to President George Manneh Weah, First Lady Clar Weah, Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor and other prominent and well-meaning Liberians to help safe her son's life.

Madam Bestman laments that they have visited several hospitals here and did medical consultations, but all did not establish the treatment for the

sickness.

According to Madam Bestman, they have been to the Redemption Hospital in New Kru Town, John F. Kennedy Medical Center, the SDA Cooper Hospital in Sinkor and Jackson F. Doe Hospital in Nimba County in search of medical attention, but to no avail.

At the SDA Cooper Hospital, she narrates that they met an American Certified Surgeon who also recommended that they seek advanced medical attention outside Liberia.

When James Doe was 12 years old, Madam Bestman recalls that they first visited the Mercy Ship and an operation was done on her son.

But she laments that the growth resurfaced and is affecting her son greatly.-- Edited by Winston W. Parley

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

77% Liberian women self employed

--Gender Minister

By Lewis S. Teh

Gender Minister Williametta Piso Saydee-Tarr says research has shown that about 77% of women are self-employed in urban areas, compared to 40% of their male counterparts that are self-employed.

Minister Tarr made the disclosure over the weekend at the Ministry of Transport during the official kick off to observe the International Day of Women here.

She notes that the International Women Day is a celebration that is done worldwide since its foundation in 1911.

The Gender Minister while serving as Guest Speaker described Liberian women as dynamic entrepreneurs.

She adds that research has shown that Liberian women's self-empowerment strategy has led to the creation of jobs that facilitated moving from the informal to the formal sector.

According to the Gender Minister, women's self-empowerment strategy has moved them from micro credit to the small and medium enterprise sector where they continue to provide significant



Gender Minister Williametta.Piso.Saydee-Tarr

economic gains to boost the economy.

She sees the International Women Day as a call to action for accelerating gender parity, saying it makes her happy that the male partners are understanding that women need to have equal participation of leadership role with.

She assures Liberian women that the Ministry of Gender is more concerned about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) #5 which speaks about gender equality.

Minister Tarr indicates that this is paramount to the development of Liberia, and it enshrined in the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD).

She expresses delight over the number of women that are in leadership in various governmental institutions across the country.

According to Minister Tarr, women's contribution to Liberia's social economic advancement remains far greater.

She cites rural women's

economic contribution by producing food crops here, describing them as the main sponsors of agriculture products for domestic and commercial uses.

In recognition of women's role in the agriculture sector, Minister Tarr believes that it is essential to revitalize agriculture to help reduce poverty in Liberia.

For her part, Assistant Transport Minister for Administration and Insurance Nuwoe A.D. Scott says the International Women Day is being set aside for women all around the world to celebrate their achievement, especially those hard working women who sacrifice their lives in contributing to society.

Minister Scott adds that the program is about showcasing

the women at Transport Ministry to work side by side with the men in delivering services to the public.

She says further that the celebration is also meant for women at the Ministry to demonstrate their talents and to erase the idea that only men can work.

According to Madam Scott, women at the Ministry of Transport are delivering services in various departments including Driving License, and Motor Vehicle Registration, among others.

The celebration held under the theme: "Gender Equality in Service Delivery," brought together scores of government officials from line ministries, agencies, and commissions, among others.--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

Families seek support

Cont'd from page 7

decided to venture into agriculture and it was how we educated our five children", she explains.

According to her, as wife and caretaker, she always reminds her husband to take his medication to keep him stabilized.

For her part, Magdalene Flomo, a daughter of a consumer user narrates that her father finds himself in a situation where he does not get overly excited or happy in order to avoid relapsing into his mental sickness.

She continues that her entire family has studied the situation about her father to the extent that whenever he enters his state of crisis (abnormality) they are fully aware and immediately call the doctor or immediately take him to hospital.

The Deputy Program Lead at Carter Center-Liberia, Wilfred

Gwakolo, applauds the students for their participation in the training, but reminds them to effectively practicalize lessons learnt from the exercise.

He says Carter Center did not just organize the workshop to waste fund, but instead, to ensure that anti-stigmatization and discrimination message is trumpeted across the country.

A student of the African Methodist Episcopal University Magdalene Saah, thanks the organizer for the workshop and promises that the lesson learnt will be implemented.

She notes the training gives students a broad knowledge about how to report on people living with mental health illness and their importance to society, once properly catered for.

Students advised to choose careers wisely

--As SEIL ends one day career symposium

By Ben P. Wesese

Panelists at a one - day National Career Day Symposium have taught over 100 students about the importance of wisely

Minister for Child Protection Mamensie Kabba spoke on the relevance of political science to national development, urging students to choose political science because the

relevance of law to national development.

He says without law in a state, the state becomes deadly and nasty, cautioning students to seek law as their career.

In order to become a



choosing perfect careers while still in high school for the betterment of their future.

Serving as one of the panelists, Assistant Gender

field is open for good jobs.

For his part, Cllr. Kwame Clement, Professor at the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law also spoke on the

lawyer, Cllr. Clement says one should have good skill in persuading others, be a very good reader and have the ability to write.

Read The NewDawn Online Daily

He discloses that becoming a lawyer is not easy, but it's worthy.

For his part, Nathan N. Gbelee, SEIL Founder and Executive Director says his institution had the first edition of the national career day symposium in June last year.

This year, he says SEIL decided to partner with another institution in conducting the program.

Mr. Gbelee points out that the program intends to help program young people that the nation can rely upon hire its

own technocrats and experts to solve the nation's complications and mysteries.

The program was hosted by Sustainable Educational Initiative Liberia Incorporated (SEIL) in partnership with Monrovia City Corporation (MCC) Youth Affairs Unit.

It brought together over 10 high schools across Monrovia.--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

Français

Le Liberia victime de conspiration et de fraude

La Banque centrale du Libéria (CBL) et l'entreprise Suédoise Crane Currency AB ont conspiré pour imprimer 18 milliards de dollars libériens et déclarer un peu moins de 16 milliards, c'est en tout cas ce qui ressort du rapport d'enquête de la commission d'enquête présidentielle mise en place par le chef de l'Etat du Libéria George Weah.

Le rapport d'enquête de l'équipe locale a été rendu public le jeudi 28 février dans les locaux du ministère de l'Information à Monrovia au même moment où les enquêteurs étrangers travaillant au compte de l'USAID publiaient leurs conclusions.

La Banque Centrale du Libéria a déclaré 15,6 milliards de dollars libériens comme étant le montant total qui a été imprimé et introduit dans le pays entre juillet 2016 et avril 2018.

Mais le chef de la Cellule de renseignement financier (CRF) et membre de l'équipe d'investigation présidentielle, M. Alex

Cuffey, a indiqué que l'analyse de la liste de colirage soumise par la CBL révèle qu'un montant de (18,1 milliards) de dollars libériens a été imprimé. Ce qui veut dire que 2,6 milliards de dollars libériens n'ont pas été déclarés par la CBL, selon M. Cuffey.

S'exprimant lors de la publication du rapport de synthèse devant un groupe de journalistes locaux et

internationaux, M. Cuffey a accusé la compagnie suédoise, Crane Currency AB, d'avoir consciemment et délibérément conspiré avec les responsables de la CBL pour duper l'Etat du Libéria.

Selon lui, non seulement la CBL a passé un contrat avec Crane Currency pour imprimer un total de 15 milliards de dollars libériens à un coût total d'un peu plus de 15, 33 millions de dollars

américains en violation des lois du Libéria, mais aussi la société suédoise a imprimé environ 18 milliards de dollars libériens en violation des termes du contrat, ce qui a fait supporter au gouvernement libérien un coût supplémentaire de 835 367,72 USD.

En outre, M. Cuffey a pointé du doigt plusieurs membres du personnel de rang intermédiaire de la CBL qui auraient enfreint les lois du Libéria dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions. Ces derniers auraient consciemment conspiré avec les anciens et actuels cadres supérieurs de la CBL pour dissimuler la véritable nature du montant total et réel des billets en dollars libériens imprimés et reçus par la banque. Ils auraient aussi présenté des rapports falsifiés.

Selon le chef de la commission d'enquête, la Banque centrale a échangé

un total de 14 millions de dollars américains contre 2, 15 milliards de dollar libériens entre juillet 2018 et septembre 2018.

Il reproche également à l'équipe technique de gestion économique de ne disposer d'aucune stratégie claire et accuse la Banque centrale de s'être écartée des meilleures pratiques conventionnelles qui préconisaient l'utilisation des institutions bancaires légitimes, des banques commerciales et des bureaux de change agréés.

Il a indiqué qu'étant donné les nombreuses divergences concernant le montant total et réel des billets en dollars libériens en circulation sur le marché, la commission d'enquête recommande vivement la démonétisation des billets de banque actuellement en circulation pour en imprimer d'autres afin de maîtriser la question monétaire.



George Weah achève une visite en Israël

En visite officielle en Israël, le président libérien George Weah a rencontré vendredi le Premier ministre Benjamin Netanyahu.

La prochaine fois, nous pourrons peut-être jouer au football et nous continuerons

à renforcer notre coopération », a lancé M. Netanyahu à son interlocuteur, ancienne star du football.

« George Weah était l'un des meilleurs footballeurs de tous les temps, c'est un homme merveilleux qui aime

Israël et a été impressionné par son séjour ici », a affirmé M. Netanyahu dans une vidéo en hébreu publiée sur Facebook.

Le Premier ministre israélien s'est également félicité du « retour d'Israël en

Afrique », reprenant une formule qu'il a souvent répétée ces dernières années.

Benjamin Netanyahu a mis en œuvre des initiatives diplomatiques et économiques en Afrique, où il s'est rendu plusieurs fois.

Sous pression des nations africaines musulmanes, accentuée par les guerres israélo-arabes de 1967 et de 1973, un certain nombre d'États africains ont rompu leurs liens avec Israël.

Le Liberia a renoué des relations diplomatiques avec l'État juif en 1983.

En 2017, M. Netanyahu s'était rendu à Monrovia, la capitale libérienne, pour participer au sommet de la Communauté économique des États d'Afrique de l'Ouest (la Cédéao, composée de 15 membres).

Mais ces dernières années, Israël a offert des perspectives de coopération dans des domaines allant de

la sécurité à la technologie, en passant par l'agriculture, afin de développer ses relations sur le continent africain.

M. Weah est arrivé le 26 février en Israël.

Lors d'une rencontre jeudi soir avec son homologue israélien Reuven Rivlin, George Weah avait déclaré « être venu en Israël pour voir comment travailler de concert pour le bien-être de nos deux peuples », selon un communiqué de la présidence israélienne.

De son côté, le chef d'État israélien, connu pour sa passion pour le football, a évoqué la carrière de M. Weah, assurant à son interlocuteur qu'il « avait apporté du bonheur à des gens dans le monde entier et notamment à moi-même ».

« Nos cœurs vous sont ouverts, faisons-en sorte que ce soit le début d'une relation intense et profonde entre nos pays », a ajouté M. Rivlin.



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Français

Interpellation de deux banquiers, dont un fils de l'ex-présidente Sirleaf

Deux banquiers centraux, dont un fils de l'ex-présidente du Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, ont été interpellés jeudi soir à Monrovia, quelques heures après la publication d'un rapport pointant des dysfonctionnements au sein de la banque.

Ce rapport, réalisé par la société américaine Kroll à la demande des autorités libériennes, infirme un rumeur qui avait fait état l'an dernier de la disparition d'un conteneur rempli de billets en dollars libériens d'une valeur de 102 millions de dollars (89 millions d'euros).

Ces fonds ont bien été enregistrés dans les réserves de la Banque centrale du Liberia (CBL), selon la firme

Carter, sans préciser les reproches qui leur sont faits.

Charles Sirleaf, qui travaillait dans la Banque centrale depuis les années 2000, avait démissionné en août, quelques jours après l'éclatement de cette histoire de billets de banque.

Des informations dans la presse et sur les réseaux sociaux, alimentées par des déclarations imprécises de responsables libériens, avaient rapporté la disparition pure et simple de conteneurs et de sacs de billets entre le port et l'aéroport de Monrovia et la Banque centrale.

La polémique, première crise à laquelle était confronté le président George Weah, au pouvoir depuis janvier 2018, était née



américaine.

Mais la société d'audit affirme avoir identifié des « faiblesses systémiques et procédurales » au sein de la CBL, ainsi que des « manquements dans la politique fiscale et monétaire du Liberia, qui existent de longue date et se poursuivent jusqu'à présent ».

« Charles Sirleaf, ancien vice-gouverneur (de la LCB) et Dorbor Hagba, directeur de l'épargne (dans la même institution) ont été arrêtés la nuit dernière en rapport avec le rapport sur les billets de banque », a affirmé vendredi sur la radio nationale le porte-parole de police, Moses Carter. Les deux personnes sont actuellement détenues au quartier général de la police à Monrovia, a dit M.

de déclarations du ministre de l'Information, Lenn Eugene Nagbe, indiquant que la nouvelle administration n'avait pas été informée de l'arrivée de ces billets par l'ancienne présidente Sirleaf, à qui George Weah a succédé.

George Weah, qui avait fait ouvrir une enquête par une commission spéciale et demandé l'assistance notamment du FBI américain, avait réclamé de la « patience » à ses concitoyens, dont certains avaient manifesté pour réclamer qu'on « rende les conteneurs ». Début octobre, la Banque centrale avait déjà assuré qu'aucun conteneur n'avait disparu.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Andrea Peto

La liberté intellectuelle et ses nouveaux ennemis

BUDAPEST - L'exposition que consacre à la Première Guerre mondiale la Maison de l'histoire européenne, à Bruxelles, offre au visiteur une vision saisissante. En un geste aussi simple que spectaculaire, le musée présente, dans une vitrine disposée au centre de la salle, le pistolet utilisé en juin 1914 pour assassiner l'archiduc François-Ferdinand.

Après des débats enflammés, nous informe notre guide, le musée a accepté que les objets exposés « tournent » de temps à autre, pour que les différents pays puissent valoriser leurs plus précieuses reliques historiques. Mais lorsque je fais remarquer, quelque peu irritée, que le pistolet utilisé par Gavrilo Princip à Sarajevo ne peut lui aussi « tourner », le conservateur me réplique que la pièce authentique est revendiquée par quatre musées européens différents.

J'ai beau respecter et défendre la pluralité des traditions nationales européennes, c'est la gâchette d'un seul pistolet et non de quatre qui a déclenché la Première Guerre mondiale. Lorsque des faits historiques apportent une réponse unique à une question, le « pluralisme » et l'« inclusion » sont hors sujet. La réponse doit venir de spécialistes formés avec rigueur à l'histoire d'une époque déterminée (et familiers de ses sources), non des rédacteurs d'un programme politique.

Cela semble le pur bon sens. Mais les scientifiques, leurs institutions et la légitimité de la connaissance scientifique elle-même sont de plus en plus menacées dans plusieurs pays d'Europe. Des gouvernements procédant d'élections libres ont récemment bloqué (en Bulgarie) leur participation financière à des projets de recherche sans la moindre explication officielle, supprimé (en Hongrie) certains programmes de la liste des enseignements dispensés à l'université, voire éradiqué (en Pologne) des champs disciplinaires entiers.

Ces gouvernements méprisent des traditions universitaires pluriséculaires qui étaient respectées même durant l'ère communiste. Mais les pouvoirs qui sont à l'origine de ces décisions n'ont que faire d'établir des faits historiques ou scientifiques. Et ils sont prêts à vilipender, à moquer ou même à menacer ceux qui ont déjà acquis un tel savoir ou souhaitent l'acquérir.

Nous ne devrions pas croire que les instigateurs de ces attaques sont ignorants et dépourvus d'instruction, ni qu'ils ne respectent pas le savoir. Des membres de premier plan du gouvernement hongrois, qui a contraint l'université d'Europe centrale, fondée par le financier George Soros, à partir pour Vienne, et a interdit les études de genre, ont antérieurement bénéficié de bourses accordées par la fondation Open

Society de Soros, pour suivre leurs études à Oxford, à New York ou ailleurs. Ce sont des gens très instruits, qui savent parfaitement que le savoir, c'est le pouvoir, qui ont un programme précis et qui profitent du fait que l'enseignement, dans les pays de l'Union européenne est de la responsabilité des gouvernements nationaux et non des institutions établies à Bruxelles.

Ces gouvernements veulent mettre en place un système éducatif pour lequel l'État décide seul des champs de recherche nécessaires et socialement importants. À long terme, ils veulent probablement que l'État accorde aussi à ses thuriféraires le droit de produire et de transmettre le savoir.

Autrement dit, l'accès au savoir cessera d'être un droit civique. La fiabilité politique déterminera qui peut enseigner et étudier un pays et son passé. Cela signifierait un considérable retour en arrière par rapport à la démocratisation de l'enseignement supérieur et de la science en général, qu'accompagnerait la mise en place d'« experts » au service d'objectifs anti-démocratiques généralisés. Pour empêcher la seconde, nous devons résister au premier.

Les politiques scientifiques démocratiques s'appuient sur le principe que l'accès à la science est un droit humain. En outre, elles affirment, à juste titre, que les connaissances produites dans un esprit démocratique de recherche sont de meilleure qualité que celles qui le seraient par un « expert » ainsi désigné en raison de ses relations politiques.

Nombre de questions des sciences sociales et des humanités acceptent des réponses dépourvues d'ambiguïté. Fondamentalement, nous devons reconnaître les conclusions de spécialistes qui ont consacré leur carrière à un problème spécifique et non d'experts cherchant à faire valoir une ligne politique.

Nous devons, par conséquent, combattre la tendance perturbatrice de certains gouvernements européens à s'attribuer le droit de décider des questions scientifiques et à faire de leurs partisans les arbitres de la vérité. Nous devrions aussi nous demander si les nouveaux instituts de recherche et les nouvelles universités, établissements régis dans certains de ces pays par des critères idéologiques, ont bien leur place dans le réseau d'universités et d'institutions de recherche européennes.

Les chercheurs en sciences sociales et d'autres disciplines de l'ancienne Europe communiste travaillent une fois encore dans un climat intellectuel chaque jour plus oppressant. Nous ne devons pas les laisser défendre seuls la quête démocratique du savoir contre ceux qui voudraient décider par décret quelle est l'arme qui tira le coup de feu de Sarajevo.

PERSPECTIVES

With Bai M. Gbala, Sr.
July 18, 2018

Public Policy . Economics . Democratic Politics . Political/Economic Decentralization . Public Dishonesty . Dual Citizenship

ON POLITICIANS, GOVERNMENTS AND GOVERNANCE: SUGGESTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the most important, historical works of Philosophy on “*politics and government*” written by the Greek Philosopher, Aristotle, was *Nicomachean Ethics*. It had very important impact upon the European Middle Ages and became the criteria in the development of modern Philosophy in law and theology.

Aristotle argued that the “highest good for humans, the highest aim (calling or vocation in politics and government) of all human practical thinking (or thought) is well-being or happiness (achieved by this highest aim or vocation); that happiness is ongoing and stable dynamic, a way of being in action, specifically appropriate to the human ‘soul’ at its most ‘excellent’ or ‘virtuous’”.

Politics/government then, being the highest calling in human life, it follows, therefore, that Politicians and/or government officials are, and must be, leaders and teachers; they instruct, encourage, motivate and exemplify rational human action as role-models by pattern of desirable socio-cultural behavior - *honesty, openness, fairness, unity, loyalty and patriotism; decisive but fair and firm, with commitment to reflections on ‘mistakes of History’ for historical change, when and where necessary.*

But human history has shown and continues to show catastrophic deviations from this path with mind-boggling, historic consequences. These consequences motivated the Renaissance and Enlightenment based on human ideas and reason for historical changes, fortunately or unfortunately, the American, French and Chinese Revolutions, for examples.

The Republic of Liberia

This brings us to our country. Liberia is, indeed, the extension, so to speak, of this revolutionary processes based, particularly, on American/Western ideas of social, cultural democratic Thought for human progress and enrichment. But . . .

But Corruption, the international phenomena and vice found on every continent, country, culture and society irrespective of the level of economic development and affluence, probably intrinsic to human nature, has become monopolized by Liberia’s officials of government, the powerful Ruling Class, although research information shows that corruption can be reduced, controlled and, eventually, eradicated.

It is worth noting that the recently-retired first female “democratically-elected” President in Liberia, indeed Africa, billed as “Harvard University-trained Economist”, was expelled from her membership of the UNITY Party and position as Standard Bearer for secretly, allegedly supporting opposition politicians in return for protection against prosecution for alleged charges of war crimes. Moreover, she is the major suspect of the economic crimes of corruption second to none in Liberian history. She declare recently that “corruption is Liberia’s public enemy no. 1”, but admitted inability to innovate corrective economic prescription, although surrounded by her-appointed university-graduate Macro Economists, majority of which were, and are, rebels, suspects of human rights violations, dual citizens, crooks and criminals with characteristic arrogance, while hiding behind apparent officially-sanctioned “culture of impunity”.

Now President George Weah

For obvious reasons, we have high hopes for success of the Weah Presidency. Although a political novice and unknown quantity in political terms, but Mr. George Weah is untainted by war crimes and the history of economic crimes of corruption, including the wave of rebel activities - of *wanton plunder, destruction of properties and atrocious human right violations in Liberia*.

But the first 12 months of the Weah Presidency and Governance show depressing, deeply-troubling results as follows:

- Candidate Weah’s flirting with, and President Weah’s connections to, Mr. Charles Taylor, the flamboyant play-boy political actor and major political criminal now serving a 50-year term in prison for political war crime against humanity and to his (Taylor’s) National Patriotic Political Party;
- President Weah’s declaration against arrest and trial of war and economic crime suspects with many serving in very high positions in his government and his (President Weah’s) political alliance with major personalities who committed some of the most heinous war crimes; and
- President Weah’s refusal to declare his assets, a flagrant violation of the nation’s Constitutional Law by a sitting President and his admission in BBC public, press interview of his inability to demand assets declaration by the overwhelming majority of his close ministers and loyalists who have, also, refused/failed to declare their assets.

Prevailing Critical Difficulties Facing Liberia

Above all others, the most critical difficulties facing Liberia remain the following:

A. National Transport/Communications

Planning and Development Experts define the development/implementation of National Transport & Communications - *all-weather, safe & efficient/effective modern highways & roads* - as the “Premier, Multiplier Effect” in national economic development. In other words, the experts prescribe, with the Biblical analogy, to “seek ye first, the development/implementation kingdom of modern, national transport & communications and all others shall be added unto you”.

Priority must be placed, first and foremost, on building and implementation of modern, effective/efficient, safe, all-weather national roads and highways, a potent communication system, and all other national development projects shall follow with ease. Indeed, no prudent international foreign investment promoter will consider a community/nation without this system.

Worldwide research and experience show that successful, all-weather, modern highways & roads built between points A & B attract citizens, businesses and investment promoters who relocate along the new highways and roads, buy land and build homes, motels, hotels, restaurants, shops, service stations and rest stops for motorists/travelers.

In this way, modern, efficient/effective transport/communications system of highways & roads

facilitates not only convenient, inexpensive, safe and efficient/effective mass movement of people, but also, the production, distribution and sale of goods and services, national/international trade & commerce and, therefore, provides enormous opportunities for investment of people-freight-transport equipment and employment of citizens. Add this approach to the rapidly-developing, modern information technology, then one has the recipe for success that will drive Liberia into the 21st Century economy.

Moreover, it is very important to note that in order to locate and build schools, colleges, hospitals, clinics, agro-industrial enterprises, utilities (telephone, internet facilities, electricity, water & sewer) and related, national development projects in remote villages, towns and cities of our poor developing nation, one must, first, get to those locations expeditiously by safe, efficient, effective, all-weather highways and roads.

It is in this respect that transport/communication system constitutes the “Premier or First multiplier effect” in national economic development. Indeed, modern twenty-first century system of transport/communications drives business which, in turn, drives the economy which, also in turn, drives the nation.

B. Agriculture

The African Tribal Nation-State, now the Republic of Liberia which, once produced its food and fed itself, cannot now, feed itself since 1847, because the Republic depends upon and is held hostage by Rice and cooking oil (our nation’s staples) Cartels, foreign-owned entities in collusion with Liberian government officials with a tiny minority of the population which benefits, also, from the Cartels, although the Republic of Liberia is endowed with more fertile land than there are people.

But the people have abandoned, are abandoning the Land, Rural Liberia, in droves because there is little or no opportunity for education, training, personal development and economic upkeep, while all attention is paid only to Monrovia and other urban areas along the sea coast. Rural Liberia has been and continues to be forgotten and isolated. County officials of Rural Liberia are, in fact, surrogates of national, urban “politicians” who are NOT Leaders and Teachers.

Observations

The major, national Difficulties - *National Transport/Communication and Agriculture* - facing Liberia are as outlined above. The results or impact of these national difficulties affect all citizens, but much more the citizens of Rural Liberia than their counterparts, compatriots of urban areas in the following manner:

Firstly, an overwhelming majority of Liberia’s Body Politic - *the eligible voting-age citizens* - is poor, unemployed and, therefore, un-educated and un-informed. Most of these citizens sell their votes to enterprising local and national politicians for economic survival and care less about community interests, let alone national economic and political development.

Secondly, unemployed able-bodied young men and their wives from towns and villages of Rural Liberia seek hand-to-mouth income in gold & diamond mining camps in the forest with their young children left in the care of grandparents unable to relocate from the towns and villages that are without schools for the children. Therefore, these children, the Counties’ and Nation’s future leaders, born in abject poverty and ignorance, live in abject poverty and ignorance and will, likely, die in abject poverty and ignorance, if nothing is done to arrest this alarming possibility.

Thirdly, patients in Rural Liberia die, often, of curable illness because of poverty, lack of transport to nearby clinics or hospitals, lack of approved and affordable drugs, adequate staffing and budgetary support.

Fourthly, Liberia has been locked, and continues locked, in the critical problem of graft/greed, public/private dishonesty, the vice of corruption. Though corruption is, probably, intrinsic in human nature, but it has been shown to be an *effect* (not a *cause*) due, mainly, to poverty and ignorance (education). Moreover, research information shows, also, that corruption can be, and has been, reduced, controlled and, eventually, eradicated completely.

Suggestions, Recommendations

We argue that the Difficulties identified are overcome-able and doable, with determination/commitment, loyalty and patriotism to the nation and people; that is, with bravery, guts and the political will. This approach requires absolute, public policy action against graft/greed or corruption, because corruption takes away an estimated 50-70% of the public resources needed to provide Transport/communications and Agriculture and, therefore, poverty, hunger, unemployment, the lack of education, healthcare and all of the other results of the indicated difficulties.

On economic planning and development of the nation’s economy with specific reference to international trade and commerce, we suggest and recommend that the Republic of Liberia must plan, develop and organize local enterprises for production of goods and services for local consumption and for export trade and commerce:

A) Production for Local Consumption

Goods & services produced for local consumption discourage, reduce and, eventually, eliminate Liberia’s dangerous and infinite dependence on imports. They include local production of food - rice and cooking oil (our staples), oranges, pineapple, tomato and juices; coffee, cocoa, mineral water, poultry products, cucumber, leaf lettuce, plantain, banana, fish & fish-farming, cassava, eddoes, yams, pawpaw, plums, etc. Other products for local consumption include Liberian clothes and furniture made by Liberians with Liberian wood. This listing is by no means complete, but examples.

A) Production for Export

For export - all tropical products - plantain, banana, rice, palm oil, Pineapples, Oranges, tomato and juices; coffee, cocoa, cassava, eddoes, yams, cucumber, timber, rubber, furniture, Liberian clothes, iron ore, gold, diamond and manufacture of tires from our rubber and steel products from iron ore that we produce. This list of export products is, also, by no means complete, but examples.

TO BE CONTINUE

Sirleaf, Weeks, others due in court today

By Winston W. Parley

Information available to the NewDawn indicate that, Charles Sirleaf, the son of former President Ellen Johnson - Sirleaf's, and Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL), former CBL Executive Governor Milton Weeks, and Director of Banking Dorbor Hagba are due in court today, 4 March.

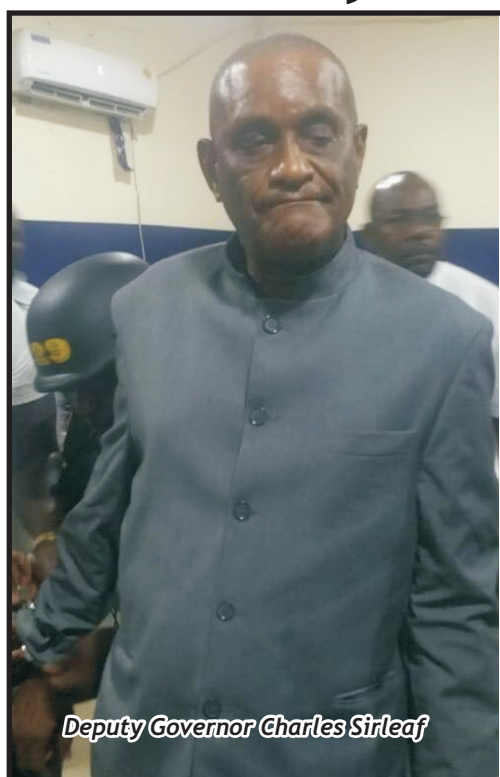
They were arrested from Thursday through Friday after the United States Embassy and the government here separately released their versions of reports into investigations surrounding Liberia's alleged "missing" 16 billion local currency.

Mr. Sirleaf and Mr. Hagba were arrested Thursday, 28 February hours after the reports were released, while Mr. Weeks was later arrested Friday.

The trio are expected to give account of the excess amount of money that were printed and their roles in the alleged missing money saga.

During a follow up with police Saturday, 2 March, Police Spokesman Moses Carter told the NewDawn via mobile phone that police are not giving out names or the number of suspects that are being targeted for arrest. Instead, he says they are looking at those that are found culpable in the report.

The Presidential Investigative Team (PIT) says CBL reported 15,606,000,000 (15.6bn) Liberian dollars



Deputy Governor Charles Sirleaf



Ex-CBL Executive Governor Milton Weeks



Director of Banking Dorbor Hagba

banknotes as the total amount printed, shipped by Crane Currency AB and received by the CBL between July 2016 and April 2018.

But the head of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and member of the PIT Mr. Alex Cuffey says analysis of the packing list submitted by the CBL reveals that the amount of 18,151,000,000 (18.1bn) Liberian dollar banknotes were printed and shipped by Crane Currency.

According to Mr. Cuffey, this leaves a variance of 2,645,000,000 (L\$2.6bn) Liberian dollar banknotes that is yet to be fully accounted for by the CBL.

The firm hired by the United States Agency for

International Development (USAID) to help investigate the money issue separately, Kroll Associates Inc., established that the CBL entered into a contract with Crane AB on May 6, 2016 to print new banknotes totaling LRD 5.0 billion eleven days prior to the CBL receiving full Legislature approval to print new banknotes.

The USAID report further indicates that the Legislature's approval was not granted in the same manner as 2016 for the CBL to print a second tranche of new banknotes totaling LRD 10.0 billion in 2017.

It adds that Crane AB was awarded the second contract in June 2017 by the CBL to print new banknotes totaling

LRD 10.0 billion, four weeks before two officials from the Legislature requested that the CBL replace all legacy banknotes.

The report says a letter dated July 19, 2017 from the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives Mildred Sayon and the Secretary of the Senate Nanborlor Singbeh provided an instruction to the CBL to "...replace the legacy notes completely with newly printed banknotes" but with a clear caveat that the CBL provide the Legislature with details of the quantity and denominations of the new banknotes "...prior to the printing" of the new banknotes.

The CBL did not provide the Legislature with details of the quantity and denominations of the new banknotes prior to the printing and shipping of new banknotes, the USAID report finds.

The actual value of new banknotes printed by Crane AB

to Liberia totaled LRD 15.506 billion, the report says, adding that the new banknotes totaling LRD 0.506 billion were printed by Crane AB above the initial contractual amount of LRD 15.0 billion.

Besides, Kroll reveals that the CBL procured the services of Crane AB for both contracts without adhering to its own internal tendering policies for procurement.

To make matter worse, Kroll established that of the new banknotes printed and shipped by Crane AB totaling LRD 15.506 billion, the CBL had injected new banknotes totaling LRD 10.146 billion into the Liberian economy without removing from circulation (and destroying) the equivalent quantity or value of legacy banknotes (the old money).

According to the USAID report, under the direction of the Minister of Finance, the President's Economic Management Team also conducted a separate USD 25.0 million exercise to "mop-up" excess LRD banknotes with USD banknotes.

At the time of Kroll's review, this resulted in LRD 2.3 billion (USD 15.0 million)3 being purchased by the CBL from local businesses and foreign exchange bureaus, in an attempt to address the depreciation of the Liberian Dollar, the USAID report says.

It reveals that this action was undertaken by the CBL without a clearly documented strategy.

Kroll's independent counts of the physical cash balances in each of the CBL's three operational vaults could not be reconciled with the CBL's corresponding financial accounting records.

AFELL condemns women abused in Sinoe

The Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia or AFELL, condemns the abuse of two young Liberian women in Sinoe County, describing the act as barbaric and inhumane.

The women were allegedly stripped naked and paraded recently in the streets of Greenville City, Sinoe County by some unknown men for

suspected witchcraft activity.

AFELL President, Attorney Vivian Neal, says the action taken against the women is a classic example of entrenched discrimination against women in the Liberia society.

She adds that the incident also highlights the fact that mob violence is still being practiced in the society.

"It appears that some

people are not aware that tradition and customary practices which infringe upon the fundamental rights of an individual, right to security and integrity of the person are subordinate and inconsistent with the Constitution of Liberia," she says.

The Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia however, calls on the Government of Liberia to speedily bring to justice alleged perpetrators of such uncivilized and diabolical act, which is totally inconsistent with the status of civilized nation in the 21st century.

The incident, which has wide condemnation here, occurred recently in the county when unidentified men reportedly accused two young women of witchcraft activity, stripped them naked, tortured and paraded them in the streets, resulting to the death of one of the victims.

No arrest has been made in the county since the incident, as the suspected perpetrators are said to be on the run.

Trial by ordeal is illegal under Liberia's jurisprudence. -Editing by Jonathan Browne



Attorney Vivian Neal

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Welcome To The New World

Klopp hits back at Liverpool critic



The German manager believes the Reds are taking appropriate risks with their offensive play despite three goalless draws in recent weeks

Jurgen Klopp has hit back at criticism regarding Liverpool's ineffective attack and insisted football isn't as simple as it appears in a video game. The Reds were held to scoreless draw against Everton at

Goodison Park on Sunday, with the visitors registering just three shots on target.

It was the third time in their last four games that they have failed to find the net, with suggestion the club are failing to cope with the pressure in the current Premier League title race. When asked if he wished his Liverpool side took more risks in their attacking play against the Toffees, Klopp said:

"We don't play PlayStation. Do you think we didn't take enough risks today? Is that you want to ask? "That's a really disappointing question, I have to say, because that means it's like it's so easy.

"I tell the boys to take more risks, 'Come on boys, we go for it!' Is there any draw we didn't try to win? What is that?

"An extra attacker just to go wild nine matchdays [from the end]? You think it's PlayStation, bring an extra attacker and football changes. It's not like that. We are offensive enough, football doesn't work like that.

"There are nine games to go, we don't lose our nerve like you obviously. It's the second time you ask a question I really don't get. "You cannot start with four or five strikers in a striker way, nothing else to do but try to score. We have an offensive team and we take the risk, no doubt about that, but it's not like that.

"There's not a moment where we say, 'Come on now, throw everything in that direction'. You cannot play in the Premier League like that.



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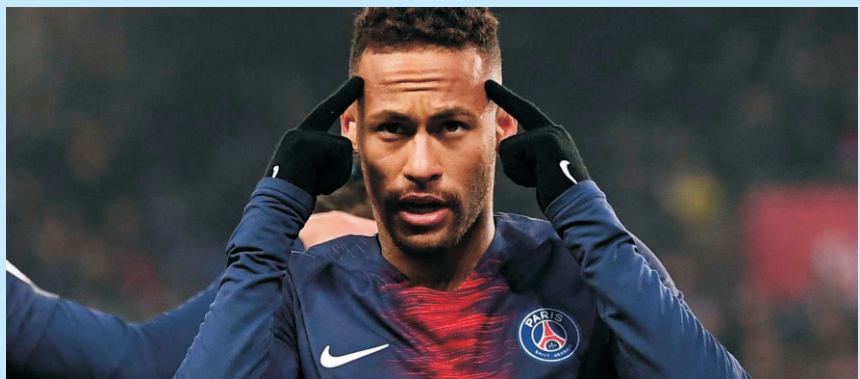
Neymar uncertain over future amid Real Madrid attaction

The Brazil international is happy with life playing in Ligue 1 but stated he does have interest in playing for Los Blancos at some point in the future.

Neymar has refused to rule out the possibility of playing for Real Madrid at some point in his career though he says he is happy in Paris. The Brazil international is currently in his

second season for Paris Saint-Germain following his move from Barcelona back in August 2017. He's bagged 48 goals in 53 games so far for the Ligue 1 club, but speculation has not ceased around a potential return to La Liga in the near future. He has been linked with a Barcelona return and with Real Madrid still looking to replace Cristiano Ronaldo following his departure

from the club for Juventus in the summer, Neymar is touted as a suitable replacement. The 27-year-old admitted he's attracted to the possibility of playing for Los Blancos, but stated he's happy with his life in France for now. "Real is one of the biggest clubs in the world," Neymar told Globo. "Everyone that is followed by Real Madrid would feel attracted to play there.



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