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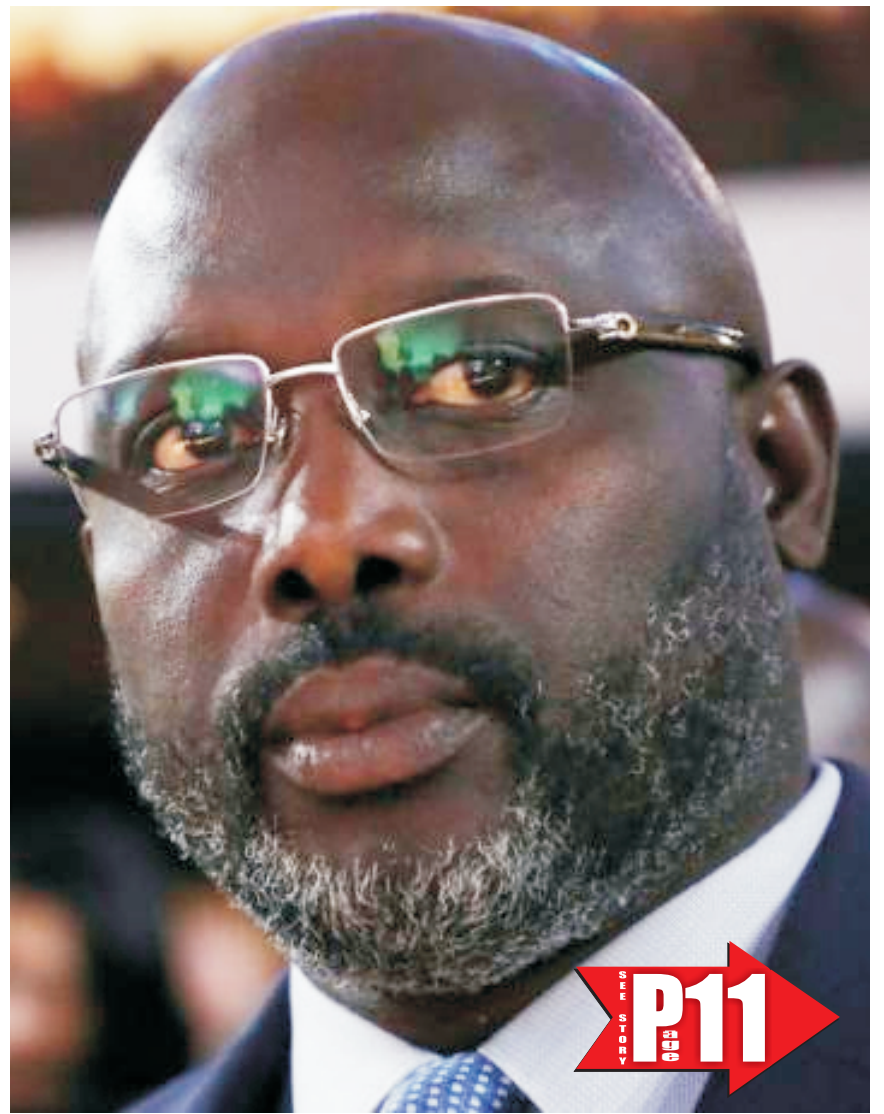
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No plan to meet protesters

-Pres. Weah



P11



Vice Pres. Taylor and Cabinet members in photo

Over 4,000 to face salaries cut

P11



Continental News

Drought-hit Namibia 'faces natural disaster'

Namibia is facing a "natural disaster" because of poor rains, President Hage Geingob says.

He has declared a state of emergency - the second in three years - over the situation, mobilising all government agencies to respond to the drought. The lack of rain has already left 500,000 people - one in five Namibians - without access to enough food, the government says.

The sparsely-populated country has seen a succession of droughts since 2013.

The government had set aside \$40m (£30m) to buy food and water tanks, and to transport livestock to and from grazing areas. Prime Minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila has appealed for international help.

"We... call on all Namibians and development partners to assist in any way possible, so that we provide

to our people who are affected, as well as the livestock," she said in the national assembly.

At least 60,000 domestic animals have died in the past six months.

Those affected are facing

severe food shortages following the prolonged drought, the prime ministers's office, which is coordinating the response, has said. President Geingob blamed a poor rainy season, which is usually comes

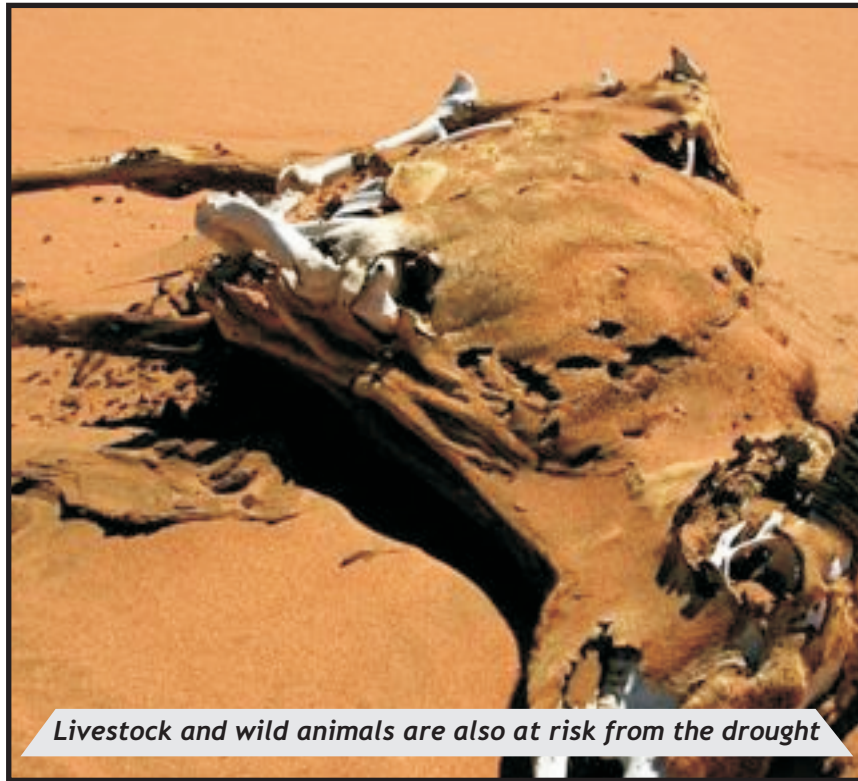
between January and March, for being behind the problem.

Rivers have dried up in the north of the country, and people are depending on food and water relief from the government, journalist Tuyeimo Haidula told the BBC.

Livestock have been worst affected by the drought, she said. Information and Communication Minister,

Stanley Simataa, has asked farmers to reduce livestock to reasonable numbers that they can build when the situation changes, national broadcaster NBC reports.

The vast mineral-rich southern African nation imports around 70% of its food from neighbouring South Africa. Its expansive arid geography makes it difficult to grow crops for subsistence use. BBC



Livestock and wild animals are also at risk from the drought

Mugabe dairy firm sings the blues

ALPHA Omega Dairy, a company owned by former President Robert Mugabe is singing the blues with operations at below capacity and low uptake of its products in the market. The former Zanu PF strongman was pushed out by the military and his party to resign from the presidency in 2017 after 37 years in power. The company's southern region sales executive Cassim Asani told

NewsDay that the uptake of their products in supermarkets was very low. "Business for the first quarter of this year was not as it was last year. On our side, we are pushing as a company because we want to be viable, we are producing the products but the rate of uptake in supermarkets is very low because the majority of the people do not have enough buying power," Asani said.

"So from our market

research and market intelligence, we have discovered that people want to buy products but they are not buying or buying limited quantities". Asani said schools which used to be their top customers for dairy products like yoghurt and ice creams had altered their diets because of the economic hardships. During Mugabe's time in power, the company was touted as a model of success of the land reform programme Zimbabwe embarked on at the turn of the millennium.

Asani said the company's operations were being hindered by foreign currency shortages.

"...when we want to import ingredients and spare parts, forex is not yet readily available. So this is our biggest challenge and as a result, we are limited in our operations because of that. Sometimes, we end up having to raise prices to keep us viable like everybody else."

"We hope authorities are working on that (availing forex) so that our economy returns to its green days. We

DR Congo arrests US tourist kidnappers

KAMPALA. Two men suspected to have taken part in the kidnap of a US tourist and her guide in Queen Elizabeth National Park in Uganda are to be extradited after they were arrested in Democratic Republic of Congo.

Alex Byamukama and Memory Derrick were arrested in Goma Town in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo last week.

Police spokesperson Fred Enanga yesterday said the process of extraditing the two suspects is ongoing.

"They were arrested by DRC security agencies after coordination with Uganda security forces. Our police team is working with the DRC security agencies to extradite them to face charges," Mr Enanga said.

Police allege that the duo collaborated with Onesmus Byaruhanga, who was arrested and currently on remand, to kidnap Ms Kimberly Sue and her tour guide Jean Paul Mirenge.

Ms Sue and Mirenge were kidnapped while on an evening game drive on Edward track between Katoke gate and Wilderness Camp in Kanungu District last month. The suspects demanded Shs1.8b in ransom, but were only paid Shs112m. Kidnaps and robberies on Uganda-DRC

border are high but the police say most of them are by Ugandans working with Congolese militias.

Background

In 2013, the suspects were arrested for kidnap and robbery, but it was only Byaruhanga, who was convicted and jailed. Byamukama and Derrick skipped bond and arrest warrants were issued against them, Mr Fred Enanga, the police spokesperson, said.

He said they are first tracking the old cases to charge the suspects as soon as they are extradited.

Police have so far charged six other people for the kidnap of the US tourist and her guide.

The six are Yoweri Mugabo, Hakim Tumwebaze, Denis Kyalisima, Adam Immaniraguha, James Hatangimana and Joram Akankwasa. However, police's efforts to recover the guns the suspects are using has not yet yielded results.

Police allege that they participated in another kidnap for ransom against Robert Mugabe on August 3, 2018 in Queen Elizabeth National Park. They released Mugabe after paying unspecified amount of ransom.

Detectives also added aggravated robbery charges against the seven suspects including Byaruhanga. BBC



Zimbabwe's ex-President Robert Mugabe

haven't laid down any staff. Our capacity utilisation is not bad. For now we are at 58%, we have not been running juices due to packaging material challenges but we have managed to secure something. We are now running juices and we expect our capacity utilisation to go up," he said.

"We are a company that

runs professionally and we are an equal opportunity competitor in the market. We face the same challenges like other companies face." Last May, State-owned media reported that the company was facing eviction from its rented Harare offices over \$29 134,22 arrears. NewsDay

EDITORIAL

The warning from America

THE UNITED STATES warns against inciting “unlawful acts through ill-considered rhetoric that could jeopardize Liberia’s hard-won peace and security.”

THE EMBASSY OF the United States near Monrovia says it is concerned by recent comments made in various fora which could impede Liberia’s progress, and that those who promote through their words or deeds a Congo-Country divide do not have Liberia’s best interests or that of their constituents at heart, but rather appear motivated by personal ambitions or fears.

A STATEMENT FROM the embassy specifically stresses that it is unacceptable for Senator Prince Y. Johnson, Representative Yekeh Kolubah, ‘ex-generals’ or other former actors from Liberia’s civil wars to engage in such acts, noting that it is equally irresponsible for people within leadership positions in government or the ruling Coalition to promote such division as Deputy Information Minister Eugene Fahngon has done on social media.

IN OTHER WORDS, the United States admonishes Liberians, particularly government officials, to turn down the hate messages, and instead, promote peace, national reconciliation and unity.

SENATE EX-PRESIDENT pro-tempore Cletus Wotorson, recently urged Liberians on all sides of the divide to calm down the tension in the country, and get to work.

BUT THE GOVERNMENT appears to be mesmerized by the words of war being led by its officials, who should rather, be focused on conducting the matters of state instead of responding to every sound coming from the public.

SENATOR PRINCE JOHNSON claims ownership of his native Nimba County and therefore, threatens opposition parties to not step in the county without getting his approval yet, he professes to subscribe to tenets of democracy that allow pluralism and opposing views.

SUSPENDED DEPUTY MINISTER Fahngon is fond of spewing hate and divisive comments on social media, but believes somewhere in his brain those are his private views. Even if his views were private, for God’s sake, can’t he be civil in the public space? Who told him that the social media is a private space?

OUR OFFICIALS HAVE stood so low that it now takes outsiders and foreign partners to chastise them for their utterances in public. Are they obsessed with the offices they occupied or power drunk?

AS THE U.S. EMBASSY statement notes, Minister Fahngon and his likes should take cognizant that to “take such a public stance and suggest it is a private opinion or a personal right reflects a misunderstanding of the nature of public service in a democracy.”

The
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COMMENTARY

By Raghuram G. Rajan

Why Capitalism Needs Populism

Globalization, digital technologies, and other factors have allowed competitive US corporations to achieve market dominance. If the past is any guide, it is only right that these “superstar” firms should now be challenged by grassroots political movements protesting against an unholy alliance of private-sector and government elites.

CHICAGO - Big Business is under attack in the United States. Amazon canceled its planned new headquarters in the New York City borough of Queens in the face of strong local opposition. Lindsey Graham, a Republican US senator for South Carolina, has raised concerns about Facebook’s uncontested market position, while his Democratic Senate colleague, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, has called for the company to be broken up. Warren has also introduced legislation that would reserve 40% of corporate board seats for workers.

Such proposals may seem out of place in the land of free-market capitalism, but the current debate is exactly what America needs. Throughout the country’s history, it has been capitalism’s critics who ensured its proper functioning, by fighting against the concentration of economic power and the political influence it confers. When a few corporations dominate an economy, they inevitably team up with the instruments of state control, producing an unholy alliance of private- and public-sector elites.

This is what has happened in Russia, which is democratic and capitalist in name only. By maintaining complete control over commodity extraction and banking, an oligarchy beholden to the Kremlin has ruled out the possibility of meaningful economic and political competition. In fact, Russia is the apotheosis of the problem that US President Dwight D. Eisenhower described in his 1961 farewell address, when he admonished Americans to “guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence” by the “military-industrial complex” and the “potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power.”

With many US industries already dominated by a few “superstar” firms, we should be glad that “democratic socialist” activists and populist protesters are heeding Eisenhower’s warning. But, unlike in Russia, where the oligarchs owe their wealth to the capture of state assets in the 1990s, America’s superstar firms have gotten to where they are because they are more productive. This means that regulatory efforts have to be more nuanced - more scalpel than sledgehammer.

Specifically, in an era of global supply chains, US corporations have benefited from enormous economies of scale, network effects, and the use of real-time data to improve performance and efficiency at all stages of the production process. A company like Amazon learns from its data constantly to minimize delivery times and improve the quality of its services. Confident of its superiority relative to the competition, the firm needs few favors from the government - one reason why Amazon founder Jeff Bezos can back The Washington Post, which is often critical of the US administration.

But just because superstar firms are super-efficient today does not mean they will stay that way, particularly in the absence of meaningful competition. Incumbents will always be tempted to sustain their positions through anti-competitive means. By supporting legislation such as the 1984 Computer Fraud and Abuse Act and the 1998 Digital Millennium Copyright Act, the leading

Internet firms have ensured that competitors cannot plug into their platforms to benefit from user-generated network effects. Similarly, after the 2009 financial crisis, the big banks accepted the inevitability of increased regulations, and then lobbied for rules that just so happened to raise compliance costs, thereby disadvantaging smaller competitors. And now that the Trump administration has become trigger-happy with import tariffs, well-connected firms can influence who gets protection and who bears the costs.

More generally, the more that government-defined intellectual-property rights, regulations, and tariffs - rather than productivity - bolster a corporation’s profits, the more dependent it becomes on government benevolence. The only guarantee of corporate efficiency and independence tomorrow is competition today.

The pressure on the government to keep capitalism competitive, and impede its natural drift toward domination by a dependent few, typically comes from ordinary people, organizing democratically in their communities. Not possessing the influence of the elite, they often want more competition and open access. In the US, the late-nineteenth-century Populist movement and the early-twentieth-century Progressive movement were reactions to monopolization in critical industries such as railroads and banking. These grassroots mobilizations led to regulations like the 1890 Sherman Antitrust Act, the 1933 Glass-Steagall Act (albeit less directly), and measures to improve access to education, health, credit, and business opportunities. By supporting competition, these movements not only kept capitalism vibrant, but also averted the risk of corporatist authoritarianism.

Today, as the best jobs drift to superstar firms that recruit primarily from a few prestigious universities, as small and medium-size companies find the path to growth strewn with impediments laid by dominant firms, and as economic activity abandons small towns and semi-rural communities for megacities, populism is emerging again. Politicians are scrambling to respond, but there is no guarantee that their proposals will move us in the right direction. As the 1930s made clear, there can be much darker alternatives to the status quo. If voters in decaying French villages and small-town America succumb to despair and lose hope in the market economy, they will be vulnerable to the siren song of ethnic nationalism or full-bore socialism, either of which would destroy the delicate balance between markets and the state. That will put an end to both prosperity and democracy.

The right response is not revolution, but rebalancing. Capitalism needs top-down reforms, such as updated antitrust regulation, to ensure that industries remain efficient and open to entry, and are not monopolized. But it also needs bottom-up policies to help economically devastated communities create new opportunities and maintain their members’ trust in the market economy. Populist criticism must be heeded, even if the radical proposals of populist leaders are not followed slavishly. This is essential to preserving both vibrant markets and democracy.

O-PED

By Carmen M. Reinhart

Explaining Inflation Inertia

CAMBRIDGE - The stubbornness of inflation continues to challenge and mystify central bankers worldwide. Whether they are trying to boost price growth or rein it in, policymakers are effectively wrestling with the same problem.

Consider Japan, which has experienced deflation (a decline in the price level) in 11 of the past 20 years. Since 2016, deflationary forces appear to have receded, but inflation rates have consistently remained well below the 2% target set by the Bank of Japan, despite accommodative policies. The BOJ has maintained the policy interest rate below zero since 2016, capped long-term rates near zero, and expanded the monetary base by about 250% since 2013 via record purchases of Japanese government bonds (JGBs). The BOJ now holds about 50% of the outstanding stock of government bonds. This is no small achievement, as Japan's government debt ratio, at 238% of GDP, is the highest in the world. And yet, despite these policies, inflation expectations five years out are still anchored close to 1%.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is Argentina's ongoing inflation battle. The Central Bank of Argentina (BCRA), in connection with an International Monetary Fund program in June 2018, promised to keep the monetary base unchanged. This has forced the policy rate to climb to almost 74%. Nonetheless, the annual inflation rate has accelerated from around 26% a year ago to about 55%.

The pick-up in inflation largely reflects higher import prices, as the peso crashed (plummeting about 115% against the US dollar during the 12 months that ended in March). But pass-through from the exchange rate to the price level is only part of the story. And an overheated economy has played no role at all. On the contrary, Argentina is grappling with a deep and lingering recession. The IMF expects GDP to shrink by 1.2% this year (following a larger contraction in 2018).

And yet, despite a credit crunch and other indications of tight monetary conditions and a recent spate of price controls, inflation remains close to 40%. Under President Mauricio Macri's administration, Argentina had a short-lived spell of inflation targeting during 2016-2018. When the scheme was unveiled, the 2019 target was set at within 1.5 percentage points of 5%. Credibility has been a problem.

Why have inflation expectations failed to respond to draconian changes in policies?

In 2001, one Argentina peso traded for one US dollar (see chart); today, one dollar costs around 44 pesos (a cumulative depreciation of over 4,000%). Since 2001, the Japanese yen has appreciated about 12% against the US dollar (and by almost 70% since the exchange rate began floating in 1971). Any modest amount of extrapolation would attach a low weight to a near-term yen crash or to a stable peso. During times of global financial market stress, there was a flight not only to US dollars (the global reserve currency), but also to yen (and Swiss francs). In 2008-2009, for example, nearly all other currencies crashed.

These secular exchange-rate trends reinforce existing preferences in saving-consumption patterns and asset allocation. In the case of Japan (prior to the more recent era of negative real interest rates), they allowed savers to maintain the purchasing power of their savings. They also help to explain the strong Japanese bias toward domestic, yen-denominated assets.

As for Argentina, chronic inflation and currency depreciation have cemented a clear preference for the US dollar as a store of value. The compulsory pesoization in January 2002 (when existing US dollar deposits and loans in the domestic banking sector were forcibly converted to pesos) provided only a temporary and artificial reduction in the domestic use of the US dollar. Saving rates are low, and a nontrivial share of private savings is held outside the country. As Christoph Trebesch and I have highlighted, reliance on fickle foreign saving does not help with currency instability or external indebtedness.

So, what can governments do to induce turning points in stubborn inflation expectations when central banks' policies prove insufficient to the task?

In the case of Japan, convincing the private sector that higher inflation is the path of the future requires a break from the current practice of indexing public-sector wages to the previous year's inflation. Bold increases in public-sector wages may provide the official signal that has been lacking, with private-sector wage and price setting following suit. The very fact that such a measure would run counter to fiscal prudence in such a highly indebted country might help undermine the entrenched trend toward yen appreciation. Higher inflation has to be part of the solution to the existing overhang of public and private debt.

As for Argentina, to avoid fueling a classic wage-price spiral, de-indexation requires significant reductions in real wages, starting with the public sector. The political difficulty of doing this (especially when the public sector is large, as it is in Argentina) is daunting at the best of times; in an election year, there is (at least as far I am aware) limited historical precedent for it. Apart from dampening inflation expectations, real wage cuts mitigate the real exchange-rate appreciation (loss of competitiveness) that often accompanies disinflation plans. For a country like Argentina, facing increasing difficulties in global capital markets, current-account deficits are a luxury.

Perhaps inflation expectations are stubbornly high (or low) because the public has learned to extrapolate from another historical trend: governments tend to avoid making difficult choices.

OPINION

By Harold James

Stories That Can't End Well

PRINCETON - In today's irrational world of fake news and bad-faith politics, a new mantra has emerged: It's all about narratives. Power today lies in one's ability to tell a story. As a case in point, consider Ukrainian President-elect Volodymyr Zelensky, a comedian whose only political experience is that he played a president on TV. Zelensky beat the incumbent, Petro Poroshenko, because he knew how to spin a yarn.

Today's performative politics represent a sharp break from a century in which social science drove governance. Until recently, policymakers sought to provide empirically compelling - albeit often simplified - assessments of problems such as poverty, disease, and violence, in order to build political support for evidence-based solutions.

After the 1930s, this technocratic approach was shaped by economists who used national income accounting to manage macroeconomic conditions. Relying on a straightforward conceptual framework developed by the British economist John Maynard Keynes, they saw deficient demand as the root cause of underemployment and overcapacity. At the same time, they abided by an economic orthodoxy that linked monetary growth to inflation. In both cases, there was a simple causal mechanism, embodied in the Phillips curve, for controlling unemployment and prices.

Keynesianism fell out of favor during the stagflation of the 1970s, when both unemployment and inflation rose simultaneously in the US and other advanced economies. And though the 2008 financial crisis occasioned what Keynes's biographer, Robert Skidelsky, described as a "return of the master," momentum toward a new Keynesianism proved short-lived. Instead, the world embarked on a massive experiment in monetary easing.

Meanwhile, policymakers during the post-crisis years became deeply ambivalent toward fiscal deficits. On one hand, they worried that debt levels in some countries were unsustainably high; on the other hand, they took solace in the notion that a world awash in easy money should be able to finance its way out of anything.

But this policy confusion and reliance on illusory arithmetic recalls the Soviet experience of the 1920s and 1930s. In the Soviet planned economy, prices were set by the state, and the interest on capital was effectively zero. This meant that the cost of financing was the same for a grandiose infrastructure project as it was for anything else. And so, in planning a railroad, engineers would pull out all the stops, proposing tunnels through mountains just to avoid ever having to go uphill.

Needless to say, reality soon caught up with the authorities. As more and more projects went uncompleted, Soviet planners tried to cover up the failures by simply declaring them a success. But they looked clueless, and the result was a loss of confidence in technocrats generally.

The 2008 financial crisis produced a similar loss of confidence. A deeply complex event with many causes, the only way to explain it was to tell a straightforward story. Hence, many people came to believe that the crash had discredited conventional economics in its entirety. The reality was more complicated. To be sure, economists in the lead-up to 2008 had neglected money and finance; but standard (and older) economic models are still enormously effective in assessing the impact of policy. What was discredited, then, was a specific analytical approach that relied on too little data when calculating risk.

Humans are wired to be influenced by stories. Having finally recognized this fact, international bodies such as the World Economic Forum, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank now organize their annual meetings around the quest for a new "narrative" to replace neoliberalism.

Historians, of course, have always understood the power of narrative. Ancient Rome owed its primacy to the poet Virgil as much as to Augustus Caesar; and seventeenth-century England derived more of its strength from Shakespeare and the King James Bible than from Queen Elizabeth. And yet, today's new narratives may be too ambitious, tracing contemporary shortcomings to fundamental and ancient problems such as greed - a basic emotion that previously went by the name of avarice - and institutions that have existed for centuries.

Unfortunately, this is one of the consequences of the financial crisis. The sheer depth of political and economic uncertainty turned historians into pundits whose critiques of conventional social science are overly biased toward random pet narratives. Worse, many historians have begun to lend their academic authority to policy prescriptions that are even more problematic than anything pre- or post-crisis economists ever proposed.

For example, by peddling fallacious assertions about the centrality of sovereignty in Britain's constitutional tradition, a number of prominent historians have played a devastating role in precipitating the Brexit crisis. They would have British voters believe that leaving the European Union is no different than Henry VIII's declaration of sovereignty in opposition to the Roman pontiff.

If historians are going to participate in high-stakes political debates, they should provide a broader context for understanding the issues. When they advance simple narratives that imply specific policy prescriptions, they are even more dangerous than social scientists.

Partial historical knowledge pressed into the service of national myths - the Reformation or the 1992 Exchange Rate Mechanism crisis as a model for Brexit; the Battle of Poltava for contemporary Russia - causes confusion, sows discord, and inflicts harm. With a growing chorus of flimflam artists pushing such "scholarship," it is incumbent on all sober and cautious commentators to set the historical record straight.

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EU, Liberia Hold 7TH Political Dialogue

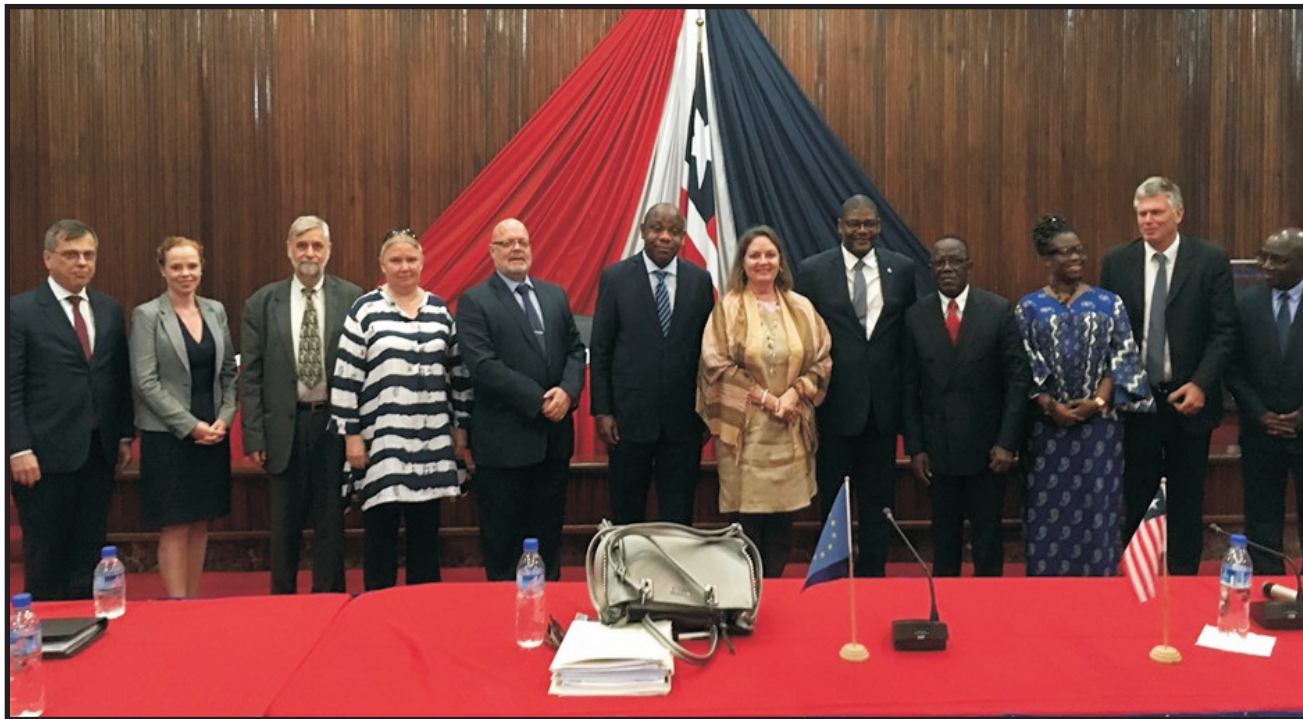
The Government of Liberia and the European Union has held their Seventh EU-Liberia Political Dialogue aimed at strengthening the existing bilateral ties and cooperation between the two parties.

According to a Foreign Ministry release, the Seventh EU-Liberia Political Dialogue which took place on Monday, May 6th was convened in the C. Cecil Dennis' Auditorium at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Members of the Liberian Government's delegation at the forum were Finance and Development Planning Samuel Tweah; Labor Minister Moses Y. Kollie; Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection Ms. WilliamettaPisoSaydee-Tarr as well as Hon. Wesley Momo Johnson of the Governance Commission and a host of other officials of the Liberian Government.

There were also representatives from the Justice Ministry and the National investment commission at the deliberation.

Members of the European Union delegation included the



following: the Ambassador of the Republic of France, H. E. Terrence Wills; the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, H.E. Mr. David Belgrove; The Charge d'Affaire of the Federal Republic of Germany, M r. GuenterPlambeck and the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium, Hugues Chantry among other EU Diplomats in Liberia.

Liberia's Foreign Minister, Gbehzohngar Milton

Findley, led the Liberian Government delegation at the dialogue, while the EU Ambassador accredited to Liberia, Her Excellency Hélène Cavé headed the European Union Delegation at the one day event.

The Seventh Political Dialogue was co-chaired by Minister Findley and EU Ambassador to Liberia, Ms. Helene Cave.

At the Dialogue, the two sides discussed critical

economic, political and social issues including "Creating the Conditions for Broad-Based Economic Growth and Job Creation - measures aimed at fostering an enabling business investment environment; Private Sector Development; Good Governance; Accountability and Transparency.

Other issues deliberated at the just ended Dialogue were the Post-Cotonou Negotiation and the Schengen Visas issues among others. The two parties also highlighted the state of the Liberian Economy and the country 2019/20 National Budget.

Speaking at the dialogue, Foreign Minister Findley extolled the European Union and its member states for the many bilateral assistance it has rendered and continues to provide the Government and people of Liberia.

Minister Findley told the meeting that Liberia will continue its bilateral engagements with the EU member countries aimed at promoting the country's 'Pro-poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development.

Making closing remarks, Minister Findley added "Let me first of all thank you Madam Ambassador and members of the EU delegation; I would also like to thank all Ministers and heads of Government entities here present from the Liberian side. Today, once again Madam Ambassador we have been able to sit openly and to discuss those issues that are affecting our bilateral relationship and to some extent our multilateral relationship with the European Union;

The Dean of the Cabinet expressed delight over the progress the two sides made together at the dialogue.

He indicated that since last July, both the EU and GOL have had open and frank discussions on the EU-Liberia relations

stressing "we will continue to work together to improve the living condition of the Liberian people".

The Minister who co-chaired the dialogue revealed that President George Manneh Weah cannot over emphasize his concerns about the EU-Liberia relationship and has expressed his desire to continue to engage with the Union to solve the differences with the European Union.

"We will continue to liaise with you as partners to help improve the living condition of the Liberian people," he added.

For her part, the Head of EU Delegation expressed delight over the engagement and stated that "we have addressed critical issues of concern including political, social and economic and human rights.

The purpose is to make progress together on a platforms where questions and answers are raised from both sides and exchanges are made; we are building the country together, she said.

Ambassador Hélène Cavé then commended the Liberian Government for systematically addressing the EU concerns. She expressed hope that the next dialogue would take place at a reasonable time frame with the view to take note of development taking place in the course of six months in Liberia, adding "our assistance are linked to this".

During the opening deliberation, the Government of Liberia briefed the EU delegation on state of the economy, the country's national budget as well as the Liberian business climate. The GOL also highlighted some of the challenges the country is faced with and efforts the Weah-led administration is making in addressing some of the problems.

The European Union, for its part, underlined the importance of creating friendly business environment to enable investors come to Liberia and appreciated receiving an update from the Government on the efforts being made thus far.

The Liberian Government also informed the meeting about the condition of people in pre-trial detention in Liberia and the challenges faced by the Liberian government in dealing with the situation.

On this note, the European Union committed to continue its support for Government's efforts to address these challenges.

Koijee warns opposition

By Lewis S. Teh

Monrovia City Mayor Jefferson T. Koijee is warning protesters here to desist from staging the June 7 protest which is being planned by the Council of Patriots.

Speaking Sunday evening, 5 May in West Point, Koijee said if opposition believe that "this government is underperforming and has brought hardship" on the Liberian people, they should challenge the ruling Coalition for Democratic Change (CDC)

at the ballot box.

"But don't push this country into chaos with your so-called June 7 protest," Koijee warned during his visit in West Point, Montserrado County District #7 where he was warmly welcomed by residents that were chanting slogans.

His comment comes against a plan by some Liberians to stage protest beginning June 7 to demand some meaningful change in the way the state is being governed.

Koijee alleges that the

decision by the opposition to hide under the canopy of Council of Patriots to plan a protest on June 7 is meant to push the country into chaos, rather than good.

He criticizes opposition of allegedly hiding their true identity to stage a protest, noting that during the CDC's days in opposition, it did not hide its identify when partisans wanted to protest.

Meanwhile, Mayor Koijee has mocked the opposition by appealing on their behalf to the Ministry of Justice to allow the Council of Patriots to carry out their protest.

Koijee says if the Council of Patriots come one time, the CDC will come out 10 times and will show itself.

"I challenge any member of the four collaborating parties calling themselves opposition to get on the ballot and contest, only if they claim that this government has lost its popularity," says Koijee.

He narrates that sitting in the back to throw stone at the government is not the right thing for the opposition to do.

Koijee told residents of District #7 that his mission there was to visit, interact with residents and to know how they are doing.--Edited by Winston W. Parley



Mayor Jefferson T. Koijee

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Liberia hosts ICE 22nd Session

By Lewis S. Teh

The 22nd Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of West Africa kicks off at the Farmington Hotel in Harbel, Margibi County, Liberia.

The session is being held under the theme, "National Capacities and Mechanisms in Evaluating Progress in the Implementation of Agendas 2030 and 2063: Assessment of Challenges and Prospects in West Africa."

Addressing cross section of participants at the formal opening on May 6, 2019, the Director for the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa or (ECA) Bakary Dosso, told participants that the ICE is a body established by the United Nations General Assembly.

He says the two-day session will discuss recent developments likely to impact economic and social development in West Africa, with a view to identifying major challenges to be addressed and to propose guidelines for accelerating



sustainable development in the region through the transformation of the economies of West Africa.

Mr. Dosso continues that the SDGs represent an unprecedented opportunity to eliminate extreme poverty and put the world on the path to sustainable development.

He thanks the Government of Liberia for hosting the

meeting of experts from West Africa to discuss what he terms a topic of great interest to the sub-region.

Giving a rough estimate of West Africa, he indicates that it shows out of an estimated population of 377 million in 2018, just over 200 million or 53.5 percent of the people lives below the national poverty line, something he

notes demonstrates the magnitude of the challenges of everyone.

Accordingly, he adds that countries in the sub-region need to make major reforms in their macroeconomic and financial frameworks; invest in human capital, tackle infrastructure deficits, improve business climates to meet challenges and positively and sustainably reverse trends.

Mr. Dosso explains success lies in the ability of the national leadership to execute on time, monitor and evaluate implementation of the different agendas to which the regional body has committed for the transformation of member countries and the continent at large.

He points out that institutional capacity for evaluation and monitoring of development agendas has been identified as one of the missing links in development processes in West Africa.

The ICE meets annually to discuss economic and social performance, based on working documents prepared by the Sub-regional Office for West Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa.

For her part, Liberia's Deputy Minister of Finance for Budget and Planning Ms. Tanneh Brunson asserts that Liberia, as a member state of ECOWAS, remains deeply

committed to continuing her partnership with sub-regional bodies.

She lauds the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for its continuous support to Liberia in making sure that the country simultaneously achieves the United Nations 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

She says the Government of Liberia has adopted the global and continental frameworks of the U.N. 2030 Agenda and the A.U. 2063 Agenda, among others.

According to her, the A.U. 2063 Agenda is developed as a vision for "The Africa We Want" by Heads of State in May 2013, as a long-term development framework that aims to materialize Africa's vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the world.

The SDGs, she explains, speaks to socioeconomic development issue and reflects stronger environmental concerns, adding that government is committed to development despite current challenges.

The Sub-regional Office for West Africa, based in Niamey, covers the 15 member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Experts from these member States form the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts of West Africa.

The ECA, established by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, is one of five United Nations regional commissions mandated to promote the economic and social development of Africa. Its five sub-regional offices translate its normative and analytical work into operational activities in the sub-region. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Muslims applaud police chief Sudue

The Muslim Community comprising the Grand Mufti, Muslims and Imams Councils has praised Police Inspector General Patrick Sudue for his exceptional leadership in protecting lives and properties.

The appraisal of Col. Sudue's leadership was done at a meeting convened by the Liberia National Police to ensure security arrangements for Muslims across the country during the observance of this year's Holy Month of Ramadan.

The police say in a press release that the heads of the

Muslim groups in the meeting included the Grand Mufti of Liberia, Sheikh Abubakar Mory D. Sumaworo, the head of the Imams Council, Iman Ali Krayee, and the Secretary General of the Muslim Council, Sheikh Arkibu Sheriff.

Speaking during the meeting, the Grand Mufti of Liberia, Sheikh Abubakar Mory D. Sumaworo was full of praises for the distinct leadership of Col. Patrick Sudue as head of the Liberia National Police, describing him as one of the best Inspector Generals in the history of Liberia.

The soft-talking Grand Mufti noted that since Col. Sudue took the leadership mantle of the LNP, he has been very proactive and creative in the discharge of his duties which has helped greatly in the fight against crimes and abuse.

For his part, the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Liberia appreciated the leadership of the LNP for prioritizing the Muslim community especially during the observance of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

He called on IG Sudue to continue his great works in providing effective security services for the people of Liberia.

Also speaking, the head of the Imam Council of Liberia, Imam Ali Krayee applauded IG Sudue for his great works. He used the occasion to recount the great efforts of IG Sudue in providing security for Muslims during last year's observance of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

In remarks, IG Sudue appreciated the Muslim leaders for recognizing his great leadership role.

He said his idea of providing security for Muslims at various Mosques is aimed at providing a space where they can commute to their various places of worship without being attacked or their

personal effects taken away from them by criminals.

IG Sudue observed that during time past, Muslims have been victimized during the observance of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

He indicated that some of them have been physically attacked while some have lose their shoes, slippers, phones and other personal effects while in their attitudes of

prayer.

The LNP IG recounted that since the activation of his Ramadan security operation, it has succeeded in ensuring total security for all Muslims across the country.

He concluded his meeting by donating seven full package hijab and 30 bags of rice as the LNP's contribution to the Muslim community. **--Press release**



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

CDC commends U.S. Ambassador Elder

The National Executive Committee of the Coalition for Democratic Change terms as appropriate and timely, Monday's (06 May) statement by the Embassy of the United States of America, encouraging 'All Liberians to reflect on their role in constructively contributing to development and sustaining peace'.

CDC national chairman Mulbah Morlu in an official statement Tuesday, May 07, notes that the leadership of the Coalition for Democratic Change reiterates this important concern raised by the United States Embassy against divisive rhetoric, as such, the CDC calls on all officials and members to avoid unhealthy or inciting political utterances that could undermine peace, security and the mutual coexistence of all Liberians.

In what seems clearly as a contradiction, Chairman Morlu himself publicly accused former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf recently of funding protesters gearing



U.S. Amb. Christine Elder

up to assemble in Monrovia on 07 June, but the Minister of Information Lenn Eugene Nagbe swiftly rebuked him, dismissing his [Morlu's] assertion as untrue

In reference to suspended Minister Fahngon's reprehensible tribal rhetoric, the ruling Coalition says as a mass-based democratic

institution inspired into existence by the ideas of a just, free and equitable society for all, makes clear that it has no space for 'Congau-Native' politics, and rejects any politics that stirs division.

However, it lauds President Weah for the suspension of Deputy Minister Fahngon, and

believes it's a step in the right direction, reaffirming the CDC-led government's unshaken commitment to a 'One country, one people policy'.

"Within this framework, the CDC reminds all partisans of its already-stated position on the status quo, which unequivocally denounces any plan for counter-protest that may only serve the unscrupulous agenda of a few. While the CDC respects the rights to peaceful assembly, it however, cautions all Liberians against any unauthorized protest, especially in view of the British Government's security alert on Liberia," the statement adds.

Meanwhile, the leadership of the CDC, while calling for the practice of impartial journalism, nonetheless reaffirms the CDC's unflinching commitment to free speech, and calls on all partisans to be tolerant of criticisms as [they] work to strengthen the democratic gains [they] fought to achieve.

Meanwhile, ahead of National Unification Day, the CDC encourages all partisans, sympathizers and supporters to be reconciliatory in words and actions, and continue to show tolerance while using various platforms, especially social

media, utilizing dialogue and other forms of constructive engagement as best mechanisms through which contending national issues may be addressed.

In a statement Monday, the Embassy of the United States warns, "It is unacceptable for Senator Prince Y. Johnson, Representative Yekeh Kolubah, "ex-generals" or other former actors in Liberia's civil wars to incite unlawful acts through ill-considered rhetoric that could jeopardize Liberia's hard-won peace and security."

The statement specifically notes that it is equally irresponsible for people within leadership positions in government or the ruling party to promote such division as suspended Deputy Minister Eugene Fahngon has done on social media, adding, "To take such a public stance and suggest it is a private opinion or a personal right reflects a misunderstanding of the nature of public service in a democracy."

The Executive Mansion on Monday suspended Deputy Minister of Information Eugene Fahngon for time indefinite, immediately after the statement from the Embassy of the United States. *-Editing by Jonathan Browne*

West African Journalists Want AfCFTA agreement ratified

Members of the ECOWAS Economic Journalists Network have called on countries that have not ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA), to consider doing so without any further delay.

The call by the ECOWAS Economic Journalists Network comes in the wake of the fast approaching official launch of the AfCFTA, scheduled for July 2019 in Niamey, Niger, on the sidelines of the Summit of

Heads of State and Government of the African Union.

According to a press release, the implementation of the AfCFTA is expected to lead to increase in the volume of exports by US\$35 billion per year, representing 52% of exports, and the reduction of imports by US\$10 billion.

Making the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement workable through ratification by all member countries will also see

agricultural and industrial exports increased from US\$4 billion to US\$21 billion.

Knowledgeable minds and their likes in the field of economics strongly believe that such development has the potential to create employment and wealth on the African continent.

With average tariffs at 6.1%, companies currently face higher tariffs when exporting goods within Africa, while they pay lower tariffs when they export goods outside the continent.

The release indicates that the AfCFTA, a flagship project, carved out of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) scheduled for 2022 and mainly included in Agenda 2063 of the African Union, has enormous advantages and potentials.

"These enormous advantages and potentials include significantly increasing intra-African trade, and also stimulating and encouraging investment, innovation, and the structural transformation of African economies in order to improve food security, economic growth, exports diversification and the rationalization of the trade regimes of the economic communities," the release notes.



it further discloses that it is also in the spirit of a dynamic and expanding trade in Africa that the ECOWAS Economic Journalists Network is urging signatory countries to consider negotiating, among other things, the aspects and modalities of the implementation of this agreement, including rules of origin, payment terms, tariff concessions for merchandise trade and settlement and non-tariff barriers.

The press release continues that political and economic pundits also believe that the AfCFTA will give birth to a large single and common continental market, and has the potential for the economic integration of 1.2 billion people, representing a gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$2.5 trillion in all the 55 African Union Member States.

"The Network of Economic

Journalists for West Africa would like to take the opportunity to thank the Sub-regional Office for West Africa of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (SRO-WA/ECA), for having organized a workshop on the AfCFTA for journalists from West Africa in February 2019 in Monrovia (Liberia), in collaboration with the Government of Liberia and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)," a release from Niamey (Niger), said.

The release concludes that the Monrovia workshop, among other things enabled the Network, not only to understand the innovations and opportunities of the AfCFTA, but also, through the various communication materials, to enhance the awareness of the populations of ECOWAS. *--Press release*

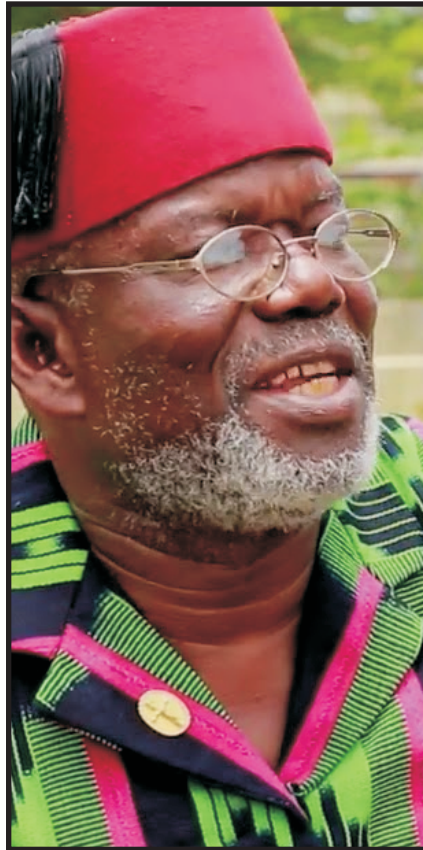
Français

« Inacceptable ! », le gouvernement américain tape du poing sur la table

Le sénateur Prince Yormie Johnson, ancien chef de guerre, le représentant Yekeh Kolubah, les soi-disant « ex-généraux » et le vice-ministre suspendu Eugene Fahngon peuvent être de honte après avoir été vivement grondés comme des enfants par l'ambassade des États-Unis près de Monrovia pour les propos qu'ils ont tenus récemment en public, lesquels propos risquent de compromettre la paix et la sécurité du Libéria.

Ces personnalités de l'Etat du Libéria ont, dans leurs discours politiques irresponsables, livré des messages de haine, tenu des propos incendiaires, prôné la violence, proféré des menaces et semé la discorde sur les ondes et les médias sociaux.

Dans une déclaration publiée le lundi 6 mai, l'ambassade des États-Unis a déclaré que ceux qui promeuvent, par leurs propos ou leurs actes, une division entre les Congos (descendants d'exclaves affranchis) et les



indigènes n'ont pas à cœur l'intérêt supérieur du Libéria encore moins de leurs administrés, mais semblent plutôt animés soit par des ambitions personnelles ou par la peur.

« Il est inacceptable que le sénateur Prince Y. Johnson, le

représentant Yekeh Kolubah et les "ex-généraux" ou autres anciens acteurs des guerres civiles du Libéria incitent à des actes répréhensibles par des discours irréfléchis qui risquent de mettre en péril la paix et la sécurité du Libéria gagnées au prix de

grands sacrifices », peut-on lire dans la déclaration.

A la déclaration d'insister qu'il est tout aussi irresponsable de la part des personnes qui occupent des postes de responsabilité au sein du gouvernement ou du parti au pouvoir de promouvoir une division comme le sous-ministre Eugene Fahngon, sur les médias sociaux. « Adopter une telle position publique et suggérer qu'il s'agit d'une opinion personnelle ou un droit personnel met en exergue sa méconnaissance de la nature du service public dans une démocratie », a ajouté la déclaration.

Le chef de l'exécutif a suspendu lundi le vice-ministre de l'Information, Eugene Fahngon, pour une durée indéterminée, immédiatement après la déclaration de l'ambassade des États-Unis.

Pendant ce temps, alors que les Libériens célèbrent la Journée de l'unification nationale la semaine prochaine, l'ambassade des États-Unis encourage tous les Libériens à réfléchir sur leur rôle dans la contribution constructive au développement et au maintien de la paix dans le pays.

Les activités économiques du Libéria sont mises en berne en raison de la probable manifestation publique que

prépare un groupe de Libériens réunis sous la bannière du « Conseil des patriotes (COP) » pour, dit-on, attirer l'attention de l'administration Weah sur « la mauvaise gouvernance, la corruption, la mauvaise gestion des ressources de l'État et les violations flagrantes de la Constitution », entre autres.

Le COP, dans une lettre datée du 24 avril 2019 adressée au ministre de la Justice, Frank Musa Dean, a déclaré : « Nous vous écrivons pour vous informer de notre intention de tenir une réunion pacifique qui devrait commencer le vendredi 7 juin 2019 et qui pourrait durer plusieurs jours à Monrovia. »

A la lettre de poursuivre : « Au cours de ce rassemblement pacifique, nous avons l'intention de présenter nos doléances au président et aux responsables des pouvoirs législatif et judiciaire sous forme d'une pétition écrite. »

Mais le Ministre garde des sceaux Frank Musa Dean, dans sa réponse officielle rendue publique le mercredi 01 mai, a fait valoir que les conseillers et les membres du COP, qui ont signé la communication, n'ont aucune autorité pour représenter une organisation et / ou un organisme non constitué en organisation. Au ministre d'ajouter : « Par conséquent, pour se conformer aux procédures légales, il faut que la demande soit faite à travers des responsables statutaires du "Conseil des patriotes", après avoir fourni au ministère de la Justice la documentation indiquant que cette organisation est dûment constituée et régie par le droit de la République du Libéria. »

Il a ajouté que les signataires de la lettre peuvent choisir de présenter la demande sous leur propre nom, en tant que groupe de citoyens libériens.

Mais certains observateurs pensent que la position du ministère de la Justice est une tactique qui vise à refuser l'autorisation aux manifestants pour se réunir pacifiquement le 7 juin, comme ils l'avaient annoncé. Le COP maintient que la manifestation aura lieu comme prévu.

Le ministre Fahngon suspendu

Le président George Manneh Weah a immédiatement suspendu pour un temps indéfini le controversé vice-ministre de l'Information chargé de la Presse et des Affaires publiques, Eugene Fahngon.

Selon un communiqué de presse publié le 6 mai par The Executive Mansion, le

président Weah a déclaré l'attachement de son gouvernement à la politique de « un pays, un peuple » avec le principe de la tolérance zéro en matière de politique de discorde ou de tribalisme.

Le président Weah a profité de l'occasion pour mettre en garde les représentants du gouvernement et tous les

citoyens contre toute velléité divisionniste et tribaliste ou ethnocentrique.

La décision du président Weah de suspendre M. Fahngon fait suite à des propos controversés tenu par ce dernier sur les réseaux sociaux concernant la manifestation prévue le 7 juin. Ses propos avaient tendance à semer la discorde entre les Congos (descendants des esclaves affranchis) et les autochtones.

M. Fahngon fait partie des représentants du gouvernement et de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique (CDC, parti au pouvoir) dont les propos ont été condamnés par l'ambassade américaine près de Monrovia.

En voici un extrait : « Vous avez tué 250 000 personnes de notre peuple autochtone et vous êtes libres. Nous protégerons notre président, notre gouvernement et notre pays !!! Pourquoi faut-il que ce soit un groupe de personnes tout le temps ? N'est-il pas citoyen libérien aussi ? Est-ce parce qu'il s'appelle Manneh Weah ? ... ». Ces mots écrits sur Facebook le



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4 mai ont clairement tendance à insinuer que le président Weah est combattu

parce qu'il est d'origine autochtone.

Français

Éditorial

Les politiciens libériens rappelés à l'ordre

Les États-Unis mettent en garde contre toute incitation à « des actes répréhensibles à travers des propos irréfléchis ayant la tendance de mettre en péril la paix et la sécurité du Libéria gagnées au prix de grands sacrifices ».

L'ambassade des États-Unis près de Monrovia s'est dite préoccupée par les propos qui se tiennent partout sur toutes les chaînes, avertissant que ces propos risquent d'entraver les progrès réalisés par le Libéria. Elle se dit convaincue que ceux qui, par leurs propos, veulent semer la division entre les libériens issus de la descendance des esclaves affranchis communément appelés « Congo » et les indigènes n'ont pas à cœur l'intérêt supérieur du Libéria encore moins de leurs administrés, ils semblent plutôt animés soit par des ambitions égoïstes personnelles ou par la peur.

Dans une déclaration rendue publique, l'ambassade a souligné spécifiquement qu'il est inacceptable que le sénateur Prince Y. Johnson, le représentant Yekeh Kolubah, les « ex-généraux » ou encore les autres anciens acteurs des guerres civiles qui ont endeuillé le Libéria se livrent à de tels actes. Il est également irresponsable de la part des cadres du gouvernement ou de la coalition au pouvoir de promouvoir une telle division, comme l'a fait le ministre adjoint de l'Information, Eugene Fahngon, sur les médias sociaux, selon l'ambassade.

En d'autres termes, les États-Unis exhortent les Libériens, en particulier les responsables gouvernementaux, à cesser leurs discours de haine et à promouvoir la paix, la réconciliation nationale et l'unité.

L'ancien président du Sénat, Cletus Wotorson a récemment exhorté les Libériens de tous les bords à apaiser la tension politique dans le pays et à se mettre au travail.

Mais le gouvernement semble fasciné par les propos incendiaires tenus par ses responsables, qui, au lieu de se concentrer sur la gestion des affaires de l'État, veulent réagir à tous les bruits que fait la population.

Le sénateur Prince Johnson revendique la propriété de son comté natal, Nimba, et menace donc tout parti politique de l'opposition qui tenterait de s'y rendre sans sa permission explicite. Il déclare pourtant souscrire aux principes de la démocratie qui autorisent le pluralisme et les points de vue opposés.

Quant au sous-ministre suspendu Fahngon, il a le plaisir de tenir des propos haineux et de division sur les réseaux sociaux, tout en croyant quelque part dans son cerveau que ce sont des opinions personnelles. Même s'il s'agissait des points de vue personnels, pour l'amour de Dieu, ne peuvent-ils pas être imbibés ne serait-ce d'un peu de civilité d'autant plus qu'ils sont tenus dans un espace public? De fait, qui lui a dit que les médias sociaux sont un espace privé?

Nos dirigeants se sont rabaissés si bas au point qu'ils sont maintenant réprimandés par des étrangers et des partenaires étrangers pour leurs propos irresponsables tenus en public. Sont-ils obsédés par les bureaux qu'ils occupent ou sont-ils ivres du pouvoir?

Comme l'a si bien dit l'ambassade américaine dans sa déclaration, le ministre Fahngon et ses semblables devraient prendre conscience du fait que "prendre une telle position publique et suggérer qu'il s'agit d'une opinion personnelle ou d'un droit personnel met en exergue sa méconnaissance de la nature du service public dans une démocratie".

COMMENTAIRE

Par Raghuram G. Rajan

Pourquoi le capitalisme a besoin du populisme

CHICAGO - Les plus grandes entreprises sont actuellement prises d'assaut aux États-Unis. Amazon a annulé son projet de nouveau siège dans le quartier du Queens à New York, face à une forte opposition locale. Lindsey Graham, sénatrice républicaine de Caroline du Sud, a soulevé des inquiétudes concernant la position de marché contestée de Facebook, tandis que sa collègue démocrate Elizabeth Warren, sénatrice du Massachusetts, a appelé au démantèlement de l'entreprise. Warren a également introduit une législation consistant à réserver aux employés 40 % des sièges aux conseils d'administration.

Ces propositions peuvent sembler hors de propos en terres de capitalisme et de libre marché, mais le débat actuel constitue exactement ce dont l'Amérique a besoin. Car tout au long de l'histoire du pays, c'est bien la critique du capitalisme qui a permis au système de fonctionner correctement, en luttant contre la concentration du pouvoir économique, et contre l'influence politique qu'elle confère. Lorsqu'une poignée de grandes sociétés domine une économie, ces entreprises finissent inévitablement par faire équipe avec les instruments du contrôle étatique, ce qui aboutit à une alliance contre nature d'élites des secteurs privé et public.

C'est ce qu'il s'est passé en Russie, qui n'est démocratique et capitaliste que de nom. En maintenant un contrôle total sur l'extraction des matières premières et le secteur bancaire, une oligarchie obéissant au Kremlin a exclu toute possibilité de véritable concurrence économique et politique. La Russie constitue en effet l'apothéose du problème que le président américain Dwight D. Eisenhower décrit en 1961 dans son discours de fin de mandat, lorsqu'il attire l'attention des Américains sur la nécessité de « [se] garder de toute influence injustifiée » exercée par le « complexe militaro-industriel », et sur « le risque de désastreuse ascension d'un pouvoir illégitime ».

De nombreux secteurs étant d'ores et déjà dominés par quelques grandes sociétés à succès, nous devons nous réjouir que les militants « démocrates-socialistes » et les contestataires populistes s'inspirent de l'avertissement formulé par Eisenhower. Pour autant, à la différence des sociétés en Russie, où les oligarques doivent leur fortune à la captation des actifs de l'État dans les années 1990, les géants américains en sont arrivés là grâce à leur productivité supérieure. C'est la raison pour laquelle les efforts réglementaires à fournir doivent être plus nuancés - et user davantage du scalpel que du marteau.

Plus précisément, à l'ère des chaînes logistiques mondiales, les grandes sociétés américaines bénéficient d'immenses économies d'échelle, d'effets de réseau, ainsi que de l'utilisation de données en temps réel permettant d'optimiser la performance et l'efficacité à tous les stades du processus de production. Une société comme Amazon apprend en permanence de ses données, pour minimiser les délais de livraison et améliorer la qualité de ses services. Confiante quant à sa relative supériorité par rapport à la concurrence, l'entreprise n'a pas réellement besoin des faveurs du gouvernement - ce qui explique pourquoi il arrive au fondateur d'Amazon, Jeff Bezos, d'approuver un Washington Post souvent très critique à l'égard de l'administration américaine.

Mais le fait que les plus grandes entreprises à succès soient aujourd'hui ultra-éfficientes ne signifie pas nécessairement qu'elle le resteront, particulièrement en l'absence de véritable concurrence. Les géants en place seront toujours tentés de pérenniser leur position via des pratiques anticoncurrentielles. En soutenant des législations telles que le Computer Fraud and Abuse Act de 1984 et le Digital Millennium Copyright Act de 1998, les sociétés leaders de l'Internet veillent à ce que les concurrents

ne gagnent pas leurs plateformes pour bénéficier d'effets de réseau produits par les utilisateurs. De même, après la crise financière de 2009, les grandes banques ont accepté l'inévitabilité d'une multiplication des réglementations, puis ont opéré un lobbying en faveur de règles qui se sont révélées augmenter les coûts de conformité, ce qui a désavantagé les concurrents de moindre envergure. Et maintenant que l'administration Trump dégage les tarifs douaniers sur les importations, les sociétés qui pèsent le plus peuvent influencer la question de savoir qui bénéficie d'une protection, et qui en supporte les coûts.

De manière générale, plus les droits de propriété intellectuelle, réglementations et tarifs douaniers définis par un État favorisent les profits d'une grande société - davantage que le fait sa productivité - et plus cette société devient dépendante de la bienveillance du gouvernement. La seule garantie d'efficacité et d'indépendance d'entreprise demain réside dans la concurrence aujourd'hui.

La pression exercée pour que l'État maintienne un capitalisme concurrentiel, et empêche son glissement naturel vers la domination d'une poignée d'entités dépendantes, provient généralement des citoyens ordinaires, qui s'organisent démocratiquement dans leurs communautés. Ne possédant pas l'influence de l'élite, ils aspirent souvent à plus de concurrence, ainsi qu'à un accès plus ouvert. Aux États-Unis, le mouvement populiste de la fin du XIXe siècle et le mouvement progressiste du début du XXe ont été des réactions à une monopolisation de secteurs majeurs tels que les chemins de fer et la banque. Ces mobilisations de base ont conduit à des réglementations telles que le Sherman Antitrust Act de 1890, le Glass-Steagall Act de 1933 (toutefois moins directement), ainsi qu'à des mesures visant à améliorer l'accès à l'éducation, à la santé, au crédit et aux opportunités d'affaires. En défendant la concurrence, ces mouvements ont non seulement conféré de la vie au capitalisme, mais également évité le risque d'autoritarisme corporatiste.

Aujourd'hui, à l'heure où les meilleurs emplois dérivent vers des grandes sociétés à succès qui embauchent principalement dans une poignée d'universités prestigieuses, à l'heure où les petites et moyennes entreprises arpentent vers la croissance un chemin semé d'obstacles érigés par les sociétés dominantes, et tandis que l'activité économique abandonne les petites villes et les communautés semi-rurales pour privilégier les mégapoles, le populisme émerge de nouveau. Les dirigeants politiques s'efforcent d'y répondre, mais rien ne garantit que leurs propositions nous orienteront dans la bonne direction. Comme l'ont clairement démontré les années 1930, il arrive que le statu quo cède la place à des alternatives beaucoup plus sombres. Si les électeurs des villages français et des petites villes américaines en déclin succombent au désespoir, s'ils perdent foi en l'économie de marché, ils deviendront vulnérables aux sirènes du nationalisme identitaire ou du socialisme à l'extrême, qui l'un ou l'autre seraient susceptibles d'anéantir l'équilibre délicat entre les marchés et l'État. Ceci mettrait fin à la fois à la prospérité et à la démocratie.

La juste réponse réside non pas dans une révolution, mais dans un rééquilibrage. Le capitalisme a besoin de réformes du sommet jusqu'à la base, telles qu'une modernisation de la réglementation antitrust, s'il entend veiller à ce que les secteurs demeurent efficaces, ouverts à l'entrée, et non monopolisés. Mais des politiques verticales ascendantes sont également nécessaires pour aider les communautés économiquement dévastées à bénéficier de nouvelles opportunités, et pour maintenir la confiance de leurs membres en l'économie de marché. La critique populiste doit être écoutée attentivement, même si les propositions les plus radicales des leaders populistes ne doivent pas être suivies naïvement. Cette démarche est essentielle si nous entendons maintenir pleinement en vie les marchés et la démocratie.

PERSPECTIVES

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

With Bai M. Gbala, Sr.
May 3, 2019

In his recent outburst, the arrogant, tough-talking Mr. MulbaMorlu, as Chairman of the ruling CDC Coalition Political Party, decried and attacked Mr. Benoni Urey for what he described as Mr. Urey's business relationship and political connections with the Lone Star Cell Telephone Company (*Front Page Africa*, May 1, 2019).

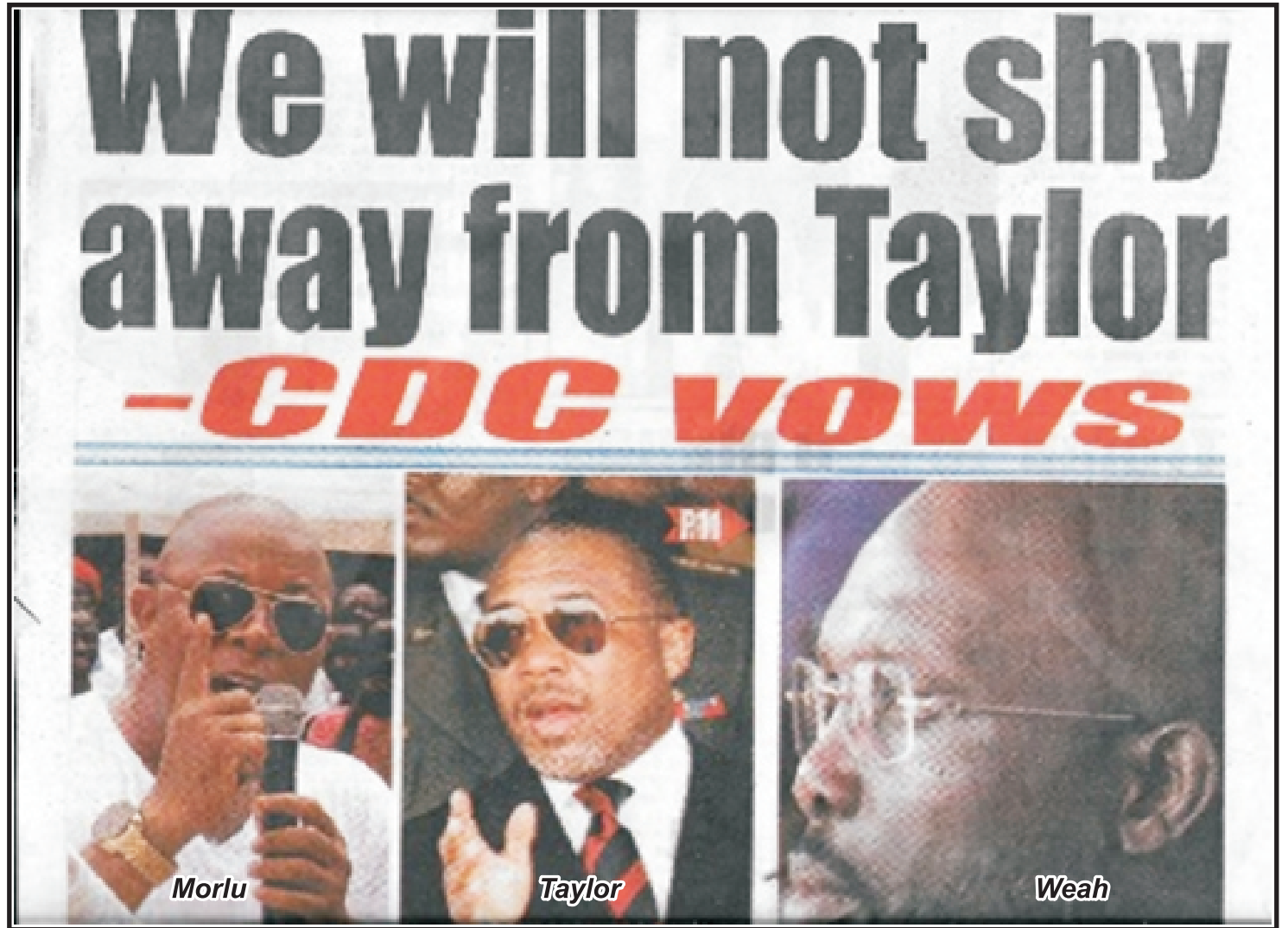
Mr. Urey, former Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Lone Star Company, is now Standard Bearer of the All Liberia (political) Party and Chairman of the Joint Membership of the major opposition political Parties, the leading organizers of planned national protest demonstration against the CDC Coalition Government scheduled for June 7, 2019.

There has been sustained controversy, with tough, antagonistic exchanges, about granting/denial permission for the planned protest demonstration between government authorities and the planers & supporters, inundated with several conspiracy theories by political Historians, Observers and Analysts about the possible, likely outcome of the protest, including overthrow or forced resignation of the CDC government. Thus, Chairman Morlu's attack upon Mr. Urey is, apparently, in response to and recognition of a threat to the CDC Coalition-led Government and his job.

Mr. Morlu's concerns and outburst of attack upon Mr. Urey and his (Mr. Urey's) alleged activities drew my attention; in that, Mr. Morlu's public ranting & raging is simply the belated barking of the-now toothless bull dog rendered powerless by its own acts of and cooperation with the Ureys, Taylors, Ellen Johnson-Sirleafs (former Presidents of Liberia) and, now, the current Government of which he, Mr. Morlu, is one of the most visible officials and sub-set.

The UN Report

Firstly, according to volumes of United Nation's validated, civil war evidence, Mr. Benoni Urey, as Commissioner of Liberia's Maritime Commission with LISCR, Liberia's shipping Agent, purchased the arms/ammunitions with stolen Commission/Public funds, with which rebels/insurgents brought extreme human suffering and death of an estimated quarter of a



million of Liberians; looted personal/public properties, including destruction of economic infrastructure; and sent another hundreds of millions into self-imposed exile in neighboring and distant lands.

Further, the UN Report showed that hundreds of millions of US dollars, also, stolen from the-then Maritime Commission under the administration of Mr. Urey as Commissioner, capitalized the Lone Star cell telephone Company with former President Taylor, Mr. Urey and others as major shareholders. It is important to note that, apparently, Mr. Taylor is being paid annual dividends by Lone Star while in prison for political crimes against humanity, including Liberian humanity.

Moreover, LISCR, Liberia's shipping agent with close

traditional ties extended to the-now Liberia Maritime Authority, is still in Liberia with offices on Tubman Boulevard with its sponsored Liberian Football Club and legal counsel of a well-known "politically-connected" lawyer, the Senator who represents a rural County but lives in a Mansion on Tubman Boulevard in Congo Town. By and through the celebrated politically-connected legal counsel, LISCR's agency agreement with Liberia was renewed, lately, with reported bribes of imported bags of rice and thousands of US dollar payments.

Lone Star Company

Importantly, the Company has been, and is, in reported collusion with leading officials of government (the MulbaMorlus) with respect to scratch cards and questionable payments designed to maintain monopoly and prevent introduction of Land Line Telephone system in Liberia which will re-introduce the system with published telephone directory for easy access to government offices - the Police & security agencies, medical and social relief agencies - and socio-economic and business organizations such as lawyers, architects/engineers, hospitals, clinics & doctors, food, clothing, furniture and related household needs.

Moreover, telephone and internet connectivity in Liberia is not only very poor, but also, without rational, public policy regulated approach. Examples are the corrupt telecommunication agencies - LTA, Ministry of Post & Telecommunications and related others. But modern communications are an asset in national economic and political development.

Efficient/effective communication drives the economy which, in turn, drives the nation. In fact, no prudent investment promoter will venture into a community or nation which is without capital-saving utilities - national transport/communication, electricity, telephone/internet, water & sewer, etc.

The critical question is that, in all of these questionable national economic and political wheeling/dealing predicaments, where was, has been and is, the arrogant, loud-mouth MulbaMorlu?



No plan to meet protesters

By Ethel A. Tweh

Liberia's President George Manneh Weah says he has no plan to meet with protesters that are seeking to assemble beginning 7 June to demand a number of reforms in government.

His comment came in an interview with journalists on Capitol Hill Tuesday, 7 May after meeting with members of the Liberian Senate and discussed several national issues.

In the wake of panic among Liberians over the pending June 7 Protest, suggestions have been coming in from different quarters of the society for a dialogue between the government and the protesters.

Allegations of corruption, the poor state of the economy and a US\$25m mop - up exercise are among many other reasons why opposition and critics of President Weah's regime are saying they will protest and make demands for some reforms



here.

While President Weah says he has no plan of meeting with the protesters, he, however, suggests that there is a need to dialogue for the peace of the country.

He notes that it is the

constitutional right of the people to protest.

He says he is moved by the June 7 protest, as he reflects on the April 12, 1980 protest in Liberia.

The violent historical event referenced by President Weah

records a coup d'etat when sitting President William Tolbert was overthrown and murdered.

"We know what protest did in Liberia on April 12, 1990," he says.

Briefing the press on the closed door meeting with the President, Senate President Pro-Tempore Albert C. Chie says the meeting was in line with the spirit of the constitution of Liberia which calls for coordination among the three branches of Government.

Pro-Tempore Chie says the Senate presented to the President issues of national concerns and interest which include justice and security, economic situation, status of investigation report on the LRD\$16 billion and the US\$25 million intended to mop up excess Liberian dollars from the market.

Additionally he says the Senate presented issues of the withdrawal of the Tenured Bill, the assessment of the performance of current government officials, government of inclusion, the United Nations letter regarding the management of funds, proposal for a national

reconciliation conference and information dissemination from the government to its people.

Following the Senate's presentation, Pro-Tempore Chie discloses that President Weah committed himself to the resolution of the issues raised in the interest of the people of Liberia.

According to Pro-Tempore Chief, former Pro-Tempore Cletus Wotorson's request to the Senate [to calm the tension here] helped to re-enforce the Senate's meeting with the President, indicating that they already had such plan.

Sen. Chie adds that the Senate's leadership met with the advisors of the Council of Patriots (COP) that are also members of the Liberian Senate, including Senators Sando Johnson (Bomi), and Daniel Naatehn, Sr, (Gbarpolu).

According to Sen. Chief, Margibi County Sen. Oscar Cooper was not in the meeting.

The President Pro-Tempore concludes that some of the things that were discussed with the advisors of the COP were the same issues they put forth to President Weah.--*Edited by Winston W. Parley*

Over 4,000 to face salaries cut

By Winston W. Parley

The office of President George Manneh Weah says some 4,140 higher - earning government employees will be affected by salaries cut in government's new measures seeking to synchronize pay system and to revamp the economy.

"The cut will affect higher - earning government employees in the Executive Branch. We want to underscore that ... Considering, uh, some 4,140 out of 71,000 plus employees," Deputy Presidential Press Secretary Smith Toby told a press briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tuesday, 7 May.

In announcing the new government austerity measure, Toby laments that

what was planned in the past 12 years is what President Weah's government is reaping today, in his attempt to find a cause for today's economic challenges facing the new administration.

"Those who understand the economy will tell you that, uh, what was being planned or implemented in 12 years or in six years is what we are reaping right now," he says.

The Deputy Presidential Press Secretary explains that the economic condition of the state was not manufactured by the Weah led - government, recalling that President Weah has said time without number that he inherited a bad economy.

In previous administration, he continues that people were earning around US\$45,000, but President Weah's

government is working towards synchronizing the pay system of government employees.

To standardize salaries, Toby reveals that all cabinet members, heads of autonomous agencies and public agencies earning between US\$5,000 and US\$7,861 will experience a 10 percent reduction in salaries.

He adds that there will be an additional 3.5 percent to 7.5 percent salary reduction affecting deputy and assistant ministers, as well as civil servants making above US\$1,000.00.

He clarifies rumors here that the measures are being introduced to further deepen the hardship on civil servants, saying only civil servants making below US\$1,000 will not be affected by the cuts.

Toby says he is told that the cabinet and the heads of public enterprises and autonomous agencies have agreed on these measures, meaning that no longer will these officials in the Executive Branch make above US\$10,000.00.

The measure, he says is government's way of putting employees into categories based on the type of work they do.

Additionally, the presidency announces that a very big cabinet meeting is due to be held today, 8 May, as government seeks to put into place some measures to address the status of the economy.

Touching on other issues, Toby announces a plan to extend President Weah's housing unit projects to the

Officials face 10%

these are government's efforts aimed at calming the economic tension associated with high cost of living being experienced by Liberians.

However, he clarifies that the benefits and allowance cuts will not affect civil servants, adding that the cut is actually intended to make the low income earners in government feel somehow equal with their respective bosses.

He discloses that in the wake of the decision to cut officials' benefits especially, from the Executive Branch of government, a cabinet retreat is being planned at a local hotel near the Roberts International Airport in Margibi

County to discuss detail of the cuts.

Earlier last week, Montserrado County District #8 Representative Acarous Moses Gray of the ruling CDC wrote the House of Representatives, proposing cuts in lawmakers' benefits, but one of his colleagues in the House described the suggestion as "deception."

Rep. Gray, who Co-chairs the House Committee on Executive, notes in his communication addressed to Speaker Bohfal Chambers that the reduction will greatly help to address some of the pressing economic problems in the country. -*Editing by Jonathan Browne*



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rest of the 15 counties upon completion of the ongoing construction of a US\$3.8m project for 282 housing units in Grand Kru County.

According to him, another 1,500 housing units will be constructed in the 15 counties

here for the poorest of the poor, after the completion of the 282 housing units in Grand Kru County.

Each of the counties are expected to benefit 100 housing units, according to Toby.

Officials face 10% pay cut



By **E. J. Nathaniel Daybor**

Following President George Weah's closed doors meeting with both leaderships of the 54th Legislature at the Capitol, the Government of Liberia announces 10 percent cut of special allowances, affecting over 4,000 officials in government.

Deputy Presidential Press Secretary Smith Toby says, the benefit and allowance cuts

will specifically affect officials earning US\$5,000 and above.

Briefing reporters on the grounds of the Capitol Tuesday, 07 May after President Weah's closed doors meetings with the leaderships of the House of Representatives and the Liberian Senate, Toby details that currently, about 4,140 senior officials are being targeted, including cabinet ministers and their deputies, heads of government agencies

and public corporations and their deputies.

However, he says other categories to be affected by the exercise include lower ranking officials, who earn a monthly income of US\$1,000 and above.

Since the inception of the Coalition for Democratic Change-led administration a year ago, the government wage bill has increased significantly following mass employment of party stalwarts.

Under the former administration of ex-president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the total strength of the civil service was around 40,000 to 44,000.

But Toby puts the current figure at over 71,000.

President Weah recently communicated with the 54th Legislature, requesting for an extra month to submitting the draft national fiscal budget, to enable the Executive make adjustments that would reflect current economic realities in the country.

Toby adds that



Legacy of former lawmaker, Cllr. Kuku Y. Dorbor



Montserratado County District#6 former Representative Kuku Y. Dorbor strongly believes in community projects that empower the people, including support to schools, churches and mosques and local groups, among others. In this photograph, she dedicates a hand pump in Pipeline Community, Paynesville and is subsequently gowned by residents of the community.

Liverpool reach Champions League final after incredible turnaround

Liverpool are into their second successive Champions League final after overcoming Barcelona with a stunning second-leg fightback on an epic night at Anfield.

Roared on relentlessly by their fans, the Reds produced an incredible all-action display to claw back and then ultimately overturn their 3-0 deficit



from the Nou Camp with an unanswered four-goal salvo in thrilling style.

It is the first time since 1986 - when Barcelona knocked out Gothenburg in the old European Cup - that a team have recovered a three-goal first-leg deficit to win a semi-final in this competition.

Divock Origi started the unlikely revival, tapping home from close range after seven minutes, but it was only when

substitute Georginio Wijnaldum scored twice in the space of 122 seconds after the break that the tie truly swung in Liverpool's favour.

Barcelona were rattled, and even Lionel Messi was unable to steady the ship before Origi struck again with the goal that would decide the tie on aggregate, after Trent Alexander-Arnold caught the visitors' defence

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