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THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 2019



Senator Prince Y. Johnson

We've not violated human rights law

-Sen. PYJ

We don't want political prisoners



ANC political leader Alexander Cummings



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Continental News

DR Congo Ebola outbreak: Child in Uganda dies of virus

A five-year-old boy in Uganda has died from Ebola, health officials have said.

The death is the first in Uganda, amid a deadly outbreak in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo. Officials said his grandmother and younger brother also had the disease. The Ugandan government is now reporting seven suspected cases of Ebola.

The boy is said to have travelled across the border with his family from DR Congo on Sunday.

He was then taken to a Ugandan hospital after exhibiting symptoms, including vomiting blood, officials said. The World Health Organization (WHO), citing Uganda's Health Minister Jane Ruth Aceng, announced on Twitter that the boy had died on Tuesday.

More than 2,000 cases

have been recorded in DR Congo in the last 10 months - most of which have been fatal. Fifty people in Uganda are suspected to have come

into contact with the seven people known to have contracted the deadly disease, the Ugandan government said.

The government has

suspended mass gatherings including market days and prayers. Market days in the town of Kasese attract an estimated 20,000 people at the border area. Uganda's health ministry and the WHO said a rapid response team had been dispatched to identify others at risk and to follow up on eight other possible cases. Uganda has already vaccinated about 4,700 health workers against the disease, according to a joint statement by WHO and Ugandan health officials. The outbreak in DR Congo is the second biggest in history, with a significant spike in new cases noted in recent weeks. Nearly 1,400 people have died of the disease since August.

Only once before has an outbreak continued to grow more than eight months after it began - that was the epidemic in West Africa between 2013 and 2016, which killed 11,310 people. What is Ebola?

Ebola is a virus that initially causes sudden fever, intense weakness, muscle pain and a sore throat.

It progresses to vomiting, diarrhoea and both internal and external bleeding.

People are infected when they have direct contact through broken skin, or the mouth and nose, with the blood, vomit, faeces or bodily fluids of someone with Ebola.

Patients tend to die from dehydration and multiple organ failure. BBC



Nearly 1,400 people have died in a recent outbreak in neighbouring DR Congo

Ghana security forces rescue Canadian women hostages

Two Canadian women have been rescued after they were kidnapped last week by gunmen in Ghana's second city, Kumasi, a government minister has said. The two students, aged 19 and 20, were working as volunteers for a charity when they were seized.

Kidnappings in Ghana, regarded as one of West Africa's most stable states,

are extremely rare.

However, there have been several recently, usually involving ransom demands. Security forces carried out an operation in the early hours of Wednesday to rescue the women, Information Minister Kojo Opong Nkrumah said in a statement. The pair were volunteering for Youth Challenge International, which confirmed their names as

Lauren Tilley and Bailey Chitty. The Toronto-based organisation said both women are physically unhurt and have been in contact with their families. Canadian officials thanked the Ghana government for its cooperation "in the resolution of this case". In a statement, they said no further details will be released for privacy concerns "and out of respect to these two Canadians who have been through harrowing experiences". Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo has vowed to take tough action to end the spate of abductions in the country. The chairman of Ghana's main opposition party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), was briefly detained by police on Tuesday as a suspect in kidnappings.

"Credible and actionable intelligence" led to the arrest of Samuel Oforu-Ampofo, police said in a statement posted on Twitter, without specifying which kidnappings he was allegedly linked to. Mr Oforu-Ampofo has not commented on the allegations, but NDC general secretary Aseidu Nketia said his arrest was an attempt to "intimidate us and frustrate our activities".



The Canadians were living in the Silver Spring residence in Kumasi

Kenya to record currency exchange

The Central Bank of Kenya has instructed commercial banks to file weekly reports on persons exchanging old currency notes in a bid to curb circulation of illicit money in the economy. The weekly reports will be submitted to CBK at the beginning of the following week by 9am.

In a report by the Business Daily, the financial institutions will be required to obtain identification documents of every person involved in the

fails, neglects or omits to comply with anti-money laundering laws including submission of returns on time. The regulations come barely two days after Bank of Tanzania and Uganda stopped the use of the Kenyan currency in an effort to curb its banks from being used to launder stolen money back into Kenya.

The Bank of Uganda said the move was necessitated after the CBK informed it that



transaction and establish the source and purpose of the funds.

"Commercial banks shall submit to the CBK periodic weekly reports in the returns attached to the banking circular. These returns should reach the CBK by 9am of first working days of the following week," read a circular dated Monday, June 10. Further the CBK shall take appropriate enforcement action against any commercial bank which

it had issued a new series of banknotes effective May 31.

The money regulator also suspended conversion and repatriation of the Kenyan currency and anyone who needs to exchange money between KSh 1 million and KSh 5 million will be required to exchange the money at their banks. Those who do not have bank accounts will need to contact the CBK to endorse the exchange. AFP

EDITORIAL

The President's olive branch

PRESIDENT GEORGE MANNEH Weah extends olive branch to Liberians, specifically, leaders of political parties, civil society groups, elders, religious leaders, traditional leaders, student leaders and the business community, inviting them to a round-table discussion to present their alternative views about the bad state of the economy.

PRESIDENT WEAH WANTS Liberians to sit and dialogue on the way forward for economic revival in Liberia, promising, "Bring your ideas to the table, and I assure you that they will be given my most careful consideration."

WE URGE ALL those concern to cease the opportunity by going for the round-table to sit with the President and put forth their ideas on the current state of affairs. Politics aside, we are all Liberians and the survival of the State should be our paramount goal.

THE PRESIDENT'S OLIVE branch followed the 07 June peaceful protest by group of Liberians under the leadership of the Council of Patriots to petition his government for reforms.

WE CAN BUT only hope that the offer from the President is in good fate in that he promises to give all ideas that will be brought forward his "most careful consideration."

LIBERIA IS ENGULFED with multiple challenges, ranging from politics, economics, governance to rule of law, reconciliation and social cohesion, among others.

FRIDAY'S (07JUNE) PROTEST is a clear flashpoint, indicating that all is not well in the country economically hence, a need for swift intervention. Solutions may not only lie with the current government, but other national leaders. This is why the call from President Weah is important.

"**IT WILL TAKE** the collective effort of all Liberians to achieve the desired objective of reviving the economy and placing our country on a path of sustainable development and transformation. We will have to come together to devise and support new measures which are necessary to address the structural defects and imbalances in our economy", President Weah stresses.

WE AGREED WITH him that all hands should be on deck to finding solutions to the problems that plague us as a nation rather than engaging in blame game, which is always counter-productive to whatever objective we want to achieve.

DIALOGUE RATHER THAN confrontation is the way forward in building a vibrant nation not only for ourselves, but also for posterity.

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COMMENTARY

By Mohamed A. El-Erian

America's Unusual Recovery is Now Also its Longest

After overcoming significant political and economic headwinds during the past decade, the US economy now appears to have undergone its longest sustained expansion in history. Yet, behind the data showing historically low unemployment and long-awaited wage growth lie vulnerabilities that cannot be ignored.

LONDON - Data released over the next few months will show that the current US economic expansion is the longest on record. But while the United States continues to outperform other advanced economies, this success has yet to dispel many Americans' persistent sense of economic insecurity and frustration; nor does it alleviate concerns about the lack of policy space to respond to the next economic downturn or financial shock.

The current expansion began in mid-2009, following the 2008 financial crisis and the "Great Recession." Powered initially by exceptional fiscal interventions and previously unthinkable monetary policies, the economy built enough of a foundation for private-sector confidence to return, and for corporate balance sheets to recover. Coupled with accelerating advances in new technologies, the expansion came to be led in large part by technology and platform companies presiding over the new "gig economy." It was given further impetus by pro-growth measures, including deregulation and tax cuts.

With the US unemployment rate at 3.6%, real (inflation-adjusted) wages are now growing at 1.6%. And with the most recent quarterly data indicating an annualized GDP growth rate of 3.1%, US economic activity continues to outpace that of Europe and Japan by a significant margin. Owing to this strength, America has become increasingly assertive in pursuing national objectives abroad, including by circumventing longstanding cooperative and conflict-resolution mechanisms and threatening import tariffs and other protectionist measures.

To get to this point, the US had to overcome headwinds from abroad, including an existential debt crisis in Europe and slowing economic growth in China. Domestically, deep political polarization, especially since 2011, has impeded congressional legislative activity and produced multiple actual or threatened government shutdowns (including the longest on record). In the absence of new pro-growth measures from Congress, monetary policy became the "only game in town." After being forced to expand its role in the economy substantially during the crisis years, the US Federal Reserve flirted with some major policy mistakes, and became more vulnerable to political interference.

Because annual growth over the past decade has often been tepid and insufficiently inclusive - what has become known as the "new normal," or secular stagnation - the US economy has been left with a residual sense of underperformance and potential vulnerability. According to an oft-cited Fed survey, almost half of US households report having insufficient savings to cover a \$400 emergency expense.

No wonder trust in institutions and expert opinion remains so low. Coupled with excessive

inequality (of income, wealth, and opportunity), frustration and political anger remain high. Making matters worse, fearmongering about the implications of technology and globalization continues to fuel concerns of job dislocations and disruptions. And outside the US, many have come to worry that the superpower responsible for issuing the global reserve currency, and that plays a decisive role in many multilateral interactions, is no longer a reliable and predictable anchor for global trade and finance.

Moreover, unlike in prior expansions, the US is yet to build sufficient buffers to deal with future economic and financial challenges. Or, to quote former US President John F. Kennedy by way of IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde more recently, we have not fixed the roof while the sun was shining.

Beyond the lack of self-insurance at the household level, the Fed's ability to counter economic recessions and financial disruptions is rather limited. Whereas the current policy rate is 2.25%-2.5%, past downturns have usually required cuts of five percentage points or more. Also, the Fed has a bloated balance sheet and a rather weak mechanism for transmitting monetary-policy measures to the real economy. And even if fiscal policymakers were to become more responsive, they would be starting from a point of relatively high deficits and debt.

Prolonging the current expansion will require great care. Policymakers, particularly Congress, need to avoid big mistakes and minimize the risk of market accidents while doing more to promote growth. The US needs a well-targeted approach to modernizing and upgrading its infrastructure.

Policymakers and leading economists also must be more sensitive to how the fruits of economic growth are shared; among other things, there should be better protections for the most vulnerable segments of society and stronger automatic stabilizers. Businesses, for their part, need to do more to embrace their social responsibilities, if only to avoid ending up in the same position as the banks after the 2008 crash. There is already a growing chorus calling for more regulatory constraints on Big Tech.

Moreover, having shaken up global trade, the US needs to ensure that it will remain the anchor of the rules-based international system. Otherwise, its ability to inform and influence economic and financial outcomes around the world will weaken.

The US will - and should - soon be celebrating its longest-ever expansion. But it must not lose sight of its remaining challenges. The last thing the world needs right now is for today's expansion to give way to a sustained period of lower growth, higher financial instability, and greater cross-border tensions.

O-PED

By Olga Morawczynski
& David Porteous

Africa's Gig Opportunity

TORONTO - The growth of digital platforms in Africa could offer new opportunities to bridge the current gap between often-insecure informal work and formal employment. Portable benefits, which move with a freelance worker from gig to gig, could drive this transition.

There are already about 300 active digital platforms in Africa, employing close to five million workers. They include e-commerce company Jumia, which was established in Nigeria and now operates in 14 countries on the continent.

The rise of such platforms has intensified the debate about the demise of the traditional employment contract and the persistence of widespread informal employment in Africa. This shift increases the risk of lower wages and lower-quality work. It also restricts workers' access to critical benefits, including sick leave, health insurance, workers' compensation, and employer-funded retirement savings plans.

Although informal work sometimes provides an adequate income, it often traps workers in a cycle of low productivity and even poverty. In most parts of the world, government policies fail to support and protect the growing number of freelance or gig workers, forcing them to navigate a regulatory grey zone.

Furthermore, informal employment deprives governments of substantial tax revenues. According to the International Labor Organization, 85% of workers in Africa are employed informally, and therefore do not declare their income or register their businesses. This loss of potential revenue affects countries' ability to invest in education, health, and basic infrastructure, all of which are vital for boosting the productivity of the workforce and sustaining broader economic growth.

Gig workers are increasingly putting pressure on employers to rethink outdated models of compensation and benefits. Uber, for example, has recently lost a series of lawsuits in the United Kingdom instigated by drivers seeking access to basic benefits like minimum wage and holiday pay. In an effort to appease their workers, platforms are experimenting with additional incentives for contract workers. For example, drivers working for ride-hailing company Lyft in the United States get a voucher giving them a discount when they visit a doctor, while TaskRabbit workers are provided with liability protection of up to \$1 million. But these perks are still a far cry from the health-care and retirement benefits that companies traditionally offer their full-time employees.

A growing number of experts and policymakers are therefore looking at the feasibility of portable benefits, which are not tied to a particular job or company. Employers would pay a certain percentage toward universal benefits for all work that they commission, regardless of the nature of their contract with the worker. For example, if an independent worker drives one hour for Uber, and walks a dog for another hour on Rover, each platform would contribute an equal amount toward his or her benefits. This would enable independent workers to accumulate and manage their benefits, and eventually acquire a safety net like that of a full-time contracted employee.

With digital commerce estimated to benefit at least 80 million young Africans by 2030, opportunities for gig workers will increase. And if access to a range of valued benefits, from health insurance to pensions, is made conditional on registering their business and paying taxes, they will have a powerful reason to formalize their work.

Digitization could enable the formal sector to offer a spectrum of benefits for workers and responsibilities for employers. African labor-market regulators and tax authorities can play a significant role in recognizing and incentivizing progress along this spectrum. This means taking stock of which benefits workers value most, and then designing effective policies that encourage digital platforms to offer them. Moreover, such policies should ensure that benefits are portable and tied to the worker rather than the platform, so that people can choose the ones that suit them.

Digital platforms should also consider how to include portable benefits in what they offer to potential employees, such as by setting aside a portion of their revenues to finance these perks. Such benefits could become an increasingly important recruitment tool as platforms grow and compete for labor. And unless digital firms take the lead on this issue, they face the risk that governments will force them to adapt their business later on - which will likely be much harder.

By introducing portable benefits for gig workers, African governments and digital platforms can help to power the continent's future growth. Otherwise, these platforms will lose top talent, countries will miss out on potential tax revenue, and Africa will fail to reap the full benefits of the digital revolution.

OPINION

By Larry Hatheway

The US Economy's Strange Decade

ZURICH - The current US economic expansion is extraordinary. Not only does it rival the longest on post-war record, but, unlike previous periods of sustained growth, it has not unleashed much inflation. Corporate profits have soared to unprecedented levels. And economic inequality in the United States is at its most extreme in a half-century.

Each of these unique features is paradoxically linked to another oddity: despite a mostly lackluster expansion since 2009, the US unemployment rate has fallen significantly further than would have been predicted by GDP growth alone. But perhaps the defining aspect of this strange decade-long expansion, and the one that helps to explain its main anomalies, is weak productivity growth.

Consider, first, the jobs phenomenon. Using a simple model relating unemployment to GDP growth - similar to Okun's Law - indicates that the jobless rate has fallen by half a percentage point more per year during this expansion than history would have suggested. Since 2014, the rate of US employment growth has exceeded what GDP growth would have predicted by nearly one million jobs per year.

Even as unemployment has fallen to historic lows, job creation remains more than double the rate of increase of the labor force. Firms are hiring strongly despite tepid growth, a dwindling pool of productive workers, and troubling political and policy uncertainty. The soft May jobs report, alone, does not change the decade-long phenomenon of robust employment growth.

One plausible explanation is that firms are substituting cheap labor for expensive capital. The share of total worker compensation in US national income has fallen steadily this century, reaching a low of 60% in late 2014, before edging back to its current level of 62%. Yet that is still three full percentage points below its average level between 1965 and 2000.

On the other hand, returns on capital are exceptionally high. Since 2010, the share of corporate profits in GDP has reached average levels that are unrivaled in the post-war era. One might think, therefore, that firms would prefer to invest in high-returning capital rather than in labor. But that is not the case. The average annual rate of non-residential gross fixed capital formation since 2009 has been 5.3%, more or less the same as it was in the expansions of the early 2000s and the 1980s, and well below the rate in the investment-led boom of the late 1990s.

Why is cheap labor so abundant? Perhaps workers are willing to sacrifice higher wages in return for job security. That's understandable, given the painful memories of the 2008-2009 recession. Wage demands may be restrained by fears of losing jobs to China, Mexico, or machines. Yet a rising "quits rate," which is now back to levels seen prior to the financial crisis, suggests that workers are perhaps less excessively cautious than they once were.

Another factor is declining union membership. In the early 1980s, nearly one-quarter of the US labor force was unionized. Today, that figure has fallen to about one-tenth. Non-union workers earn, on average, about 20% less than their unionized counterparts. A less unionized labor force works more cheaply and, perhaps, more flexibly, making it more attractive for companies to hire.

But the most important factor behind sluggish wage growth is probably weak productivity growth. Average labor productivity in the US (and in most other advanced economies) has slumped in the past decade. Despite the explosive growth in information technology, the average worker is not becoming more productive.

If output per hour worked is not rising much, then the number of hours worked must increase to ensure adequate provision of goods and services. This is why US job creation remains robust, despite pedestrian GDP growth.

In addition, firms cannot raise wages by more than the increase in the marginal product of labor. Low productivity growth therefore explains sluggish wage increases. It also makes firms less willing to invest. The resulting capital discipline contributes to high returns on capital, which underpin soaring profits and yawning income inequality.

US policymakers must try to ensure that the benefits of growth are more equally distributed. Populist proposals from both ends of the political spectrum, such as calls for protectionism or a universal basic income, are unlikely to do the trick. Such measures would simply result in Americans fighting over shares of a shrinking pie.

Rather, the key is to raise average levels of productivity. For a variety of reasons, including the current political and social backlash against capitalism, the US cannot address its productivity challenge solely with 1980s-style deregulation, lower taxes, and less government. Economic efficiency will have to be augmented by improvements to energy and transport infrastructure, along with better access to quality education, worker training, and health care.

America's growth over the past decade has been unique in many ways. But if its productivity malaise is allowed to persist, the expansion will remain uniquely unbalanced and unhealthy.

LIBERIANS DEBATE

With Sally Gaye

What do Liberians think about President George Manneh Weah's call to leaders of political parties, civil society groups, elders, religious leaders, traditional leaders, student leaders and the business community for a round-table discussion to present their alternative views about the bad state of the economy?



Washington Kollie

"I do not see President Weah as [a] serious-minded President. Is this the kind of person that calls for round table dialogue and you take him seriously? Imagine a president of a whole country leaves and he doesn't even know the function he attends but all he cares about is to get on a plane and travel. The 62 percent of Liberians who voted Weah really put us in a hot water. I'm done with your whole Weah business and will not go on the streets for anything again."



Grice Appleton

"He's talking about dialogue; when he refused to declare his assets. And he built 49 houses in less than two years. You can't give account of your 25 millions. Try to be serious mehn, President Weah. He cares less about Liberians' plights... stop deceiving him. To make himself rich is his primary objective and we will not take it. We abandoned [our] activities and pleaded to meet him, as wicked

and careless he is; he ignored [our] call for peace; putting an end to all this ridiculous stealing killing in [Liberia]. Keep listening to ill advices, you will end up like Saul."

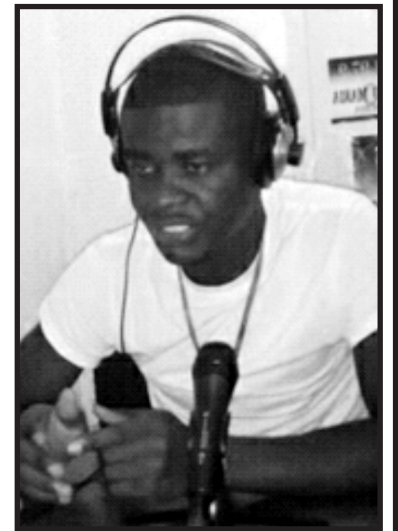
Vick Gray

"For me I see the statement from President Weah as a welcoming development. From President Weah this is a great step forward. God bless the President and save the State; we need to pray for our leaders that God will guide them to rethink their strategies for Liberia. Humbly listen to your citizens and react on some that will help us as a nation and its people. Thanks Mr. President, my fellow Liberian, our President has spoken. Let's see reasons to come together and find the way forward. Let's forget the pass and move on, please I beg."



Winston Yekeryen

"The President is looking for peaceful solution for the betterment of [his] citizens, so he is prepared to work with all people with positive mindset but not those who preach evils. The President is set to dialogue with the people who voted for him, but not the greedy people and let those who have problem with the government speak out this time. [Thank you] Mr. President, for the



decision to dialogue with your country men. Please turn your ears away from those 'advisors' a bit. They are leeches that are preying on your popularity. Wise men changes."



Foeday Taylor

"Mr. President, if it is necessary, personally phones those stakeholders for this consultative meeting and let this meeting be a two-day event if possible. Recommendations from this meeting must be seriously considered for implementation as promised by you. Thanks for your brilliant address and have [a] wonderful time in Nigeria and Gabon. I'm glad hearing this from the President!! For it's always

fruitful listening to the cry of your people whom you are leading.....once more, remain blessed!"

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World Bank debars Chinese Coy for fraud in Liberia

The World Bank on Wednesday June 12 announced a 15-month debarment of China-based Dongfang Electronics Co. Ltd. (Dongfang) in connection with fraudulent practices while bidding on a power project in Liberia.

settlement agreement under which the company acknowledges responsibility for the underlying sanctionable practices and agrees to meet specified corporate compliance conditions as a condition for release from debarment.

sector. According to the facts of the case, during the bidding process, Dongfang falsified two letters asserting that the manufacturer of a type of equipment had authorized Dongfang to supply and install that equipment, which is a fraudulent practice. Dongfang did not ultimately win the contract.

The settlement agreement provides for a reduced period of debarment in light of the company's cooperation and voluntary remedial actions. As a condition for release from sanction under the terms of the settlement agreement, the company commits to developing an integrity compliance program consistent with the principles set out in the World Bank Group Integrity Compliance Guidelines. The company also commits to continue to fully cooperate with the World Bank Group Integrity Vice Presidency.

The debarment of Dongfang qualifies for cross-debarment by other multilateral development banks (MDBs) under the Agreement for Mutual Enforcement of Debarment Decisions that was signed on April 9, 2010. -Press release



The debarment makes Dongfang, which provides electrical engineering, manufacturing, and research and development services, ineligible to participate in World Bank-financed projects. It is part of a

The project, Liberia Accelerated Electricity Expansion Project Additional Financing, was designed to increase access to electricity and strengthen institutional capacity in Liberia's electricity

Lonestar Cell MTN employees empower youth during 21 Days of Y'ello Care

Liberia is characterized by a youthful population and they possess enormous potential to drive economic growth and help their communities thrive.

It is against this backdrop that Lonestar Cell MTN is hosting its annual employee volunteerism program, 21 Days of Y'ello Care, from 1 to 21 June with youth empowerment as its theme for the campaign.

During the program, Lonestar Cell MTN will deliver

growth of the nation. Our goal for our 21 Days of Y'ello Care program is to do our part to support young Liberians and equip them with the necessary skills they need to deliver this bright future."

MsOfodile added, "Lonestar Cell MTN understands that digital innovations have the power to transform lives and we believe that everyone deserves the benefit of a modern, connected life. We



ICT empowerment training for students of the G. W. Gibson High School, Bassa High School, Gboveh High School, and J. W. Pearson High School. The company will also make donations to the schools.

Commenting on the campaign, Lonestar Cell MTN's Chief Executive Officer, UcheOfodile said, "We believe that the youth of Liberia will be the driving force behind the development and economic

want to connect young people with technology and empower them to use their new skills to develop innovative solutions that will positively transform their individual communities and Liberia as a whole."

The 21 Days of Y'ello Care program is taking place in all the markets that make up MTN's footprint in Africa and the Middle East, of which Lonestar Cell MTN is a part. -Press release

Int'l partners salute Liberians

Liberia's international partners have commended all stakeholders for the peaceful manner in which the June 7 protest took place and record it as another of Liberia's achievements in the consolidation of democracy, peace and stability.

In a joint statement issued on Wednesday and signed by over a dozen partners including the African Union, ECOWAS, EU, the United States, China, France, Germany, United Nations (UN), Canada, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and United Kingdom (UK), the partners commended the Government of Liberia (GoL) for respecting the right to peaceful assembly, and ensuring that security was provided to all citizens.

The country's partners also commended the Council of Patriots (CoP) for organizing the protest in an orderly and peaceful manner. The International Partners in Liberia also congratulate the people of Liberia for demonstrating their



commitment to peace.

"We welcome the high level of cooperation between the Government, including security agencies, and the protest organizers. We also recognize the role played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) observers and the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR)

monitors," the statement noted.

"We stress the importance of inclusiveness, national dialogue, unity and continued respect for the rule of law to move Liberia's development goals forward. In this regard, we welcome the statement made by H.E. President George Weah on 11 June 2019, including his call to all

concerned Liberian stakeholders for a round-table discussion on the economy, and affirm our pledge to support this initiative," it added.

The International Partners in Liberia further committed itself to continue supporting

the government and people of Liberia in their efforts to consolidate peace and, as stated by the President yesterday, place the "country on a path of sustainable development and transformation."

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IMF wants rational spending and realistic budgets -in Liberia

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) says policy uncertainty and slippages have imposed a significant toll on the economy of Liberia over the past two years, noting that particularly, higher fiscal deficits and accommodative monetary policy led to rapid depreciation of the Liberian dollar and increased inflation thereby, eroding the purchasing power of the poor.

In its assessment report published Tuesday, 11 June by the Board of Directors in line with Article IV consultation with Liberia, the IMF notes the near- and medium-term outlook under the baseline scenario is challenging for Liberia, and growth is projected to slow further to about 0.4 percent in 2019 and remain below 2 percent into the medium-term.

The report details that in the baseline scenario, the authorities face the possibility of a forced, abrupt adjustment when domestic and external financing options are exhausted, adding that an alternative reform scenario is therefore presented as a more viable alternative, in which growth weakens somewhat in the near term, due to proactive



fiscal and monetary tightening, but picks up significantly over the medium term to exceed 5 percent by 2024.

“Executive Directors noted that Liberia is facing major economic challenges and welcomed the authorities’ efforts to bolster macroeconomic stability. Directors emphasized that steadfast and well-sequenced policies and structural reforms are essential to enhance macroeconomic stability and promote higher, sustainable, and inclusive growth. They welcomed the authorities’ Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity

and Development (PAPD) and agreed that garnering support from the international community will be important.

The Board concluded its assessment here on May 31, 2019, noting that Liberia remains a fragile, post-conflict country with weak capacity and limited physical and human capital accumulation.

It stresses that external assistance to Liberia is winding down from its peak in 2016, and that to address pressing needs, the government launched its Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD), focusing on physical and human capital

accumulation.

But it further emphasizes that significant fiscal adjustment is needed going forward, recommending that efforts should focus on mobilizing domestic revenue and rationalizing spending, especially the wage bill, while securing needed space for social and capital spending.

“Directors encouraged the authorities to formulate realistic budgets and to implement a sound borrowing plan that ensures debt sustainability, while advocating caution in engaging in non-concessional borrowing. They also called for further progress in public financial management reforms to improve the quality of spending in a resource-constrained environment”, the report reads.

The Board also agreed that the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL) should tighten monetary policy with the objective of reducing inflation to single digits by 2021, emphasizing that further issuance of CBL bills should be suspended until the cost of the operation is included in the government budget, and the fiscal financing gap is closed without CBL financing.

It notes that while the financial soundness indicators show that the banking sector appears adequately capitalized, the CBL should enhance its supervisory

efforts, while highlighting the need to prioritize strengthening the CBL’s supervisory, regulatory, and resolution frameworks in light of the elevated level of nonperforming loans, focusing on measures that improve loan underwriting standards.

President George Manneh Weah recently promised to reconstitute the entire Board of Directors of the CBL in a nationwide address, but is yet to do so.

The IMF also highlights the need to improve the external position at the Central Bank by tightening monetary and fiscal policies, allowing for greater exchange rate flexibility, and raising competitiveness through improvements in the business environment, while welcoming the authorities’ pro-poor agenda focuses on physical and human capital, particularly improving service delivery in health and education.

It says in the context of the development agenda, aggressive efforts should be made to strengthen governance and reduce corruption, advising the Liberian authorities to upgrade their anticorruption and AML/CFT frameworks in line with international standards.

Hence, the Board emphasizes that continued efforts to improve the quality and availability of data are essential for Fund surveillance and economic policy making.

Under Article IV of the IMF’s Articles of Agreement, the IMF holds bilateral discussions with members, usually every year. A staff team visits the country, collects economic and financial information, and discusses with officials the country’s economic developments and policies. On return to headquarters, the staff prepares a report, which forms the basis for discussion by the Executive Board.

IMF says at the conclusion of the discussion, the Managing Director, as Chairman of the Board, summarizes the views of Executive Directors, and this summary is transmitted to the country’s authorities. *Story by Jonathan Browne*

House to investigate LTA

By Bridgett Milton

The House of Representatives instructs its Committee on posts and Telecommunications to investigate the Liberia Telecommunications Authority or LTA on the

rationale behind shutting down of the internet and all social media networks in the country during the June 07 protest.

The Plenary of the House mandates the committee to have authorities of the LTA explain why they took the

action, which reported caused the Government of Liberia loss about US\$100K in revenue.

The body took the decision here Tuesday, following the submission of a communication by Grand Bassa County District #5 Representative Thomas Goshua.

In his communication to Plenary, Rep. Goshua raises concerns as to what would have happened during the course of the protest as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram were shut down.

He argues that it was unfair to the Liberian people for the internet to be shut down on that day.

The committee is expected to report in two weeks.

The entire country was disconnected from the rest of the world via internet and the social media during Friday’s protest organized by the group, Council of Patriots to petition the Government of Liberia for reforms in the governance system under President George Manneh Weah. *-Editing by Jonathan Browne*



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Français

Les idées des libériens pour la relance économiquesont les bienvenues

Le président libérien, George Manneh Weah, exhorte les Libériens à s'unir « pour élaborer de nouvelles mesures nécessaires pour remédier aux défauts structurels et aux déséquilibres de l'économie dans le pays ».

L'appel du président intervient quelques jours après que des milliers de citoyens lésés sont descendus dans la rue le 7 juin dans le cadre d'une manifestation considérée comme étant la manifestation la plus pacifique du pays.

« Chers concitoyens, asseyons-nous et discutons de la voie à suivre pour une relance économique au Libéria. Faites parvenir vos idées sur la table des opérations et je vous assure qu'elles seront examinées avec la plus grande attention », a déclaré le président le mardi 11 juin à

la télévision publique ELBC.

Parmi ces revendications figure l'ouverture de poursuites pénales contre le ministre des Finances Samuel Tweah et le gouverneur de la Banque centrale du Liberia (CBL), Nathaniel Patray, pour

une opération monétaire controversée lancée en 2018 et censée enrayer l'inflation.

Le « Conseil des patriotes » exige également l'annulation d'emprunts contestés destinés à la construction de routes et de

ponts, ainsi qu'une déclaration publique du patrimoine du président et de son administration.

Par ailleurs, la police a annoncé avoir engagé des poursuites contre le député d'opposition YekehKolubah, un des organisateurs de la manifestation du 7 juin, brièvement interpellé deux jours auparavant, et 20 de ses partisans.

Le député et six autres personnes sont poursuivis à la suite d'une plainte d'un homme qui l'accuse d'avoir ordonné à ses gardes du corps de le battre, a précisé la police dans un communiqué.

Les 14 autres prévenus sont des partisans de YekehKolubah qui s'étaient affrontés aux policiers le 5 juin pour protester contre son interpellation, selon la même source.

S'adressant brièvement à la nation mardi dernier avant de prendre son envol pour Abuja, Nigeria, le président Weah a exhorté tous les Libériens à faire des efforts de manière collective pour atteindre l'objectif souhaité, celui de la relance de l'économie et de placer le pays sur la voie du développement et de la transformation durables.

« Il faut que nous nous unissions pour concevoir et mettre en œuvre de nouvelles mesures pour remédier aux défauts structurels et aux déséquilibres de notre économie », a-t-il déclaré.

Il dit reconnaître que les points de vue divergents de tous les citoyens sont également essentiels, c'est pourquoi il invite à nouveau les leaders politiques, les groupes de la société civile, les anciens, les chefs religieux, les chefs traditionnels, les leaders des étudiants et le monde des affaires à une table ronde. Il s'agit de leur donner une occasion pour présenter leurs points de vue et proposer des solutions à la situation économique.

On ignore cependant quand cette table ronde sera organisée pour écouter l'opposition. Toutefois, célébrant le caractère pacifique de la récente manifestation, le président Weah a remercié tous les Libériens pour leur passion

pour le maintien et la promotion de la paix et la consolidation de la démocratie du pays.

Il félicite en particulier les manifestants pour la manière pacifique et ordonnée dont ils ont exercé leur droit le 7 juin, ainsi que les autres Libériens qui ont choisi de vaquer à leurs occupations habituelles ce jour-là, ce, également de manière pacifique et ordonnée.

Selon le président Weah, les deux parties ont fait preuve de tolérance et de respect des droits mutuels, dans le respect de l'état de droit.

Il salue également les forces de l'ordre et de sécurité du pays qui ont fait preuve de professionnalisme dans la protection des vies et des biens et le maintien de la sécurité et de l'ordre public.

Selon lui, sous sa direction, le gouvernement continuera à protéger les droits et libertés fondamentaux de tous les Libériens, indépendamment de leur affiliation politique, de leur tribu et de leur religion.

Le président Weah a rappelé que lorsqu'il avait accédé à la présidence l'année dernière, il avait informé les citoyens de que son régime avait hérité d'une économie déchirée et s'était engagé à tout mettre en œuvre pour réparer l'économie et améliorer les conditions de vie et les moyens de subsistance de la population.

Il reconnaît qu'en dépit des efforts continus et soutenus qui visent à réparer l'économie, son gouvernement est toujours confronté à une situation difficile.

Le président Weah souhaite également que les partenaires internationaux continuent d'apporter leur soutien indéfectible pour aider le gouvernement et le peuple libériens à consolider les acquis démocratiques du pays.

Il salue également les médias locaux et internationaux pour la couverture de l'événement dans le respect de leurs responsabilités professionnelles.



Procès du putsch manqué au Burkina Faso: le temps des plaidoiries

Retour au tribunal militaire de Ouagadougou pour les accusés dans le cadre du procès du coup d'État manqué de septembre 2015. Suspendues à la suite d'un mouvement d'humeur des avocats burkinabè, les plaidoiries ont repris mardi 11 juin, après seize mois de procès. Les 84 accusés doivent répondre des faits d'attentat à la sûreté de l'État, coups et blessures, meurtres, entre autres chefs.

« Vous avez rendez-vous

avec l'histoire du Burkina Faso ! », a lancé au tribunal Me Souleymane Ouédraogo, l'un des avocats des victimes dès le début des plaidoiries.

Outre le général Gilbert Diendéré, présenté comme le principal cerveau du coup d'État, les avocats des parties civiles souhaitent que soient également reconnus coupables des faits d'attentat à la sûreté de l'État onze sous-officiers, ceux qui ont joué un rôle dans la préparation, l'arrestation et la séquestration des autorités de la transition. Maître Prosper

Farama demande au tribunal d'être sévère à l'égard des accusés qui auraient nié tous les faits. « En appliquant avec la plus grande sévérité la loi à ceux des accusés qui seraient reconnus coupables et qui n'auraient démontré aucun sentiment de repentir. Et en étant aussi du mieux possible clément à l'égard de ceux qui auront exprimé une certaine reconnaissance des faits et un repentir. »

Maître Olivier Yelkouni, l'un des avocats du général Gilbert Diendéré, attend surtout que le droit soit dit au vu des faits exposés devant le tribunal et non sur la base des repentances. « La loi ne prévoit pas de repentances, la loi prévoit que s'il y a une preuve de l'infraction, prononcez la culpabilité. S'il n'y a pas de preuve, ne prononcez pas la culpabilité. Si vous doutez, ne prononcez pas la culpabilité. »

L'armée « doit être républicaine »

Dans une salle d'audience où le public n'était pas au rendez-vous, maître Ouédraogo Souleymane a souligné que « la décision du tribunal doit permettre à l'armée burkinabè de savoir qu'elle doit être républicaine ».

Le 16 septembre 2015, des soldats de l'ex-régiment de sécurité présidentielle (RSP) interrompaient le Conseil des ministres et mettaient en place un Conseil national pour la démocratie.



Français

Éditorial

Lamain tendue du président à l'opposition

Le Président George Manneh Weah invite les libériens, en particulier les leaders des partis politiques, la société civile, les chefs religieux, les chefs traditionnels, les leaders des étudiants et les leaders du monde des affaires à une table ronde et à faire parvenir leurs recommandations afin de trouver une solution définitive aux problèmes économiques qui assaillent la nation.

Le président Weah souhaite que les Libériens s'asseyent et discutent de la voie à suivre pour la relance économique du Libéria. "veuillez faire parvenir vos idées à la table des opérations et je vous assure qu'elles seront examinées avec la plus grande attention.", a-t-il exhorté.

Nous demandons instamment à tous ceux qui s'inquiètent de saisir cette opportunité pour s'asseoir autour d'une table ronde avec le Président afin de faire des propositions sur la situation économique actuelle. Mise à part la politique, nous sommes tous des Libériens et la survie de l'État devrait être notre objectif commun.

La main tendue du Président fait suite à la manifestation pacifique du 7 juin organisée par un groupe de Libériens réunis sous la bannière du Conseil des patriotes pour réclamer des réformes.

Nous prions que la main tendue du président soit saisie, dans la mesure où le président a promis d'examiner de manière minutieuse toutes les recommandations. Le Libéria est confronté à de multiples défis, allant de la politique à l'économie en passant par la gouvernance, la primauté du droit, la réconciliation et la cohésion sociale, entre autres.

Le message de la manifestation du vendredi 07 juin est éclair. Il fait comprendre au gouvernement que tout n'est pas rose dans le pays sur le plan économique, d'où la nécessité d'une intervention rapide. Les solutions peuvent venir aussi bien du gouvernement actuel que de tout autre citoyen. C'est pourquoi l'appel du président Weah est venu à point nommé.

«Tous les Libériens doivent déployer des efforts collectifs pour atteindre l'objectif souhaité, celui de la relance de l'économie et de placer notre pays sur la voie du développement durable et de la transformation. Il faut que nous nous unissions pour concevoir et soutenir de nouvelles mesures nécessaires pour remédier aux défauts structurels et aux déséquilibres de notre économie », a souligné le président Weah.

Nous sommes tout à faire d'accord avec le chef de l'Etat et appelons toutes les parties prenantes à rechercher des solutions aux problèmes qui nous tourmentent en tant que nation, au lieu de se contenter à s'accuser mutuellement, car cela est toujours contre-productif.

Le dialogue est plutôt la voie à suivre pour bâtir une nation dynamique, non seulement pour nous-mêmes, mais également pour la postérité.

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COMMENTAIRE

By Mohamed A. El-Erian

L'inhabituelle reprise américaine est également la plus longue jamais observée

LONDRES - Les chiffres qui seront publiés au cours des prochains mois démontreront que l'actuelle expansion économique américaine est la plus longue jamais observée à ce jour. Mais si les États-Unis continuent de surperformer par rapport aux autres économies développées, cet essor ne dissipe pas encore un sentiment persistant d'insécurité économique et de frustration chez de nombreux Américains, ni les inquiétudes face au manque de marge politique possible face au prochain ralentissement économique ou choc financier.

L'expansion actuelle a débuté mi-2019, après la crise financière de 2008 et la « Grande récession ». Soutenue par des interventions budgétaires exceptionnelles et des politiques monétaires auparavant inconcevables, l'économie a bâti des fondations suffisantes pour permettre à la confiance de faire son retour dans le secteur privé, et aux bilans des entreprises de se redresser. Associé à des avancées de plus en plus rapides dans le domaine des nouvelles technologies, cet essor s'est révélé en grande partie mené par des sociétés technologiques et plateformes au contrôle de la nouvelle « gig economy ». Un élan supplémentaire a été conféré par des mesures favorables à la croissance, dont une déréglementation et des réductions d'impôts.

Le taux de chômage aux États-Unis atteignant 3,6 %, les salaires réels (ajustés à l'inflation) enregistrent aujourd'hui une croissance de 1,6 %. Par ailleurs, les derniers chiffres trimestriels indiquant un taux de croissance annualisé du PIB de 3,1 %, l'activité économique américaine demeure supérieure d'une marge significative à celle de l'Europe et du Japon. Forte de cette solidité, l'Amérique affirme de plus en plus la poursuite de ses intérêts nationaux à l'étranger, y compris en contournant des mécanismes de longue date dans la coopération et la résolution des conflits, ainsi qu'en menaçant d'imposer des taxes à l'importation et autres mesures protectionnistes.

Pour en arriver là, les États-Unis ont dû surmonter des vents de face en provenance de l'étranger, notamment une crise existentielle de la dette en Europe et un ralentissement de la croissance économique en Chine. Au niveau national, une profonde polarisation politique, notamment depuis 2011, a fait obstacle à l'activité législative du Congrès, et produit de multiples shutdowns, avérés ou potentiels (dont le plus prolongé de l'histoire). En l'absence de nouvelles mesures pour la croissance de la part du Congrès, la politique monétaire est devenue « l'option unique ». Après avoir été contrainte de jouer un rôle substantiellement accru dans l'économie au cours des années de crise, la Réserve fédérale a flirté avec plusieurs erreurs politiques majeures, devenant également plus vulnérable aux interférences politiques.

La croissance annuelle au cours de la dernière décennie ayant souvent été molle et insuffisamment inclusive - ce que l'on décrit désormais comme la « nouvelle normalité », ou stagnation séculaire - l'économie américaine conserve un sentiment résiduel de sous-performance et de vulnérabilité potentielle. D'après un sondage de la Fed souvent évoqué, près de la moitié des ménages américains confient ne pas disposer d'une épargne suffisante pour faire face à une dépense d'urgence de 400 \$.

Pas étonnant que la confiance dans les institutions et les opinions d'experts demeure si faible. Associées à des inégalités excessives (de revenus, de richesse et d'opportunités), la frustration et la

colère politique restent très importantes. La situation est d'autant plus difficile que les discours alarmistes autour des conséquences des technologies et de la mondialisation continuent d'alimenter la crainte d'une dislocation et perturbation des emplois. Hors d'Amérique, beaucoup redoutent par ailleurs que la superpuissance en charge d'émettre la monnaie de réserve mondiale, une puissance au rôle décisif dans de nombreuses interactions multilatérales, ne soit plus aujourd'hui un point d'ancrage fiable et prévisible du commerce et de la finance à l'international.

Par ailleurs, ce qui n'était pas le cas lors des expansions précédentes, il reste encore aux États-Unis à bâtir des réserves suffisantes pour faire face à de futures difficultés économiques et financières. Autrement dit, et pour citer la formule de l'ancien président américain John F. Kennedy, dernièrement reprise par la directrice générale du FMI Christine Lagarde, c'est quand le soleil brille qu'il faut réparer le toit, ce qui n'a pas encore été fait.

Outre le manque de sérénité des ménages, la capacité de la Fed à contrer les récessions économiques et perturbations financières reste limitée. Alors que l'actuel taux directeur s'élève à 2,25-2,5 %, les précédents ralentissements ont généralement nécessité des réductions de cinq points de pourcentage, voire plus. La Fed présente en outre un bilan gonflé, et un mécanisme fragile de transmission des mesures de politique monétaire vers l'économie réelle. Et même si les décideurs de la politique budgétaires se montraient plus réactifs, ils débuteraient sur la base d'un niveau relativement élevé de déficits et de dette.

Une grande minutie sera nécessaire pour prolonger l'actuelle expansion. Les dirigeants politiques, en particulier au Congrès, devront éviter de commettre de graves erreurs, et minimiser le risque d'accidents du marché, tout en accomplissant davantage pour promouvoir la croissance. Les États-Unis ont besoin d'une approche soigneusement ciblée pour remettre à niveau et moderniser leurs infrastructures.

Les dirigeants politiques et principaux économistes doivent également prêter davantage attention à la manière dont les fruits de la croissance économique sont partagés, en instaurant notamment de meilleures protections pour les segments les plus vulnérables de la société, ainsi que de plus solides mécanismes automatiques de stabilisation. Les entreprises doivent pour leur part accomplir davantage dans le cadre de leur responsabilité sociale, ne serait-ce que pour éviter de se retrouver dans la même situation que les banques après le krach de 2008. D'ores et déjà, des voix se font de plus en plus entendre en faveur de contraintes réglementaires plus importantes pour les sociétés du Big Tech.

Par ailleurs, ayant quelque peu bouleversé les échanges commerciaux mondiaux, les États-Unis doivent veiller à demeurer le point d'ancrage du système international fondé sur les règles, sans quoi leur capacité à façonner et influencer les résultats économiques et financiers à travers le monde s'en trouvera affaiblie.

L'Amérique célébrera bientôt - et à juste titre - sa plus longue période d'expansion. Elle ne doit toutefois pas perdre de vue les défis qui demeurent. La dernière chose dont le monde ait besoin aujourd'hui n'est autre qu'une expansion actuelle qui céderait la place à une période prolongée de moindre croissance, d'instabilité financière plus prononcée, et de tensions transfrontalières accrues.

PERSPECTIVES

PERSPECTIVES

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

BLACK-ON-BLACK COLONIALISM SOCIAL CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WOES MAXIMIZED IN THE THROES OF AFRICAN POLITICAL RULE

With Bai M. Gbala, Sr.
June 10, 2019 2019

A REPEAT

In the year of 1847, the Republic of Liberia was the first and only nation of black people declared politically independent and ruled, entirely, by black people on the black African Continent of several African nation-states colonized by white, mainly, European nations. As proud citizens of the new Republic, Liberians travelled the world community in celebration (boasting and beating their chests) of this unique, historic achievement, in the light of the then prevailing socio-economic and colonial politics of the day.

But, over time and, in fact and in deeds, it became clear that the estimated 15-16 African tribe, nation-states, still known as the Republic of Liberia, have been transformed and, in fact, are a single Black state colonized by black African-American immigrants from North America, black African immigrants from the Caribbean Islands, both freed slaves, and black Africans captured from slave ships on the high seas on their way to slave merchants.

Thus, the unique “black-on-black colonialist Rule” on the Black African Continent.

Political philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, practicing politicians, analysts and Liberian observers argue that old-world, white Colonialism would and could have made the Republic of Liberia a better shining, attractive nation on the African Continent, in terms of ability to produce and provide social cultural, economic and political needs and development for the nation and people, the Republic failed not because the Colonialists were black Africans on the black African Continent but, simply, because the black colonialists lack the required training and experience of research, analysis, planning and organization for institutional success and/or ignored application of such training and experience, although the Republic was, and is, closely-allied historically, with and was the step-child, so-to-speak, of the world's greatest, most developed, and powerful nation on earth (the USA) in terms of political/economic solidarity.

The Republic has become and remains the laughing stock of world watchers because democratic politics and national economic development have been, and are, extremely elusive.

This conclusion is based upon Liberian History of colossal inability to “produce and provide”, due, also, to graft/greed, the system of Black-on-Black Colonial Rule and the resulting profound negative impact on the nation and people. The argument/conclusion points not only to academic history, but also, practical, comparative socio-economic and political activities of Liberia and former-colonized neighboring nations.

Raymond Leslie Buel

Firstly, author Buel's epic book, *Liberia: Century of Survival, 1847-1947*, published on the 100th birth anniversary of the Liberian Nation was, and is perhaps, the best assessment of the social cultural, economic and political activities of the Republic during its first one hundred years.

As topic of Chapter 2 of the book, the author posed and answered the rhetorical question of “*What Is Wrong with Liberia*”, the subject and analysis of his book. He noted that “Although the constitution of Liberia is modeled on that of the United States, Liberia cannot be called a democracy”, because the descendants of the African-American immigrant-settlers of 20,000 “kept firmly in their hands the government of the country of about one million. The freedom of the immigrant settlers takes the form of imitating the old (US) Southern aristocracy”. Although with emphasis on



“classical” education, Liberia did not produce intellectual elites as found in Hattior political leaders such as the late James Aggrey of Ghana or the late Felix Eboué, Negro Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa.

“Every Americo-Liberian (and the assimilated, Congo) strives to get on government payroll and, usually, succeeds”. Except for the period of 23 years, (1847-1870), the Liberian government has been in the hands and control of the True Whig Party, a single-party state, political rule for 110 years. “Of West Indian stock, President Edwin Barclay proved to be the most dictatorial of all Liberian Presidents”. At his request, the Legislature enacted a sedition law in 1933 (still on the books?) which penalized criticism of the President or the Government's indigenous policy with imprisonment of from three to seven months and confiscation of property. The same penalty is imposed upon anyone providing information to a foreign state or agent on affairs of domestic concern.

Upon retirement in 1943, Barclay selected Mr. William V. S. Tubman as his successor, opposed by Mr. James F. Cooper, former Secretary of Interior, with a newly-organized Democratic Party. On May 7, 1943, Mr. Cooper's Paper, the *Weekly Mirror*, wrote “. . . the voting on Tuesday, May 4, 1943 was the most partial, the most unfair, the most brazenly corrupt and domineering in the long shady record of the True Whig Party and in the history of the Republic. One small precinct of two dozen dwelling hoes, more or less, in the Territory of Marshall, with a population in the whole territory of less than 1,000, counting men, women and children, including all domestic animals polled 5,100 for the Whigs and 7 for the Democrats”.

In probably the most sweeping indictment of any political system in the world, a US diplomatic representative in Liberia in October, 1933 summarized the Liberian situation as follows:

“The political system of Liberia has been marked not only of unfair elections, but also, of inefficient, arbitrary and corrupt government. Waste of public funds in maintenance of over-staffed or unnecessary institutions and offices; failure of the Department of Justice to enforce payment of delinquent taxes; failure of the Department of Justice to prosecute Liberian officials for embezzlement or diversion of public funds and supplies or to take action against them under their bonds; failure of the Liberian government to enforce payments of taxes into the Treasury of Consular and other fees; payment of funds due soldiers of the Frontier Force whose money was collected by Liberian politicians and their friends; failure to institute economic reforms repeatedly recommended by the Financial Advisor . . .”.

Author Buel predicted that “as the Liberian Native tribes become educated, they will protest more and more against abuse. Although President (Edwin) Barclay did not say so, that there is a Native democracy in Africa revolving around the hereditary chief. When either a Negro or White aristocracy wedded to the West attempts to upset Native concepts rather than encourage their gradual evolution, trouble usually results. The future of Liberia will depend upon whether (or not) political power is (or will be) gradually transferred from the

decadent Americo-Liberian minority to the vigorous Native tribes constituting the overwhelming majority”.

“It seems only a matter of time”, he concluded that, “when the preponderance of the ‘civilized Natives’ over the Americo-Liberians will become overwhelming. Once awakened to western ideas of democracy and freedom, the educated Natives will demand the right to participate in the government, believing that, eventually, the Americo-Liberian minority must lose its control. Whether (or not) the struggle (for power) becomes violent or the transition of power to the Natives is gradual (and peaceful) depends on the wisdom of the present governing class and of the United States of America . . .”.

Writer-Historian Gus Liebenow

Liebenow's approach to Liberian political history was based on what he described as “Class & Caste Stratification in the First Republic”, reforms achieved and reforms attempted by the Tubman regime. Hostility between the majority Indigenous Liberian citizens and the minority Settler Americo-Liberian citizens had been the feature of Liberian society from the day of arrival of the settler-immigrants throughout the country's existence since 1847 (Liebenow, 1987).

William V. S. Tubman's Presidency

Mr. William V. S. Tubman was elected President in 1943 and served for 27 years. This period was unique in the history of Liberia because Tubman introduced and implemented several reforms and changes, including the “spirit as well as the substance of the Caste relationship then-existing between the Indigenous tribal citizens and the Americo-Liberians.

To the wave of Rising Expectations by the people, then an unusual phenomenon of political consciousness and agitation for change from what was considered a repressive regime of unjust, one-party rule, President Tubman realized and responded by abolishing the then Liberian Hinterland of a single Province and districts, divided/demarcated it into three Provinces - *Eastern, Central and Western Provinces*. But the new approach, however, facilitated a temporal easing of discontent, only to re-appear later in a much more violent form.

Ninety-seven (97) years (in 1944) after declaration of political independence, Tubman became President of Liberia. He announced and launched the Open Door Policy (Wreh, 1976) and later, Unification Policy in a speech in the city of Voinjama, Lofa County. These efforts were in response to the demand by the people in protests against a repressive one-party rule with the settler, Americo-Liberian aristocracy and denial of civil and political rights.

The President recognized and came to grips with the developed/developing socio-political and economic realities of the day. For, the persistent calls and demonstrations for “integration” and “unity” were the then code words for democratic governance, recognition of and respect for the rights of rural citizens. President Tubman responded by abolishing the three provinces in rural Liberia and created, instead, the first four, new counties in the hinterland - *Grand Gedeh, Nimba, Bong and Lofa counties* in 1964. With creation of the counties came the inevitable, senate and house representations, a demand which, until now, had been vigorously, persistently denied (Smith, 1964).

This effort, by the President, was designed to give political participation (legislative representation) to hinterland citizens and the Open Door Policy which would or could give economic benefits, also, to rural Liberia. These policy measures were designed, apparently, to defuse and, eventually, eradicate the socio-economic and political inequalities, differences between the settler/coastal, Americo-Liberians and the hinterland, indigenous-Liberians with due recognition and appreciation of and respect for indigenous African culture of rural Liberia.

We don't want political prisoners

By Winston W. Parley

Opposition Alternative National Congress (ANC) political leader Alexander Cummings warns government against introducing the culture of imprisoning critical voices as political prisoners.

"We do not want to start the trend of having political prisoners in our country," Mr. Cummings said Wednesday June 12, during a visit at the Monrovia City Court to support a cause for some 20 detained students to be released to their lawyers.

"I think we got good news that the students will be released today. I just came to provide my support and nothing else," Mr. Cummings told a brief interview Wednesday, 12 June after attending a Court's hearing concerning the student's detention.

Roughly two days to the June 7, 2019 peaceful protest here last week, police arrested some students and supporters of Montserrado County Rep. Yekeh Kolubah who stormed the police headquarters in demand of the lawmaker's immediate release, while he



and his private security guards were being investigated.

Rep. Kolubah is a key critic of President George Manneh Weah and his government, and also a key planner of the June 7 Save the State peaceful protest.

Rep. Kolubah and his private security guards were investigated by police in the week leading to the June 7 protest and charged with terroristic threat and criminal facilitation on grounds that one Emmanuel Freeman had

been brutalized for refusing to receive the June 7 Save the State protest T-shirt from Kolubah's men.

However, Mr. Cummings bluntly tells the interview Wednesday that "we're in a political environment unfortunately," and he believes that "there is some elements of politics with regards to these young people" who have been held in detention.

"I just came to provide support ... to the students, uh,

that's simple ... I am hopeful that they will be released today," says Mr. Cummings.

After lawyers met with City Court Magistrate J. Kennedy Peabody, Mr. Cummings told journalists that the positive outcome of the meeting was that the magistrate would have approved the bond and the students would have been released Wednesday.

At least 15 of those detained were reported to be released later on Wednesday.

Earlier in an interview with protesters outside the court, opposition Unity Party (UP) youth leader Alphonsen Belleh, II, said the protesters consider the case as a political situation and therefore they are "using a political means now to call the attention of the government to see reason to allow our colleagues [to be] released and turned over to our lawyers."

"... Or else, we'll cause civil disobedience. The civil disobedience is demonstration, protest until our colleagues are released, because our colleagues [have] now been turned into political prisoners," Belleh explains.

Expressing the protesters' frustration, Mr. Belleh explains that the case was due to be heard on Tuesday, but the magistrate had allegedly indicated that the case file was

taken away by the county attorney.

There were uncertain about the students' case being heard on Wednesday, according to Belleh who told journalists that their lawyer, Cllr. Lavela Supuwood had earlier informed them that he was not sure that the case would have been heard.

Riot police officers were immediately deployed at the Temple of Justice where the protest was being held. However, there was no clashes between the police and the protesters.

The officers departed after protesters jubilantly escorted their lawyers and court officers to the Monrovia Central Prison where the detained students were due to be released.

Earlier on Monday, 10 June when Magistrate Peabody presided, he notes that he made an offer according to law for the defendants to be signed for by their legal representative.

Magistrate Peabody notes that unfortunately, that did not happen because the lawyer representing the defendants refused to sign for them.

He lashes out against insinuation that the Monrovia City Court refused to release the defendants, warning that the "news", the "disinformation" and "misinformation" undermined the court and the rule of law as it relates to justice.

Magistrate Peabody emphasizes that the court is a neutral party, and some of the defendants involved are citizens of the Republic who are to enjoy the law of the Republic.

He notes that had the offer been accepted by the defendants' lawyer to sign for their release, "we" wouldn't have been at the court on Wednesday.

Magistrate Peabody further warns lawyers and political leaders that the court is for the citizens and those residing here.

We've not violated human rights law

By Ethel A Tweh

During discussion of Human Rights pledge at the Liberian Senate, Ex-rebel leader Senator Prince Y. Johnson of Nimba County says there has been no record of any one of them in the Senate violating the International

Human Rights law, for which they are asked to reaffirm or recommit the Human Rights pledge.

He continues that there should be something wrong first before they would be asked to reaffirm or recommit

and crimes against humanity, because of their belief in International Human Rights, they (Senate) invited President George M. Weah, and based on that, the recent 07 June protest was allowed and the police moved accordingly, noting that the Police gave water to protesters that their organizers failed to provide.

Senator PYJ is one of the key former rebel leaders in Liberia indicted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for heinous crimes during the Liberian Civil War.

But Senator Varney Sherman of Grand Cape Mount County, who is the crafter of the Human Rights pledge counters that reaffirming the Human Rights pledge doesn't mean one has violated it. "If I pledged my allegiance to the Flag of Liberia, [it] didn't mean that I've violated the flag of the country", Sen. Sherman notes.

Sen. Sherman along with nine other senators further counter that they see no reason why some of their colleagues, including PYJ are refusing to reaffirm or recommit themselves to the Human Rights pledge.

In disagreement to reaffirmation of the Human Rights pledge, Senators Saah Joseph of Montserrado County and Daniel Nateehn of Gbarpolu County agree with PYJ that the pledge should be

to the Human Rights law. According to PYJ, who opposes calls for the establishment of War and Economic Crimes Court for Liberia, threatening to return to the bush to mobilize men with single-barrel guns, if there were attempts to arrest him for suspected war crimes



Human Rights law, for which they are asked to reaffirm or recommit the Human Rights pledge.

"I have been in this Senate for 18 years and no one had violated the Human Rights law; that human rights law that we put our signatures to as the International Declaration of Human Rights

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rejected and trashed out of the Liberian Senate because according to them, it makes no sense to reaffirm or recommit themselves to a pledge, but

rather demonstrate patriotism as Liberians. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

BYC meets LISCR at ATS on Sunday



transfer of the 2019 knockout finals from the Doris Williams Sports pitch in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County to the Antoinette Tubman Stadium in Monrovia.

The decision follows an emergency executive committee meeting in the boardroom on 11 June.

According to the football house, the admission fees for the Sunday game is around the field, LD\$200, around VIP LD\$500 and VIP, US\$10 or its Liberian dollars equivalent.

It was BYC that first secured their slot in the final following their dramatic 5-2 win against Keittrace FC.

In the second match LISCR FC joined BYC as finalists after seeing off LPRC Oilers 2-0.

A goal from Alloy Brown and Curtis Koon were the ultimate desired as the 'Shipping Boys' reached their third successive FA Cup Final.

This year's final is a repeat of last year's edition where BYC trashed LISCR 4-0 at the Antoinette Tubman Stadium.

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Ts & Cs apply

By Sally Gaye

The Liberia Football Association (LFA) Cup Final has been transferred from Buchanan, Grand Bassa County to Monrovia.

The finals will take place on Sunday, 16 June at the Antoinette Tubman Stadium (ATS) in Monrovia with Blanco FC taking on Earth Angels in

the female category at 1:30PM and defending champions Barrack Young Controllers (BYC) meeting LISCR FC at 3:30PM in the male category.

The LFA cites weather condition as reason for the transfer, saying the Executive Committee resolved to relocate the finals in the best interest of all parties.

It expresses regret over the

Pep Guardiola turned down Juventus' massive salary offer

Apparently cash doesn't rule everything around Pep.

As each day has passed and even as Maurizio Sarri looks more and more like the guy who will be taking over for Max Allegri, there's always been the little thought in the very back of our minds that maybe, just maybe, Pep Guardiola could actually be the name of Juventus' next manager. Even with what seems like every Italian major media outlet saying that Sarri



is the guy, Guardiola's

There's just one problem.

Juventus has reportedly made an offer ... and Pep has given them the "Thanks, but not thanks" kind of treatment.

According to Eurosport, Juventus offered Guardiola an even more lucrative contract than he is currently getting at Manchester City, but the Spaniard has declined it. The

number, you might be wondering? How about €20 million – and that wasn't even enough for Guardiola to accept, which Eurosport points out was a quick and maybe somewhat surprising "No" from Pep himself.

There is no exact distinction as to when Guardiola turned down Juventus' massive offer, but they do say that it came before the talk of Sarri talking over in Turin truly kicked into gear.

Guardiola, under contract at Manchester City until the 2020-

21 season, is already the highest-paid club coach in the football world. was always going to be the pipe dream of all pipe dreams regardless of who else was linked to Juventus' open managerial position. Many believe that Guardiola was the No. 1 and dream scenario for Juventus president Andrea Agnelli, who has obviously been very aggressive when it comes to the club's moves – both in terms of name recognition and financially – over the last 12 months.

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