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TRULY INDEPENDENT

Public Service Announcement

THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND ALL OUR CLIENTS & READERS THAT THE BUSINESS AND NEWSPAPER OFFICES OF THE NEW DAWN NEWSPAPER HAVE BEEN RELOCATED ON UN DRIVE OPPOSITE THE NATIONAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION (NIC), BEHIND PUBLIC WORKS MINISTRY.

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2020

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We will support Henry Costa



Mr. Alexander B. Cummings

-ANC Cummings vows, as he tours Maryland



Pres. Weah

VP Taylor

VP Taylor's blood boils

-As Senate poised to investigate her letter



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Continental News

Sudan army quells mutiny by pro-Bashir troops

Sudan's army has quelled a rebellion by former elite troops loyal to ousted leader Omar al-Bashir.

Shooting broke out on Tuesday in the capital Khartoum and the city's airport was briefly closed amid the clashes.

The violence was sparked by a row over severance pay for officers in a much-feared intelligence agency that is being overhauled.

Two soldiers were killed and four were injured in the worst unrest since Bashir was overthrown last April.

Officials say 40 of the mutineers surrendered and intelligence chief Abu Bakr Mustafa handed in his resignation after he was blamed for failing to collect weapons from the pro-Bashir forces. Sudan has been jointly run by military generals and civilian leaders since August. A senior member of the ruling Sovereign Council, Gen Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemeti, accused former intelligence chief Gen Salah Gosh of orchestrating

the rebellion.

Gen Gosh's whereabouts are unclear, with speculation that he fled Sudan after Bashir was toppled. Gen Dagalo said that while he did not consider the violence a coup attempt, such action would not be tolerated.

And in a speech on Wednesday, the sovereign council head, Lt Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, declared that the violence was now over.

"All headquarters are under the army's control, and the airspace is now open," he said. Soldiers from the intelligence agency, the General Intelligence Service (GIS), posted videos of their colleagues firing heavy weapons into the night sky in a show of force.

Reuters news agency quoted residents as saying there was some fighting in a northern district of Khartoum and a security building had

been seized by mutineers near the main international airport.

"This happened because those troops rejected the amount of money they got for their retirement," government spokesman Faisal Mohamed Saleh told state television.

The country's main protest group had earlier called for an end to "these irresponsible operations that are causing terror among citizens".

At least 170 people were killed during the months-long crackdown against the protest movement last year.

The GIS, then known as the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), played a major part in the crackdown.

It was Sudan's most-powerful security agency during Bashir's 30-year rule and protesters had demanded its disbandment as a key part of the transition to democracy.

The former president, who was eventually overthrown by the military following the protests, was sentenced to two years in a social reform facility for corruption in December. BBC



Sudanese troops fired in the air near the HQ of the General Intelligence Service on Tuesday

US presses Sudan for reparations to terror victims

The United States warned Sudan Tuesday that payment of reparations for victims of terrorism is a priority for Washington as it considers removing Khartoum from a US blacklist.

The number three official at the State Department, David Hale, met in Washington with Sudanese Foreign Minister Asma Mohamed Abdalla.

They discussed "relevant policy and statutory criteria for rescission of Sudan's State Sponsor of Terrorism designation," department

government strongly backed by Washington, the process of removing Sudan from the blacklist could go even faster.

For Sudan officials, who see winning Washington's blessing as important for economic growth, removal from the list is key.

Hale, whose title is under secretary for political affairs, believes that "compensation for the victims of terrorism remains a priority for the US government," Ortagus said.

Compensation would essentially consist of financial

Malawi high court allows dread locks in school

A high court in Malawi has ordered the government to allow Rastafarian students with dreadlocks to attend school.

The temporary order was made while the court continues to hear the case filed by a schoolgirl who was denied admission to a primary school because of

her dreadlocks, Malawian media reported.

The schoolgirl had been told to cut off dreadlocks by the school's management, according to Nyasa Times news website.

The judge ordered the school to take in the schoolgirl and offer her extra classes to make up for the

days she had missed before the final judgement was made.

Rastafarians in Malawi have been accusing the government of discrimination, according to The Nation newspaper.

In November 2018, they protested against the denial of admission to students with dreadlocks. BBC



US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale

spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said in a statement. Since 1993 Sudan has been on the list of countries the United States deems backers of terrorism for having granted safe haven to Osama bin Laden.

But in recent years Washington has allowed progressively warmer relations with Sudan, citing what it called progress in the fight against terrorism, until in 2017 it lifted a 20-year-old economic embargo.

Since the overthrow last April of longtime dictator Omar al-Bashir and the emergence of a transitional

reparations to families of people killed or injured in attacks against the US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya that were carried out by al-Qaeda in 1998. US judges have said Sudan is effectively to blame for the blasts.

During a historic visit to Washington in December, Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok said progress was being made on this sensitive issue.

Court battles and negotiations are underway on damages, which have been set by US courts in the billions of dollars.



EDITORIAL

GoL should come clear on demonstrations

A JOINT STATEMENT of the Ambassadors of ECOWAS, the European Union, the United States, and the UN Resident Coordinator in Liberia issued here over the weekend on Liberia's National Discourse in the New Year following the 06 January peaceful assemble on Capitol Hill stresses the need for the Government of Liberia to urgently clarify a comprehensive notification or application process for large demonstrations, including what qualifies as individual, small, or large group protests, timelines, permissible locations, restrictions on what can be brought to events, etc.

THE JOINT STATEMENT notes that multiple recent requests by large citizen groups in the country seeking to demonstrate in central Monrovia underscore the need for such direct clarity from the government, it emphasizes that transparent notification or application procedures for permits to hold large demonstrations, coupled with apolitical and content-neutral adjudications of said applications, can ensure that future events, which are normal and healthy in a democracy, efficiently allow protestors to gather, express grievances, and present petitions to the government.

HOWEVER, IT CAUTIONS that any restrictions on the right of peaceful assembly should be consistent with the Constitution of Liberia and Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states "The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than that imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health, or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

WE BELIEVE THESE concerns raised in the joint statement by the foreign ambassadors are very important in not just strengthening civil liberty, free speech and democracy in Liberia, but enhancing our governing system.

WHEN PEOPLE ARE aggrieved about the state of affairs, they should be allowed to call their leaders to attention, and one way of doing so is by peaceful protest or assembly as guaranteed in the Constitution.

THE JOINT STATEMENT continues, "We note with regret for all present on Capitol Hill on 6 January, that a protest ended abruptly after a day in which approximately 2,000 demonstrators had peacefully assembled and security forces had displayed commendable professionalism in executing their duties. While it is understandable why the Liberian government would find it untenable for a large group of demonstrators to block the primary route through the government quarter endlessly, to disperse the crowd without reasonable audible warning increased the risk of harm to citizens."

IT ALSO UNDERSCORES the importance for individuals in all democracies to be able to exercise their freedoms of expression, petition, and peaceful assembly, saying, "We note that, if individuals in Liberia believe that their rights have been abridged, there are possible judicial remedies accessible under Liberian law. Review of administrative decisions by the courts can serve as an important mechanism in a democratic society to refine and clarify the interpretation of domestic laws and Constitutional rights. Citizens should also feel that their concerns can be heard and deliberated through their elected representatives in the legislature."

RATHER THAN JUST denying citizens' requests to peacefully assemble and protest to petition their leaders, we call on the Weah administration thru the Ministry of Justice to say in clear terms what it would require to protest in the country, including timelines and specific locations for protesters to assemble.

WE HOPE THAT the authorities would pay heed to the call from the foreign diplomats to save the country from future embarrassment and calamity. It is unhealthy for a democratically-elected government and its aggrieved citizens to always haul and pull on matters that affect their peace and happiness.

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COMMENTARY

By Elizabeth Drew

Trump's Near Miss with Iran

The drone strike that killed Qassem Suleimani not only brought the US and Iran to the brink of war; it exposed for all to see the disarray of US foreign policymaking under President Donald Trump. A majority of Americans think the episode has left the US less safe, and the incompetence displayed by Trump's team suggests they may be right.

WASHINGTON, DC - The recent tense, dangerous exchanges between the United States and Iran have revealed a great deal about US President Donald Trump's management of his foreign policy. The main conclusion is that he doesn't have one. Weighty decisions are made on the basis of gut reactions and often-contradictory impulses - for example, simultaneously seeking agreement and threatening the use of force. If there is any overarching vision or philosophy, it is that he wants to avoid another long, costly war. And yet he almost blundered into one anyway.

When he campaigned for president, Trump promised to bring US troops home. He has sometimes declined to respond to provocations, particularly by Iran-backed groups around the Middle East. This lulled the Iranians - and almost everyone else - into thinking that he would continue to turn the other cheek. Eventually, some on the right wing of his Republican Party, and, most important, Fox News commentators, were calling him weak. This is a dangerous thing to say about Trump: his presidency shows why an insecure person should not be elected to that office.

Another characteristic of Trump's conduct of foreign policy is that he is currently surrounded by a coterie of mediocrities. There is not a far-ranging mind, creative strategic thinker, or independent spirit among them. Trump is now on his fourth national security adviser in three years, his second secretary of defense, and second secretary of state; numerous other key foreign-policy jobs remain open. The lesson for others is clear: the only way to last with Trump is not to challenge him. This expectation of blind deference is all the more problematic when the president knows little and lacks curiosity.

Mike Pompeo, the bumptious secretary of state, is widely viewed as the most accomplished sycophant among Trump's top advisers. Pompeo, a former member of the US House of Representatives, is also a talkative alumnus of the Iran "regime change" caucus in Congress. We learned after the fact that Pompeo had been pressing Trump for some time to order the assassination of Qassem Suleimani, the commander of Iran's Quds Force, which the US has designated a foreign terrorist organization. According to one report, when Trump finally did decide to order the killing of Iran's second-most-important political leader on January 3, "The new team was cohesive and less inclined than its predecessors to push back against the president's wishes."

In the absence of a declaration of war against Iran, the killing of a foreign official - by a drone strike on Iraqi territory - was possibly illegal. But such niceties do not perturb Trump. The evidence is that Trump's decision was taken without consideration of the possible consequences. The national security system established under Dwight D. Eisenhower, designed to prevent such reckless measures, is

broken to non-existent, with ever-greater power placed in the hands of the president. If that president is unstable, the entire world has a very serious problem.

In fact, all-out war with Iran was narrowly avoided because the Iranian leaders were shrewder than Trump. The greatest loss of life in this dangerous episode was caused by the tragic downing of a Ukrainian civilian flight that had just taken off from Tehran's airport, killing all 176 people on board. The plane had been allowed by Iranian air authorities to depart about three hours after Iran had fired missiles at Iraqi military bases housing US troops. This carefully targeted retaliation - no one was killed - for Suleimani's death, plus back-channel messages carried by the Swiss, signaled that the Iranians wanted to stop the dangerous escalation. They would lose a war with the US, but would almost certainly inflict serious damage on US assets, including through cyber attacks. A relieved Trump accepted the Iranians' message and followed suit.

A rattled Congress demanded administration briefings on the rationale for killing Suleimani, and the lack of a clear one backfired on Trump and his national security officials. Conflicting and shifting rationales were offered, and the administration failed to persuade lawmakers that an "imminent" threat had forced the president's hand. That, coupled with the administration's characteristic contempt for Congress and its members' constitutional duty to hold the executive branch accountable and the legislature's sole constitutional authority to declare war, led to a new congressional movement to curb the president's war-making powers in the case of Iran. But the House and the Senate (which is controlled by Trump's Republican allies) are unlikely to agree on an approach, much less devise a measure that would survive a presidential veto.

Meanwhile, the relationship between the US and Iran is worse than ever, with the US having lost more since killing Suleimani. Iran announced that it would no longer observe limits on its nuclear program, lowering the estimated time it would take to develop a warhead from almost 15 years when Trump took office to just five months. The US is coming under increasing pressure to withdraw its troops from Iraq - Suleimani's longtime goal. The US military's training of Iraqi forces to fight the Islamic State - the reason the US was invited back into Iraq during Barack Obama's presidency - is now on hold. Instead of withdrawing troops from the Middle East, as he promised, Trump has now committed thousands more to the region.

Meanwhile, inevitably, Trump and his acolytes are claiming victory and accusing critics of being sympathetic to Iran and even partial to the vicious Suleimani. Currently, there are signs that the public isn't buying it. A majority thinks the episode has left the US less safe, and they may be right: though the hostilities between the US and Iran - as well as its numerous proxies - have subsided, few believe the lull will last.



By Barry Eichengreen

Democratizing the ECB

Recent tensions within the European Central Bank's Governing Council have underscored the need to manage disagreement better. The status quo, whereby the president presents a policy decision as a consensus, after which one or more Governing Council members may issue a dissenting statement, makes everyone look silly.

AMSTERDAM - The European Central Bank is undergoing a changing of the guard: a new president, a new chief economist, and two new Executive Board members. And the ECB's new leadership is facing a contentious year in 2020.

For starters, former ECB President Mario Draghi's last policy meeting was marked by disputes over quantitative easing and the president's role in decision-making, underscoring disagreement within the Governing Council (comprising the Executive Board and national central bank governors) about monetary strategy. Should the ECB retain its point target for inflation but make that target symmetrical, in contrast to the present "below but close to 2%"? Or should it abandon all hope of coming close to 2% and settle for 1.5%?

Then there is the assertion by Draghi's successor, Christine Lagarde, that the ECB should focus on climate change, even though the issue is not part of the central bank's mandate (and even though monetary policy is not an obvious instrument for tackling it).

It is timely, therefore, that the ECB has launched a comprehensive review of its policy strategy. Frank discussion of alternatives, buttressed by systematic staff analysis, can only help. But while pondering alternatives is all well and good, the idea that a strategic review should produce a consensus on targets, instruments, and strategies is misguided. Even well-informed people can disagree about the nuances of policy, because, as often happens, they weight different variables differently. Consensus can reflect groupthink, and groupthink can cause policy committees, which are strengthened by a diversity of views, to overlook important risks.

The question is how to manage disagreements. The status quo, whereby the president holds a press conference and presents the policy decision as a consensus, after which one or more Governing Council members may issue a dissenting statement, makes everyone look silly. It undermines the legitimacy of policy, because the ECB provides only partial and conflicting information about decision-makers' views and the rationales underlying them.

Recently, Ignazio Visco, the governor of the Bank of Italy, proposed that the Governing Council should vote on consequential decisions and announce the results. The Fed, the Bank of England, the Bank of Japan, and the Sveriges Riksbank, among others, already do so. Dissent, when it occurs, shows that policymakers are engaged in a healthy exchange of ideas. When their votes are announced, they feel pressure to explain why they have chosen to side with the majority or dissent from it.

Central bank independence is tenable only when policymakers are accountable for their actions. And they will be accountable only if they are compelled to defend their decisions in the court of public opinion. If transparency is essential for accountability, then the release of votes, together with minutes - and, with a delay, transcripts - is the ultimate form of transparency. Today, with central bank independence under threat, it is all the more essential.

Moreover, announcing votes has other advantages. It helps to signal future monetary policy. In other words, it acts as a sort of forward guidance, which is an essential tool in a low-interest-rate environment. Votes are also a source of information about policymakers' macroeconomic outlook, which is helpful for investors.

The argument against releasing votes is that the ECB's Governing Council is numerically dominated by central bank governors who are appointed nationally, and who thus will feel pressure to support policies that are in the national interest, rather than that of the eurozone. This is different from the situation of other central banks. In the United States, Reserve Bank presidents are selected by directors residing in their districts. But some of those directors are appointed by the Federal Reserve Board - that is to say, nationally. Since the enactment of the Banking Act of 1935, which reformed the Fed, it has been understood that members of the Federal Open Market Committee vote with the interests of the entire US economy, not their home region, in mind.

Evidently, this is not the attitude of Europe's national leaders, who worry that ECB policy affects different countries differently. Were their votes released, Governing Council members would be more likely to cater to narrow national priorities. Otherwise, they would risk replacement by more pliable lackeys.

Such cynicism underestimates Europe's central bankers. They may have made mistakes, but they have not shown a readiness to bend to popular opinion in order to retain their jobs. As important as their vote, moreover, is their ability to convince their colleagues of the validity and integrity of their arguments. Blindly obedient central bankers who lack this integrity will be unable to persuade their colleagues. They will find themselves isolated and consistently in the minority.¹

Voting, it is said, is a duty in a democracy. Unlike in democratic elections, however, those who set the ECB's monetary policy should not only vote, but also reveal how they cast their ballots.



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PROCUREMENT NOTICE REQUEST FOR QUOTATION 4A1506/ME/015

Supply and Delivery of Tools and Equipment for the LEC Asset and Customer Mapping Study

Background and Context

The United States of America, acting through the Millennium Challenge Corporation ("MCC") and the Government of Liberia (the "Government" or "GoL") have entered a Millennium Challenge Compact for Millennium Challenge Account assistance to help facilitate poverty reduction through economic growth in Liberia (the "Compact") in the amount of approximately 256,726,000 USD ("MCC Funding"). The Government, acting through Millennium Challenge Account - Liberia (the "MCA Entity"), intends to apply a portion of the MCC Funding to eligible payments under a contract for which the Request for Quotation ("RFQ") is issued.

MCA-Liberia now invites priced quotation from eligible firms/suppliers for the Supply and Delivery of Tools and Equipment for the LEC Asset and Customer Mapping Study.

The RFQ is for:

Supply and Delivery of Tools and Equipment for the LEC Asset and Customer Mapping Study

How to Participate in the Process:

Interested firms/suppliers should send an email to MCALiberiaPA@cardno.com requesting a copy of the RFQ, which is free of charge.

Important dates:

No.	Activity	Dates
1	Release of RFQ	January 10, 2020
4	Deadline for Submission of Quotations	January 20, 2020 at 3:00 pm



Change of Name

This is to publicly announce that I, **Boima Bondo Sackie**, have embarked on an official process to change my name to **Richard K. Brosius**. Hence, the public is hereby advised accordingly, as of this publication.

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

LIBERIA'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IS NATIONAL DISGRACE US EMBASSY CONSULAR SECTION FRUSTRATES APPLICATION FOR NON-IMMIGRANT VISA FOR TRAVEL TO USA:THE CASE OF A RECENT APPLICANT

With Bai M. Gbala, Sr. January 10, 2020

Indeed, the entire socio-cultural, economic and political structure of Liberia, managed, controlled and dominated by the Ruling Political Class had been, and is, a continuing quagmire, during the century and three quarters in which the Republic has been the sovereign State, since 1847.

Moreover, we, Liberians have been, and are unable, to produce Rice and cooking Oil (our national staples) to feed ourselves; we have and, are being, held hostages by foreign-owned and managed Rice and cooking Oil Cartel and other tropical food products imported from distant lands, in collusion with the political rulers, although Liberia is endowed with more fertile land than people.

But my immediate concerns, dating back to several years of socio-economic and political indignities include our Healthcare System in which there had been, and is, glaring absence of medical service-treatment of curable disease in our country. Patients, mostly the wealthy Liberians and foreign nationals, politicians of the political rulers and the politically-connected Liberians are flown, regularly, out of the country for medical service abroad.

An elderly senior citizen with some of the illnesses for which there are no treatment in Liberia, I applied, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the US Embassy Consular Section for Non-Immigrant Visa for travel to the USA and was requested, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to submit a latest report of my medical condition, which I did in early October, 2019 with the identity (address and telephone numbers) of the desired US hospital.

At my Visa Interview on November 25, 2019 with the US Consular Section, US Embassy, Monrovia, the list of questions given to me, included "Cost of Treatment" (to be provided by the US Hospital) and "Evidence of the ability" to pay the cost of treatment which, also, will be based on the response by the US hospital. But this not happen; so, I emailed a copy of my medical report to my family member, USA, with request that she submit the report to the US Hospital.

Unfortunately, the US Hospital gave January 28, 2020 appointment to receive the report and act on the request for cost of treatment, etc., some three months from November 25, 2019. Now, I am asked by the US Consular Section, Monrovia, "to send a copy of your surgery/medical appointment for January 28, 2020. Additionally, email us any medical reports you may have from the US hospital", while I am still in Liberia.

Now, in all of this, reasonably - the administration of the Visa Application Process - I submit that Law is based, primarily, on Reason, human reason; and that Law's Powerful Punch or its major power/support is drawn from and based upon Reason:

- That it is very important NOT to Admit Criminals - terrorists, anarchists, human rights violators or individuals known or to be anti-the democratic process - into the USA.

- That I have answered, successfully, all of the US Consul's political and economic questions asked of me regarding the Visa application and that there are no criminal charges against me, here in Liberia or anywhere, worldwide;

- That, indeed, I am an honorable, eternal political animal, well-known in Liberia, with open, clear, clean public record and a proven democrat



under the rule of law;

- That I am US-educated, pro-USA, lived, worked in the USA for a decade and married US citizen with 2 grown children who, now, live in the Chicago, Illinois area;

- That my application for the Visa is not intended and should not be confused with or interpreted as design for US citizenship; for, I could have achieved that status, easily, long ago, but did not apply for it because Dual US-Liberia citizenship or Dual Nationality violates the main, basic requirements for citizenship - loyalty, Nationalism and patriotism - including the historical convention that "no one may be citizen of two sovereign states at the same time" and, also, the historical adage that "no servant can serve two masters at the same time", the so-called "modern socio-political conditions notwithstanding"; and

- That, most importantly, dual nationality is illegal in Liberia and that I applied for the Non-Immigrant Visa to save my life; to eliminate constant, daily pain and for peaceful, painless elderly life, because there are no medical services-treatment for such illnesses as prostate (Urology), kidney (Dialysis), ear (Audiology), neck, throat skin/itching, etc. in our country.

The most important reason for granting this Visa to me and other Liberians so qualified is that it harms no one, in terms of placing anyone in danger of terrorism/security risk, both USA and Liberia. On the contrary, granting this Visa to me at this time, is in

fact, continuation of the historical US-Liberia friendship, solidarity and US political, economic support, particularly, humanitarian support provided over the years. Indeed, grant of this Visa for medical treatment to save my life means continuation, also, of social, cultural, economic and political support for Liberian families, including my family of 10 children with a multitude of grand, great-grandchildren and the critical future of Liberia.

On The Issue of Visa Refusals under Section 221(g) I am in agreement, reasonably, with the US Department of State that has acknowledged, also, reasonably, that Section "221(g) refusals happen too often and may be subject to overuse" and possible abuse. According to US Visa Office, "in fiscal year 2008, there were 589,418 nonimmigrant visa refusals under Section 221(g). Of those, 510,549 were successfully overcome and visas issued, a success rate of 87%."

Accordingly, granting my visa application or successful overcome of visa refusals will improve the success rate of 87%!!

Meanwhile, as indicated earlier that prostate, kidney and hearing loss deceases, etc., untreated overtime, deteriorate, while prostate and kidney may be fatal!!

Therefore, I repeat - ask, request and appeal, most respectfully, with the consent, support and cooperation of the average Liberians that the US Consular Service grant me this Visa based upon the foregoing, reasonable, truthful analysis.

Grant the Visa and Save a Life. The US Law, Section 221(g), demands it!!



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Audit the legislature

-Sen. Dillon writes plenary



By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

Montserrado County Senator Abraham Darios Dillon writes the plenary of the Liberian Senate, calling for a forensic audit of the entire Liberian Legislature.

A communication dated January 13, read in plenary inside the chambers, on Tuesday, January 14, under the signature of Sen. Dillon says the financial history of the first branch of government should be audited.

"I extend my compliments and have the honor to request the endorsement of plenary to institute a comprehensive

audit of the Liberian Legislature. There is no history to the best of my recollection of this body been audited, since 2006 up to date," Dillon asserts in his communication addressed to the President Pro-Tempore of the Liberian Senate, Albert Chie.

According to him, in order to ensure fiscal probity, a sound financial system, accountability and transparency at the legislature, it is the ardent hope that, that body will give his request due consideration and institute said audit.

The call for audit is an old choral by new lawmakers

entering the Liberian Legislature; on May 19, 2019, some lawmakers stressed the importance of protest, including Representatives Vincent S. T. Willie (Independent) of Grand Bassa County District #4), Francis S. Dopoh of Unity Party, River Gee County District #3, Robert FlomoWomba of UP, (Bong County District #4), Lawrence Morris (Independent, Montserrado District #1) and Cebee C.D. Barshell (Unity Party, Montserrado District #3).

They stated that auditing the House of Representatives is not just to promote accountability and transparency, but to place the House in a better position to ably exercise its oversight responsibility by holding the Executive and other sectors accountable.

"I support the issue of auditing the House because that will not only bring improvement in our economy but will give a clear understanding as of the workings of the House and the way forward," said Rep. Barshell.

"For over a year now, I still don't have a clear understanding, concerning [the] benefits and salaries of this House because there is no much understanding."

Also on January 16, 2014, Maryland County Representative, Bhofal

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 7

LEC under pressure

...As citizens threaten actions

By Ben P. Wessee

The Liberia Electricity Corporation (LEC) seems to be under serious pressure from Liberians here for some alleged bad deeds and theft allegedly carried out in various communities around Montserrado County by individuals believed to be employees of the corporation.

During a talk show held on local broadcaster Truth FM Tuesday, 14 January, a lot of the callers on the show expressed frustration at the way field workers of the Corporation allegedly collect money from community dwellers without providing electricity for them over a long period.

Some of the callers claim they have written

Community in Paynesville narrates that for the past months, his community has been out of electricity.

Konnah explains further that they have written series of letters to the management of the Corporation before it sent a team into the community.

He continues that upon the arrival of the LEC team in the community, residents were allegedly told to pay the amount of US\$300, noting that the head of the community took the responsibility to collect the money from each of the houses within the community.

"Since we collected the money and gave it to the team headed by a guy only identify as Bobby. The guys told us they



communications to authorities at the LEC, seeking solutions to problems on their power supply lines, but the corporation would not send its team in the communities to address residents' problems.

Out frustration, some callers have threatened to take action against the Corporation if he continues to do business as usual, as many of them go without power.

They lament that rather than addressing their problems, some employees of LEC would go into their communities whenever there, collect monies and leave without providing them with the service that they paid for.

Abraham Konnah, a resident of Jacob Town

were going to bring the transformer the next day, it has been two months now these guys are yet to bring the transformer we paid for," Konnah alleges.

He adds that every time the community people call the number left by the alleged LEC workers, somebody would answer and insult the callers.

Mr. Wolor from Johnsonville Community also called in, narrating that residents of his community had problem with their power line before the Christmas season.

According to him, they decided to inform the LEC management about the problem facing the community,

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10

CoP objects to oil blocks sale

By Ben P. Wessee

Plan by the Weah administration to sell nine oil blocks in the country risks encountering stiff opposition here as the pressure group, Council of Patriots (CoP) organizers of the January 6, 2020 protest vows to mobilize Liberians against the sale.

CoP Chairman Henry Costa alleges that President George MannehWeah has 50 percent share in each of the blocks that could raise serious issue of conflict of interest.

He made the allegation in Monrovia on Sunday, January 12, in a news conference, while responding to claim by the Liberia Immigration Services (LIS) that he forged his travel documents to enter Liberia from abroad.

The talk show host says in coming weeks, the CoP will start a door-to-door campaign to educate Liberians about the planned deal by the government.

Recently, the Government

of Liberia through the Liberia Petroleum Regulatory Authority (LPRA) announced sale of several oil blocks, beginning next licensing round.

A statement from the LPRA says the decision followed an unsuccessful ratification of

negotiated petroleum sharing contracts in 2014, which climaxed the last round of bidding process.

The LPRA discloses the next round of bidding, expected to commence in April 2020, will

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Mansion sees flaw in INCHR's report

By Winston W. Parley

The Executive Mansion here has denounced a report by the Independent Human Rights Commission (INCHR) which claims that state securities' allegedly used excessive force against peaceful protesters that assembled on 6 January on Capitol Hill in follow up of prior demands made to President George Manneh Weah's government.

Presidential Press Secretary Isaac Solo Kelgbeh told a regular press briefing Tuesday, 14 January in Monrovia that some people only write something that their sponsors want to hear, as he insists that using teargas and water cannon following failed negotiation with protesters could not amount to excessive force.

"... You report exactly what your reporter in the field sends to you. So if the INCHR or whatever you want to call it, were not privileged to have a decent person giving them report from the field, they were being misled. And when they are misled, they are held accountable for their own action," he says.

Mr. Kelgbeh notes that there was negotiation with the protesters both by the very human rights organization and the state securities in finding way for them to relocate their cooking from the corridor



between the Capitol and Executive Mansion to the back of the Ministry of Gender.

He notes that using teargas and water cannon was the only thing that the police could have done following failure of the negotiation.

Mr. Kelgbeh adds that "some of our people" only do the kind of report that their sponsors would want for their survival.

"Look, some our people they only write something for the report their sponsors want to hear. So if your sponsors want to hear negative things, every time you only try to look at the negative aspect and that's how they get something, that's how they survive, so it's not strange,"

he says.

Kelgbeh explains that besides subsidy that government gives the human rights organization, it writes projects to get the support of its sponsors.

He notes that other countries are flourishing while Liberia still lacks behind due to undermining others since the country's founding.

"If you want this country to progress, if you want this country to grow, do not work with George Weah because he's George Weah; but work with him as the president of Liberia - somebody who wants to develop this country," he says.

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Save the Children donates to Dawah Ummah of Liberia

The charity Save the Children International (SCI) Liberia identifies with the United DawahUmmah of Liberia, donating assortment of food and non-food items valued US\$22,608.00 after last year's fire disaster at the institute that left 27 persons

predominantly children dead.

The victims were Muslim children studying Arabic at the Bassa Town Quranic Recitation Center in Paynesville in September 2019.

Two survivals from the disaster were taken to John F. Kennedy Hospital in Monrovia

where they were treated and subsequently discharged.

Making the presentation recently on behalf of SCI at the United DawahUmmah of Liberia Mosque in Sinkor, Monrovia Health Coordinator, Jacob F. Tengbeh expressed sympathy to the bereaved families for the death of their children and relatives.

He said Save the Children recognizes the importance of child protection for which it has provided fire prevention and first aid training to students of the United DawahUmmah of Liberia besides the donation. Tengbeh believes that students, who benefitted from the training, would serve as ambassadors in fire prevention.

The two days exercise was conducted in collaboration with the Liberia National Fire Service and Liberia National Red Cross Society.

Receiving the items, Sheikh Mohammed Mustapha Bold,



CoP objects

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affect blocks within Harper Basin, Maryland County, southeast Liberia.

The 2019 amendment to the New Petroleum Law triggered a re-demarcation process, resorting into nine (9) blocks within the Harper Basin and 24 blocks within the entire Liberia Basin. The Harper Basin, which covers nine blocks from LB-25 to LB33, will be tendered during the 2020 licensing round.

The statement says this is a watershed moment for Liberia and the LPRA is excited to reach an agreement with all parties, including TGS and NOCAL in promoting Liberia's offshore average and attracting investments that would support for the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) under the leadership of President George Manneh Weah.

It notes the Government of Liberia made a shrewd and progressive decision, through a robust reform process to provide efficient institutional governance system, maximize revenue from potential petroleum resources, and promote citizens' participation.

The LPRA continues that the reform, besides slump in oil prices and the Ebola crisis, resorted to temporary

dormancy within the sector. But after the passage of the New Petroleum and Reform Law of 2014, and the setting up of the LPRA, Government is now in a position to proceed with the tendering process.

In a meeting held between the bankrupt National Oil Company of Liberia or NOCAL, LPRA and TGS (the geophysical company hosting Liberia's offshore seismic data and rendering technical support), it was unanimously agreed that all parties have established the need for capabilities and internal mechanisms to ensure Government conducts a successful bid round to attract investors.

Meanwhile, a formal announcement on the actual licensing data in 2020 will be made shortly by President Weah, based on recommendation from the LPRA, working in concert with NOCAL and TGS.

Liberia had sold several oil blocks during the former Sirleaf administration but the ex-regime said deposits found did not meet commercial value, and the NOCAL became insolvent under Mr. Robert Sirleaf, son of Madam Sirleaf, and she took full responsibility under her watch. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Audit the legislature

Cont'd from page 6

Chambers, requested the General Auditing Commission (GAC) to audit the National Legislature in order to account for resources allotted to that august body over the years.

The intent, Dr. Chambers said, is to provide a high degree of transparency and accountability in the operations of the first branch of the Liberian government.

According to him, since the inception of the former Ellen Johnson Sirleaf-led government at the time, no agencies had been able to conduct audits on money and goods used by the Legislature.

As such, "it is pivotal that a holistic audit is carried out in order to change public perception about lawmakers [and the Capitol Building]."

Chambers, now Speaker of the House, had maintained that auditing the Legislature would encourage other spending agencies of government to conform to the tendency of being accountable to the state, but these calls fell on deaf ears, as the leaderships on Capitol Hill both past and present seem not willing to submit to financial best practices. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

Chief Imam of the United DawahUmmah of Liberia, lauded SCI for the gesture. He said the foundation, which manages four centers here, is intended to educate children.

Sheikh Bold noted that it is part of his group's role to contribute to the development of Liberia through education.

Items donated include 104 bags of 25kg rice, 52 cartons of washing soap, 51 cartons of vegetable oil (20 liter), 40 bags of children used clothes, 25 pieces of first aid kits, 25

pieces of fire extinguishers (4kg), 40 pads, 40 cartons of copybooks, 40 packs of HB Penciland 10 pieces of rechargeable solar lights, among others.

Save the Children International is the world's leading independent organization for children with a mission to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

Français

Le sénat se penche sur le cas Jewel Taylor

La direction du Sénat libérien se saisit du cas de la vice-présidente Jewel Howard-Taylor à la suite de son refus de prendre part à la séance marquant la rentrée parlementaire lundi.

Le Mardi 14 janvier, le sénateur Abraham Darius Dillon du comté de Monsterrado, a fait part de sa préoccupation quant à l'absence de la vice-présidente à la cérémonie de la troisième rentrée parlementaire de cette législature. Il a ainsi prié la direction du sénat pour que son cas soit inscrit à l'ordre du jour car il s'agit, selon lui, d'une question d'intérêt national.

Mais le sénateur Albert T. Chie, président temporaire du Sénat libérien, a déclaré que le Sénat avait accusé réception d'une communication provenant du bureau de la vice-présidente et que le sénat était sur le point d'ouvrir une enquête parlementaire afin d'en savoir plus.

L'absence de la vice-présidente lors de la troisième rentrée

parlementaire de la législature actuelle n'est pas passée inaperçue lundi. Elle semble indiquer à quel point les relations entre elle et le président George MannehWeah sont tendues et sont loin de connaître un dénouement.

Les relations entre les deux dirigeants n'ont jamais été au beau fixe depuis leur prise du pouvoir il y deux ans, le président Weahs'étant plaint de ce que Mme Taylor

aurait voyagé à l'étranger à son insu, sur fond de rumeurs non authentifiées selon lesquelles l'ancienne première dame aurait l'ambition de devenir présidente du Libéria. Mme Taylor a maintes fois démenti ces rumeurs, les qualifiant d'infondées.

Cependant, à la fin de l'année 2019, la vice-présidente Taylor n'a pas fait mystère de sa colère face à la

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L'image du Libéria se ternit ?

Le Libéria du président George Weah n'a pas une bonne image sur le plan international, c'est en tout cas ce que pense le sénateur du comté de River Gee, Conmany Wesseh, qui s'est dit convaincu cependant que le pays pourrait redorer son blason en 2020.

Il a fait état d'une dégradation de la gouvernance du pays, laquelle dégradation est d'après lui largement la

conséquence de l'échec des trois pouvoirs de l'Etat, à savoir l'exécutif, le législatif et le judiciaire, du point de vue servir le peuple.

Le sénateur Wesseha d'abord pointé du doigt le secteur de la sécurité qui aurait exposé des lacunes, en particulier, sous l'administration Weah, avant de s'apprendre au pouvoir, déplorant une gestion calamiteuse du dossier concernant la disparition

présumée des 16 milliards de dollars libériens et de la question des 25 millions de dollars américains décaissés pour, dit-on, lutter contre l'inflation. Il a dit craindre que ces deux dossiers n'aient terni l'image du Libéria auprès des partenaires internationaux et des nations amies.

« On nous a souvent posé des questions sur ce qui se passe au Libéria car les gouvernants ne cessent de donner des informations contradictoires. Maintenant, qui voudra bien investir ici avec toutes ces informations négatives : soit l'on parle de la disparition des milliards de dollars, soit le président Weah lui-même dit être la cible d'une tentative d'assassinat ? ».

Lors d'un entretien avec ce quotidien à Monrovia, le sénateur Wesseha fait observer que l'un des principaux défis auxquels ce régime est confronté est la question de la justice, prenant pour exemple la destitution du juge associé Kabineh Ja'neh, qui, pour beaucoup, était purement politique et non juridique.

Le sénateur Wesseh, qui fut ambassadeur sous le régime de

Le COP s'oppose à la vente des blocs pétroliers

La tentative de l'administration Weah de vendre neuf blocs pétroliers risque de faire l'objet d'une forte opposition, d'autant plus que le Conseil des Patriotes (COP) a promis de s'y opposer fermement.

Le président du COP, Henry Costa, accuse le président George MannehWeah de détenir 50% des parts de chacun des blocs, ce qui pourrait poser un grave problème de conflit d'intérêts.

Il a tenu ces propos à Monrovia le dimanche 12 janvier lors d'une conférence de presse qui avait été organisée pour répondre à des questions concernant son interpellation par le service d'immigration du Libéria (LIS) qui l'accuse d'avoir falsifié ses documents de voyage pour entrer au Libéria.

Le COP a promis une campagne d'information et de sensibilisation en faisant le porte à porte afin d'expliquer aux Libériens ce que le gouvernement a l'intention de faire.

Récemment, le gouvernement du Libéria, par la voix de l'Autorité de Régulation Pétrolière du Libéria (LPRA), a annoncé la vente de plusieurs blocs pétroliers très prochainement. Selon un communiqué de la LPRA, la décision a fait suite à une ratification infructueuse des contrats de partage du pétrole négociés en 2014, qui a donné lieu à la dernière série de processus d'appel d'offres.

La LPRA a révélé que la prochaine série d'appels d'offres, qui devrait commencer en avril 2020, concernera des blocs dans le bassin de Harper, dans le comté de Maryland, au sud-est

du Libéria.

L'amendement de 2019 de la nouvelle loi sur le pétrole a déclenché un processus de re-démarcation, couvrant neuf (9) blocs pétroliers dans le bassin de Harper et 24 blocs dans l'ensemble du bassin du Libéria. Le bassin de Harper fera l'objet d'un appel d'offres en 2020.

La LPRA s'est dite ravie de parvenir à un accord avec toutes les parties, y compris TGS et NOCAL, pour promouvoir la moyenne extraterritoriale du Libéria et attirer des investissements qui soutiendraient le programme pour les pauvres pour la prospérité et le développement (PAPD) sous la direction du président George MannehWeah.

Selon elle, le gouvernement du Libéria a pris une décision astucieuse et progressive, grâce à un processus de réforme robuste, qui consiste à fournir un système de gouvernance institutionnel efficace, maximiser les revenus provenant des ressources pétrolières potentielles et promouvoir la participation des citoyens.

Entre-temps, le président Weah annoncera officiellement les données réelles sur les licences en 2020, sur la base de la recommandation de la LPRA, en collaboration avec NOCAL et TGS.

Le Libéria avait vendu plusieurs blocs pétroliers sous l'ancienne administration Sirleaf, mais l'ancien régime a déclaré que les gisements trouvés n'avaient pas de valeur commerciale.



Sen. Conmany Wesseh

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l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, estime que « la mauvaise gouvernance dont fait montre l'administration Weah » est due à l'échec du pouvoir législatif de prendre ses responsabilités.

« L'image de notre pays se dégrade quotidiennement sur la scène internationale, ce qui est inquiétant. Les événements qui ont marqué le début de cette administration continuent de nous affecter négativement », a-t-il dit.

Selon lui, le Libéria connaît la pire forme de mauvaise gouvernance et le pouvoir législatif contribue énormément à cela.

M. Wesseha condamné la confirmation de certains fonctionnaires nommés par le chef du pouvoir exécutif, comme quoi la plupart des sénateurs savaient bel et bien que ces candidats n'étaient pas qualifiés, mais pour des raisons d'intérêt personnel, ces personnes ont été confirmées.

Français

Le sénat se

réduction considérable de son budget annuel par le pouvoir exécutif.

C'est avec stupéfaction que le public a constaté lundi l'absence de la vice-présidente lors de la session conjointe du parlement qui portait ouverture officielle de la 3e session ordinaire de la 54e législature, où le président Weah s'est adressé aux membres de la Chambre des représentants et du Sénat.

Conformément à l'exigence constitutionnelle qui veut que l'Assemblée législative reprenne ses travaux le deuxième lundi du mois de janvier de chaque année, la direction du Capitole, sous la houlette du président de la chambre des représentants, Bhofal Chambers, et du président temporaire du Sénat, Albert Chie, et les membres du parlement se sont réunis en présence des chefs des missions étrangères, des partenaires au développement et des membres du gouvernement Weah pour assister à l'événement historique qui marquait l'ouverture de la session ordinaire. Pourtant, la vice-présidente, qui devrait, elle, prononcer un discours lors de la cérémonie, était totalement absente. Pour certains, il s'agit là d'une protestation de la part de l'ancienne première dame contre la réduction de son budget.

C'est après avoir attendu longtemps et vainement la vice-présidente avant la montée officielle du drapeau national dans l'enceinte du Capitole lors de la cérémonie lundi que les membres des deux chambres du parlement se sont rendu compte que le numéro deux du régime en place ne serait pas de la partie.

En croire les spéculations qui s'en sont suivies au sein de la maison du parlement parmi les législateurs et certains hauts fonctionnaires influents, la vice-présidente Jewel Howard Taylor aurait délibérément boycotté la session en guise de protestation contre la réduction de son allocation budgétaire.

Contacté au téléphone par ce quotidien, le secrétaire du bureau de presse de la vice-

présidente, Richmond Neufville, a expliqué que sa patronne avait adressé un courrier au président temporaire du Sénat pour lui faire part de son indisponibilité.

M. Neufville a fait savoir qu'il serait préférable que le président temporaire du sénat en parle, car lui-même n'a pas été autorisé de discuter du contenu de la communication avec les médias.

Interrogé également sur l'état de santé de la vice-présidente et à la question de savoir si elle était en déplacement, le chef du bureau de presse de la vice-présidence a répondu que la vice-présidente Taylor se portait bien et quelle était dans le pays.

A noter que lors de la cérémonie, le sénateur Albert Chie a révélé que « la vice-présidente Jewel Howard Taylor ne pouvait pas assister à la cérémonie en raison de problèmes d'urgence ».

Mais concernant la prétendue communication de la vice-présidente, le bureau du président temporaire du sénat s'est refusé à tout commentaire. Le chef du personnel s'est contenté de dire que son patron était indisponible car il était en train de déjeuner avec le chef de l'Etat dans la rotonde du Capitole. Il a aussi promis qu'il mettrait à la disposition de ce quotidien une copie de la communication.

Selon certaines informations, depuis environ cinq mois, le personnel du vice-président n'a pas touché son salaire.

Depuis l'ascension au pouvoir de la Coalition pour le changement démocratique, les relations entre le vice-président Taylor et le président Weah n'ont pas été bonnes.

La Coalition pour le changement démocratique est une alliance de trois partis politiques dont le Congrès pour le changement démocratique du président George Manneh Weah, le Parti national patriotique de la vice-présidente Jewel Howard Taylor et du Parti Démocratique du Peuple de l'ancien président de la chambre des représentants, Alex Tyler.

COMMENTAIRE

Par Elizabeth Drew

Trump échappe de justesse à une collision avec l'Iran

WASHINGTON, DC - Les récents échanges tendus et périlleux entre les États-Unis et l'Iran en disent long sur la gestion de politique étrangère du président américain Donald Trump. La principale conclusion, c'est que cette gestion n'existe pas. Les décisions les plus lourdes de conséquences sont prises sur la base de réactions instinctives et de pulsions souvent contradictoires, qui consistent parfois à rechercher un accord tout en menaçant d'user de la force. Seule vision ou philosophie globale de Trump, il s'agit d'éviter une nouvelle guerre longue et coûteuse. Or, le président américain et sa maladresse ne sont pas passés loin d'en déclencher une tout récemment.

Lors de sa campagne présidentielle, Trump a promis de ramener les troupes américaines à la maison. Il a parfois refusé de répondre à des provocations, notamment de la part de groupes soutenus par l'Iran au Moyen-Orient. Ceci a donné aux Iraniens - comme à beaucoup de monde - la fausse impression que Trump continuerait de tendre l'autre joue. Finalement, plusieurs acteurs du Parti républicain, et plus important encore certains commentateurs de Fox News, ont commencé à parler d'un président faible. Qu'il est dangereux d'affirmer cela de Trump : sa présidence démontre combien une personne aussi peu sûre d'elle ne devrait jamais être élue à la tête du pays.

Autre caractéristique de la conduite de Trump en politique étrangère, le président est aujourd'hui entouré d'une équipe de médiocres, qui ne compte aucun esprit visionnaire, aucun penseur stratégique créatif, ni aucun cerveau un tant soit peu indépendant. Trump en est désormais à son quatrième conseiller à la sécurité nationale en seulement trois ans, à son deuxième secrétaire de la Défense, et à son deuxième secrétaire d'État, sachant par ailleurs que nombre de postes majeurs de politique étrangère demeurent vacants. La leçon à tirer par autrui est claire : le seul moyen de durer aux côtés de Trump consiste à ne pas s'opposer à lui. Ce besoin de déférence aveugle est d'autant plus problématique de la part d'un président chez qui la curiosité manque, voire n'existe pas.

Mike Pompeo, secrétaire d'État très sûr de lui-même, est largement considéré comme le laquais le plus accompli de toute l'équipe des hauts conseillers de Trump. Ancien membre de la Chambre des représentants américains, Pompeo est également au sein du Congrès un partisan affirmé du « changement de régime » en Iran, lui qui depuis un certain temps œuvrait auprès de Trump pour que le président ordonne l'assassinat de Qassem Soleimani, commandant de la force iranienne Al-Quds, que les États-Unis ont désignée comme une organisation étrangère terroriste. Un rapport révèle que Trump aurait finalement décidé d'ordonner l'élimination du numéro deux politique de l'Iran le 3 janvier, en présence d'une « nouvelle équipe à la plus grande cohésion, moins encline que les précédentes à s'opposer aux souhaits du président ».

En l'absence de déclaration de guerre contre l'Iran, l'assassinat d'un dirigeant étranger - via une frappe de drone en territoire irakien - est possiblement illégale. Mais les subtilités de ce genre ne perturbent pas Trump. À l'évidence, sa décision a été prise sans considération pour les conséquences potentielles. Le système de sécurité nationale établi sous Dwight D. Eisenhower pour empêcher les mesures trop imprudentes en est aujourd'hui réduit à peu de chagrin, un pouvoir sans cesse croissant étant placé entre les mains du président. Or, lorsque le président est instable, le

monde entier rencontre un très sérieux problème.

En réalité, si une guerre totale avec l'Iran a été évitée de justesse, c'est parce que les dirigeants iraniens se sont montrés un peu plus malins que Trump. Dans cet épisode périlleux, les pertes de vies humaines les plus conséquentes découlent du tir de missile tragique sur un avion civil ukrainien, qui venait de décoller de l'aéroport de Téhéran, et dans lequel sont mortes 176 personnes. L'appareil avait été autorisé à décoller par les autorités aériennes iraniennes environ trois heures après que l'Iran ait lancé ses missiles sur des installations militaires irakiennes abritant potentiellement des troupes américaines. Destinées à venger la mort de Soleimani, ces représailles soigneusement ciblées, qui n'ont fait aucune victime, tout comme les messages secrets de Téhéran transmis par les Suisses, illustraient combien les Iraniens entendaient cesser une escalade dangereuse. L'Iran perdrait certainement la guerre contre les États-Unis, mais pas avant d'avoir infligé de sérieux dommages aux installations américaines, y compris via des cyberattaques. C'est donc un Trump soulagé qui a accepté le message des Iraniens, et qui leur a emboîté le pas.

Secoué par les événements, le Congrès a demandé à l'administration de lui fournir une synthèse du raisonnement ayant fondé l'assassinat de Soleimani. Le manque de clarté du gouvernement à cet égard s'est retourné contre Trump et ses responsables à la sécurité nationale. Formulant des raisonnements contradictoires et changeants, l'administration n'a pas su convaincre le législateur qu'une menace « imminente » avait forcé la main du président. Ce manquement, ainsi que le mépris habituel de l'administration à l'égard du Congrès et de ses membres, qui ont pour devoir constitutionnel d'exiger des comptes de l'exécutif, et qui sont constitutionnellement les seuls à pouvoir déclarer une guerre, ont conduit à une nouvelle dynamique parlementaire de limitation des pouvoirs de guerre du président s'agissant de l'Iran. Il est toutefois peu probable que la Chambre et le Sénat (lequel est contrôlé par les alliés républicains de Trump) s'entendent sur une approche précise, et encore moins qu'ils produisent une mesure susceptible de survivre au veto présidentiel.

Pendant ce temps, la relation entre les États-Unis et l'Iran se trouve plus dégradée que jamais, l'Amérique ayant beaucoup perdu en assassinant Soleimani. Téhéran a en effet annoncé que l'Iran ne se conformerait plus aux limites convenues pour son programme nucléaire, ce qui fait passer d'environ 15 ans (lorsque Trump est arrivé au pouvoir) à seulement cinq mois le délai estimé nécessaire à la conception d'une tête nucléaire. Les États-Unis sont de plus en plus vivement invités à retirer leurs troupes d'Irak - objectif de longue date du général Soleimani. Raison pour laquelle l'Amérique a été de nouveau sollicitée en Irak pendant la présidence Obama, la formation militaire américaine des forces irakiennes est désormais suspendue. Et loin de retirer ses troupes du Moyen-Orient, comme il l'avait promis, Trump engage désormais plusieurs milliers de soldats dans la région.

Pourtant, comme l'on pouvait s'y attendre, Trump et ses acolytes rient victoire, et accusent leurs détracteurs de sympathie à l'égard de l'Iran, voire de partialité à l'endroit du vicieux Soleimani. Actuellement, plusieurs signaux démontrent que l'opinion publique n'est pas dupe. La plupart de Américains considèrent en effet que l'épisode récent fait des États-Unis un pays moins sûr, sans doute à raison. Car si les hostilités entre l'Amérique et l'Iran (ainsi que ses nombreux intermédiaires) semble s'apaiser, il est peu probable aux yeux du plus grand nombre que l'accalmie dure bien longtemps.

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Govt. is not sincere

-Robert Kpadeh

By Lewis S. Teh

Former Deputy Minister for Technical Services at the Ministry of Information during the Sirleaf administration Robert Kpadeh joins the campaign by the Council of Patriots or CoP against recent pronouncement by the Government of Liberia to sell nine oil blocks in the country, saying that the George Weah-led government is not sincere to the Liberian people.

“you complain about taking over a broke economy, but your action is far from what you have said; you can’t ride luxurious cars, travelling with huge number of cabinet [minister] who make no impact is a complete contradiction that you met a

broke country”, he says in reference to claim by President Weah that his government inherited a broke economy.

Appearing on OK Morning Conversation, a live talk show in Monrovia, Mr. Kpadeh argues the first thing President Weah should have done is to carry on a duty study of the economy after taking office, adding, “You met a challenged economy but yet you and your officials are buying big cars; this is a complete contradiction, you can’t complain about the country being broke while riding luxurious cars.”

According to him, the government can’t claim to have inherited a challenged economy while the President

travels abroad with entourage, which sends a wrong signal.

He underscores that government should be responsible and accountable, in order to put the country on the right trajectory.

Kpadeh wonders why would the President travel with huge entourage to China, and the United Nations General Assembly that bring to tangible result to the country.

Commenting on protests by the CoP, he notes that qualms raised by the protest organizers are genuine, noting that a president must be very sensitive to the plights of his people. Currently head of a new group, One People Revolution Movement, he says it is nonviolent and well structured with a genuine message to enlighten the people, because political governance here failed.

“Beginning 2020 we want to play a very critical role that seeks to enlighten, educate, and conscientize the people because the greatest weapon is knowledge, not guns.”

Kpadeh suggests that to fix the governing system in Liberia, the legislature should the quality of people that will make quality and sound decisions and ensure that the executive works in the interest of the people.

He says Liberia’s progress can’t be on the basis of campaign T-shirts but rather on the basis of people’s reputation, but according to him, the current lawmakers on Capitol Hill have failed the people. *-Editing by Jonathan Browne*



Mr. Robert Kpadeh

Mansion sees flaw

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“But because you want Mr. X and Mr. X is not there so you will undermine this government, you are undermining yourself, you are undermining the development of our country. This is why since 1847, all of the small, small countries that gained independence in 1960s, 1980, they are flourishing. It’s because most of them didn’t have this crab mentality,” he adds.

The press secretary pleads with the media to put the human rights organization on record, if they know that they saw something differently at the protest scene from what the human rights group has reported.

He notes that everybody has their own motives, including radio stations and television stations, saying they stand for what they want.

Meanwhile, Mr. Kelgbeh has distanced President Weah from claims that he might be responsible for immigration officials to conduct investigation on his critic and talk show host Henry P. Costa’s travel documents.

Costa, the head of the Council of Patriots (COP)

which has staged two massive protests in less than a year to demand reforms in government, is going through immigration investigation surrounding his travel documents.

The investigation came while attempting to leave the country, days after staging the latest protest here supported by thousands of Liberians.

But Press Secretary Kelgbeh says President Weah is not interested in stopping anybody from travelling, noting that things should be done properly.

“The president has no interest in stopping any Liberian from travelling, from leaving this country if you want to leave the country. But it should be done properly and the president has no specific interest in stopping anybody,” Mr. Kelgbeh says.

Mr. Kelgbeh continues that the actual story is that Mr. Costa is going through investigation from the Liberia Immigration Service (LIS) regarding how he acquired “what they say is a forged laissezpasse,” and how he came into the country without his passport.

Liberia’s image

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with distribution of justice, pointing to the impeachment of Associate Justice Kabineh Ja’neh, which many have termed as purely political, lacking legal foundation.

Sen. Wesseh, also a former ambassador-at-large under former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, blames bad governance being experienced under the Weah administration to failure of the Liberian Legislature to act accordingly.

“Our country’s image is in the pit and is slumping on a daily basis from the international scene that’s worrisome. Issues that came up during the early days of this administration and the way they were handled created the slumping grounds.”

According to him, Liberia is experiencing the worse form of bad governance and the Legislature is contributing hugely towards said negative state.

Wesseh continues that in the confirmation of nominees from the executive branch, many senators in their minds knew very well that some of the nominees were not qualified, but due to personal

interest, those unqualified nominees were confirmed by the plenary of the Liberian Senate.

He laments that decision of confirming unqualified individuals to key positions in government is producing the result of underperforming and bad governance, poor justice system, corruption, and poor performance internationally.

The one time student leader and ranking stalwart of the Movement for Justice in Africa, (MOJA) reflects that while President George Manneh Weah presides over the entire governance process and the country, members of the Legislature should put their house in order to helping the country moves in the right direction, stressing the need to sharpen the justice system, reduce corruption practices and prioritize needs of the people as well as adhering to international best practice.

He calls on fellow senators to rise up to the occasion in order to rescue the country that is falling so speedily in its structure and performance. *- Editing by Jonathan Browne*

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LEC under pressure

following which a team of LEC personnel arrived in the community and did their usual checking and left.

He explains that it was realized that all meters that were on the poles that the guys from the LEC had climbed on got missing, lamenting that since that time, nobody else has gone back to fix their line.

“Let me be real to you guys in studio and the LEC management, we the members of our community have already resolved to chase and seize any LEC

properties that enter our community because every day you hear on the radio power theft but these same LEC guys are the real criminals that [are] causing serious problem for us the Liberian people,” Mr. Wolor, an elder of the Johnsonville community disclosed.

For his part, Montsrrado County District 6 Representative Samuel Enders notes that from the look of things, it seems that things will not materialize anytime soon for the power project for which grounds

have been broken in his district.

He notes that the power project supposed to run from ELWA Junction to the Roberts International Airport.

But Representative Enders notes that he will write a formal communication to the House Plenary in order for the for the House to summon the LEC management to explain why its employees are carrying on these bad deeds within various communities, promising to make that communication public. *-Edited by Winston W.*

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CEMENCO dedicates

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We will support Henry Costa

The political leader of the Alternative National Congress or ANC, Mr. Alex Cummings has vowed here to support embattled talk show host Henry Costa, who doubles as the leader of the Council of Patriots (CoP).

“This is not about an individual per se but we will support and protect his rights as a member of the opposition and citizen of this country. I want to be very emphatic about this because it could be somebody else tomorrow and that’s just unacceptable in the 21st century, in a democracy, to target opposition,” Mr. Cummings told journalists in Harper, Maryland County during a press conference, ahead of his listening tour in that part of the country.

Mr. Costa was reportedly



arrested in the Sierra Leonean capital Freetown, as he attempted to board a flight, days after he was

denied exit through the Roberts International Airport on allegations that he used fake traveling documents to

enter Liberia. His extradition to Liberia is a process which will have to play out. Extraditions, according to legal experts are specifics and must conform to the areas agreed upon by both countries.

Costa’s travel troubles started days after the CoP much trumpeted January 6, 2020 demonstration ended in a bloody clash with riot police who resorted to the use of teargas and hot water canisters to disperse the protesters.

Latest report reaching this paper Wednesday, 15 January quotes the Government of Sierra Leone as saying, as a sovereign democracy, it does not take instruction from any foreign government, and as a strong adherent to basic human rights, it believes Mr. Henry Costa has not violated any Sierra Leonean law or posed any threat to that country, so he is free man.

The statement by the Sierra Leonean government followed report here that the Government of Liberia has requested the extradition of Costa to Liberia.

However, Mr. Cummings said although he doesn’t know all the facts surrounding Costa’s alleged arrest, but the ANC will support and protect his rights like any other opposition member and citizen of Liberia.

“We will support Mr. Costa in making sure that his rights are protected as a citizen of this country and as an opposition member. Today, it’s Henry Costa and Yekeh Kolubah, tomorrow it can be Joe Boakai or Alex Cummings or so. This is unacceptable behavior in a democracy. So again, I’m glad the question was asked”, said Cummings.

Cummings believes that the George Weah-led government is beginning to unlawfully and illegally target members of the opposition.

“I believe that this. . . you know when we issued our last statement on the Protest, we mentioned that this government was beginning to unlawfully and illegally target opposition members and ...I say to you that he (Henry Costa) should not be illegally or unlawfully prosecuted

because he opposes this government. That is the beginning of tyranny and we will forcefully object to this government or any government who decided or tries to do that,” Cummings added.

The ANC Political Leader arrives in Harper, to kick off a nationwide county tour for the purpose of visiting his partisans, stakeholders and citizens and listening to their concerns. Now dubbed the Listening Tour, Cummings emphasized that while he is unable to address everyone’s concerns and provide assistance to everybody as an individual, he needs to listen to the people to enable him and the ANC address the core issues affecting the people when they are opportune to lead the nation.

Mr. Cummings said he would explore building a house in the county but stated that a physical structure does not translate to benefits for the people. He also clarified that he has provided support to TU University’s radio station, now popularly known across the county as TU Radio but has not done much in recent history.

He reflected on his performance in the 2017 elections in Maryland, stating that although he was overwhelmingly welcomed, it did not translate to votes as the people of Maryland voted President Weah who has done nothing for them since he took office.

Cummings stated that his criticisms of the government are always about the issues and that the government has had an opportunity to effect change in the lives of the people, if only they can focus on the economy.

He referenced several recommendations made to government on how to make the economy better but to no avail. He also committed not giving up on ensuring that the government does the right things for the benefit of the people. He committed that the ANC will elect credible candidates for the Senate in 2020 who will go into the legislature with the goal of serving their people and not the goal of getting brown envelopes.

VP Taylor’s blood boils

By Ethel A. Tweh

The leadership of the Liberian Senate says it has taken siege of a communication from the office of Vice President Jewel Howard - Taylor regarding her absence from the opening of the 3rd Session of the 54th Legislature.

On Tuesday, 14 January, Senator Abraham Darius Dillon of Monsterrado County raised the concern of the VP’s absence and requested that it be placed on the agenda for discussion as it is a matter of national concern.

But Senator Albert T. Chie, President Pro Tempore of the Liberian Senate says the Senate has received a communication from the office of the vice president and they will investigate the matter.

The conspicuous absence of the Vice President during commencement of the 3rd Session of the Legislature on Monday appears to demonstrate that the

strained relationship between she and President George Manneh Weah is far from being resolved.

Both leaders have been far apart at official public functions in the past two years of the administration with President Weah being on record of frowning at Mrs. Taylor for making travels abroad without his knowledge amid unauthenticated rumors that the former First Lady has ambition to become President of Liberia.

Mrs. Taylor has dismissed such speculations as unfounded. However, at the close of 2019, Vice President Taylor publicly complained over decision by the Executive to grossly slice her budget for the fiscal period.

Public attention grew here Monday, when President Weah addressed members of both the House of Representatives and the Liberian Senate in joint session for formal opening of the 3rd session of the 54th Legislature without

the presence of the Vice President.

In fulfillment of constitutional requirement that the Legislature shall resume work on second Monday of each year, the leadership of the Capitol, including Speaker Bhofal Chambers, Senate President Pro-Tempore Albert Chie, heads of foreign missions, development partners, members of the judiciary and the cabinet gathered to witness the historic event.

However, the vice president, who was expected to deliver a speech at the ceremony, was conspicuously absent, something, that has been described as an apparent protest to the slicing of her allotment in the National Budget.

Formal hosting of the national flag on the grounds of the Capitol during the ceremony on Monday delayed unusually only to discover that the leadership of the both houses waited aimlessly for VP Taylor’s arrival.

Speculation gathered from the grounds of the Capitol among lawmakers and some influential senior staffers hinted this paper that Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor had reportedly boycotted on grounds that her budgetary allocation for 2019/20 was deeply cut by officials of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.

When the Office of Vice President Taylor was contacted on the allegation, the Press Secretary to the Vice President, Richmond Neufville explained that his boss had written Senate President Pro-Tempore Chie about her absence.—Edited by Winston W. Parley



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Liberia's image slumps

-Sen. Wesseh

River Gee County Senator Conmany Wesseh says Liberia's image internationally is slumping speedily, but and expresses confidence that the country can regain its image this 2020. He notes that the

downward trend of the country's governance process is attributed hugely to all branches of government including; the executive, the legislative and judiciary, saying, they have failed to actively serve the people. Senator Wesseh says

specifically the security sector under the executive is weak and has developed lapses over the period of time, especially, under the Weah administration.

He further laments that the manner and form the Coalition for Democratic Change-led administration handled the reported 'missing billions' and the US\$25 million mop up exercise created serious dark spots on the country's image and had many international partners and friendly nations wondering what is happening to Liberia.

"We were questions many times because the dissemination of information was not coordinated well. Now, who will want to bring investment here with the information of missing billions and President Weah at a point in time saying, people want to kill him?" He asks.

Speaking to this paper in Monrovia recently, Senator Wesseh observes one of the major challenges this administration faces has do

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Sen. Conmany Wesseh

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CEMENCO dedicates US\$14m project today

Liberia's only cement factory, CEMENCO Corporation dedicates a major project today, 16 January valued at US\$14 million.

"Cemenco is pleased to announce to the general public that it will commission its state of the art production facility today January 16, 2020. This new production facility will increase Cemenco's production capacity enabling the company to meet 100%

market demand," a press release issued in Monrovia reads.

The release further notes that with support from its parent company, Heidelberg Cement Group, the second-largest group worldwide in building materials, the dream was realized.

The project is to provide a Roller Press to increase production by 30 percent, which amounts to 700,000 tons per year and the latest generation of silo with a



capacity of 2,000 tons, equipped with a bulk cement loading point, to deliver cement in tanker trucks.

It also include a shrink wrap palletizer, coupled with a second bagging machine, to secure storage during the rainy seasons, and an Eco Hoppers allowing unloading at the port without any atmospheric pollution or risk of contamination with food vessels.

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