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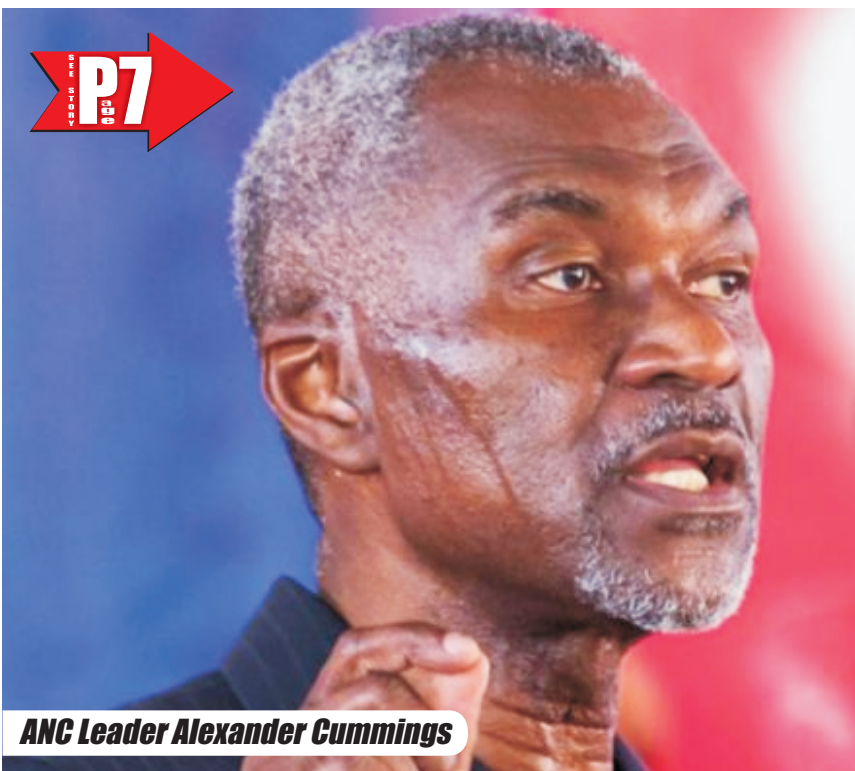
No amnesty for war criminals

-Sen. Wesseh



Senator Conmany Wesseh

P11



ANC Leader Alexander Cummings

P7

Cummings tours hospitals

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Continental News

Polygamy for women in South Africa prompts outcry

A proposal by the South African government to legalise polyandry - when a woman has more than one husband at the same time - has led to howls of protest from conservative quarters.

This does not surprise Professor Collis Machoko, a renowned academic on the topic.

The objections are "about control," he told the BBC. "African societies are not ready for true equality. We don't know what to do with women we cannot control."

South Africa has one of the world's most liberal constitutions, embracing same-sex marriages for all and polygamy for men. Businessman and TV personality Musa Mseleku - who has four wives - is among those opposed to polyandry.

"This will destroy African culture. What about the children of those people? How will they know their identity?" asks Mr Mseleku, who stars in a South African reality TV show about his polygamous

family.

"The woman cannot now take the role of the man. It's unheard of. Will the woman now pay lobola [bride price] for the man. Will the man be expected to take her surname?" Prof Machoko researched polyandry in his country of birth - neighbouring Zimbabwe. He spoke to 20 women and 45 co-husbands who practised it, even though such

marriages are socially taboo and not legally recognised.

"Polyandry, because it is shunned by parts of society, has been forced underground. The secrecy is similar to the one found in freemasons," he said.

"When confronted by somebody whom they do not trust or do not know, they even deny that such a

marriage exists. All this is because of fear of reprisals and persecution." The participants in Prof Machoko's study all lived separately but were committed to the polyandrous union and were open about it among themselves.

"One wife nourished the idea of wanting to be a polyandrous woman when she was in grade six [aged around 12 years] after learning about how the queen bee in a hive hosts many bee co-husbands," the professor said.

When she was an adult she started having sex with multiple partners who were all aware of each other.

"Four of her current nine co-husbands were in that first group of boyfriends." In polyandry, the woman often initiates the relationships, and invites the husbands to join her union. Some pay the bride price, others opt to contribute to her livelihood. She has the power to remove a co-husband if she believes he is destabilising her other relationships.

Prof Machoko said love was the main reason the men he interviewed said they had agreed to be co-husbands. They did not want to risk losing their wife. Some men also referred to the fact that they

did not satisfy their wives sexually, agreeing to the suggestion of a co-husband to avoid divorce or affairs.

Another reason was infertility - some men consented to the wife taking another husband so that she could have children. In this way, the men "saved face" in public and avoided being stigmatised as "emasculated". Prof Machoko said he was unaware of polyandrous marriages in South Africa. Nevertheless, gender rights activists have asked the government to legalise such unions in the interest of equality and choice, as the law currently permits a man to take more than one wife. Their proposal has been included in a document - officially known as a Green Paper - that the government has released for public comment as it embarks on the biggest overhaul of marriage laws since white-minority rule ended in 1994.

"It's important to remember that this Green Paper sets to uphold human rights and we cannot lose sight of that," said Charlene May, an advocate at the Women's Legal Centre, a law firm that fights for women's rights.

"We cannot reject law reform because it challenges certain patriarchal views in our society." BBC



Somali region executes 21 al-Shabab fighters

Twenty-one men have been executed in Somalia's semi-autonomous state of Puntland after they were convicted of being members of the Islamist militant group al-Shabab.

They were sentenced by a military court in Galkayo and shot by a firing squad.

State radio said 18 of the men had carried out assassinations and bombings over more than a decade.

As they were being executed the group attacked

a town in another part of Somalia, reportedly killing soldiers.

Similar death sentences have been handed down by courts in other parts of Somalia before.

But this is reported to be the largest number of executions of al-Shabab members ever in Puntland. The authorities in Puntland had vowed to bring to justice any members of al-Shabab or people found assisting the group in its attacks. The BBC's Africa editor Will Ross says the Islamist group still poses a huge

threat to Somalia's stability.

Al-Shabab controls much of the country's southern and central parts, and research published in October by the Hiraal Institute said the militants raised more cash than the Somali government.

As the executions were being carried out on Sunday, al-Shabab fighters stormed the town of Wisil in the Mudug region. There are some reports that at least 20 soldiers were killed when an army base was attacked. BBC



The Somali government has been fighting al-Shabab for more than a decade

Church bombing injures two in DR Congo



At least two people were injured when a makeshift bomb exploded inside a Roman Catholic church in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

It happened shortly before a children's confirmation ceremony was due to begin in the city of Beni.

Photos from the scene show

smashed wooden pews.

Although it's not yet known who was behind the bombing, a rebel group called the Allied Defence Forces - or ADF - carries out frequent attacks in the region and has targeted churches before.

In May two imams known for speaking out against ADF violence were shot dead - one of them inside a mosque. BBC

EDITORIAL

Depoliticizing the COVID-19 fight

RECENT OFFER BY the leader of the opposition Alternative National Congress Alexander B. Cummings to help the Government of Liberia in the current fight against the coronavirus, and subsequent acceptance by President George Manneh Weah is a welcome signal that should unite Liberians around a national cause void of politics.

MR. CUMMINGS IN a recent statement offered to work with the government in whatever reasonable way in tackling the resurgence, which experts say is the Delta variant.

HE SAID THE Cummings Africa Foundation is open to working with authorities of the Ministry of Health to identify urgent gaps in the national response to yield quick interventions. The ANC leader revealed that he has sent out SOS call to the international community, especially the United States, the European Union, and all friendly nations of the world, for much-needed help with vaccines, medical supplies, ventilators, and other support for hospitals and community clinics across the country.

IN NO TIME, President Weah accepted the offer from the opposition politician, indicating that he is willing to listen to and work with Mr. Cummings, void of political hindrance, adding "The coronavirus is no joke...Liberians are losing their lives every day to the plague. During a national crisis of this nature and magnitude, all hands of good citizens, void of political affiliation, are required on deck."

President Weah said if the help being offered by Cummings is without a political trace, it would go a long way in beefing up the health sector and finding a remedy to the unanticipated health crisis.

WE WELCOME THIS spirit of collaboration, particularly in times of national crisis such as the current health pandemic that has taken the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of Liberians, and millions around the world.

WE CHALLENGE OTHER opposition political leaders in the country to emulate the ANC leader's example, and the corresponding reception from the President in joining hands to kick coronavirus out of Liberia.

IT IS IN such critical period when the nation needs all of its best to stand up for a united cause. The gesture by both Weah and Cummings clearly demonstrate leadership that transcends selfish interest and blinded self-ego.

LIBERIA IS OUR common patrimony, and whether you are in position, opposition or no position, come out with strategies and tangible support to save the ship from sinking, because when this nation goes down or when the people perish, we would have no place to come home and politicians would have no one to lead.

LASTLY, THE CORONAVIRUS is deadly. It does not pick and choose. It has neither special friends nor foes, but rather moves on the rampage, destroying precious souls. Its next victim could be a current official or a politician aspiring to become the next President or our future scientists, doctors, educators, engineers, pastors and imams or social workers.

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+231-775407211 Managing Editor: Othello B. Garblah; Editor-In-Chief: Jonathan

COMMENTARY

By Richard Haass

Taming the New Wild West

NEW YORK - During the Cold War, summit meetings between the United States and the Soviet Union were often dominated by agreements to set limits on nuclear weapons and the systems built to deliver them. The US and Russia still discuss these topics, but at their recent meeting in Geneva, US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin focused in no small part on how to regulate behavior in a different realm: cyberspace. The stakes are every bit as great.

It's not hard to see why. Cyberspace and the internet are central to the workings of modern economies, societies, political systems, militaries, and just about everything else, which makes digital infrastructure a tempting target for those seeking to cause extraordinary disruption and damage at minimal cost.

Moreover, states and nonstate actors can carry out cyberattacks with a high degree of deniability, which adds to the temptation to develop and use these capabilities. We know when and from where a missile is launched, but it can take a long time to discover that a cyberattack has occurred, and figuring out who is responsible can take even longer. Such a slow and uncertain attribution process can render the threat of retaliation, which is at the heart of deterrence, beyond reach.

What put this issue squarely on the agenda of the Biden-Putin meeting is that Russia has grown increasingly aggressive in cyberspace, whether by creating false accounts on social media to influence American politics or by gaining access to critical infrastructure, such as power plants. Reinforcing the issue's salience is the reality that Russia is not alone: China reportedly gained access in 2015 to 22 million US government personnel files - which include information that could help determine who was or is working for the US intelligence community.

Likewise, North Korea attacked Sony (and compromised all sorts of private communications) in an effort to block distribution of a satirical film that depicted the assassination of the country's leader. This all adds up to a latter-day Wild West, with many armed people operating in a space governed by few laws or sheriffs to enforce them.

Traditionally, the US has favored a largely unstructured internet - "open, interoperable, secure, and reliable," according to a policy set a decade ago - in order to promote the free flow of ideas and information. But US enthusiasm for such an internet is waning as foes exploit this openness to undermine its democracy and steal intellectual property important to the functioning and comparative advantage of its economy.

The question - easier to pose than to answer - is where to draw lines and how to get others to accept them. For one thing, the US is not without its contradictions, as it, too, carries out espionage in cyberspace (think of it as the modern equivalent of steaming open envelopes to read someone else's mail) and reportedly, along with Israel, installed malware to sabotage Iran's nuclear weapons program. So, any ban on activities in cyberspace would presumably be partial.

One promising idea would be to follow up on what Biden and Putin discussed, namely, to ban the targeting of critical infrastructure, including but not limited to dams, oil and gas production facilities, electrical grids, health-care facilities, nuclear power plants and nuclear weapon command and control systems, airports, and major factories. Cyber capability can become a weapon of mass destruction when such important sites are compromised.

Even with such an agreement, verifying compliance could prove impossible, so the US would also want to introduce a degree of deterrence to ensure that parties to such a pledge honor it. Deterrence could involve the declared willingness to carry out symmetrical responses: if you target or attack our critical infrastructure, we will do the same to yours. Deterrence could also be asymmetrical: if you target or attack our facilities, we will sanction you or target your interests elsewhere.

Any such agreement would also need to be buttressed by unilateral action, given the stakes and the reality that other agreements (such as China's 2015 pledge not to steal intellectual property) have been violated. For example, the US would want to take steps to reduce the vulnerability of its high-value systems.

It would also be necessary to declare or negotiate that claims of ignorance or denials of government involvement in aggressive cyber activity, such as when Putin said his government had nothing to do with Russian ransomware attacks, will not be accepted. The analogy here is to terrorism: in the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks, the US made clear that it would not distinguish between terrorist groups or governments that provided them support or sanctuary. Russia would therefore be held accountable for the actions of groups acting from its territory. Insisting on accountability should increase Russia's incentive to rein in such behavior.

Over time, a US-Russia pact could serve as a model that could be joined by China, Europe, and others. If it were extended to China, prohibitions on the theft of intellectual property (and penalties for violating the ban) could be added. None of this adds up to disarmament, but it is the cyber equivalent of arms control, which is as good a place to start as any.

OPINION

By Anne O. Krueger

America's Muddled Industrial Policy

WASHINGTON, DC - When a government sets out to “pick winners” and support designated industries, products, or firms through subsidies, tariff protections, tax breaks, and other measures, it is pursuing an industrial policy. For advocates of this approach, the idea is that the state should step in to boost “particular industries that are considered strategically important” when it is expected that markets and the private sector will not do so on their own.

Despite its long history of failures, industrial policy is back on the agenda in the United States. In early June, the US Senate passed the US Innovation and Competition Act (USICA) of 2021, which envisions a more active role for government in the economy. According to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, the legislation will “jumpstart American competitiveness and make one of the most significant government investments in American innovation and manufacturing in generations.” The bill will now go to the House of Representatives, where it is expected to pass.

Most people agree that the government has an important and appropriate role to play in providing infrastructure, education, health care, social services, and other public goods such as basic research. But the USICA is full of provisions that are geared toward other objectives.

As analysts from the American Action Forum explain, the bill incorporates several provisions that are meant to counter “Chinese influence domestically and abroad.” These include increased funding for applied research through the National Science Foundation (NSF), the creation of more domestic research hubs, and stronger measures to increase diversity in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) educational and research activities.

Although these provisions may well achieve their objectives for regional development and diversity, they are unlikely to strengthen America’s manufacturing and defense capabilities. The NSF is being directed to support applied research that could be pursued more productively by the private sector; and a new NSF directorate would be tasked with ensuring an equitable distribution of research funds to create domestic jobs. Yet as The Wall Street Journal’s editorial board points out, “effective research is about ideas, not jobs.”

The bill also allocates resources for pairing weaker research universities with top ones (defined as those that received more than \$100 million of federal research funding within the past three years); for improving STEM education in rural communities; and for funding domestic technology hubs that can emulate the successes of Silicon Valley. Yet while the American education system has weaknesses, its research universities aren’t one of them. America’s top research universities are a source of national strength on the world stage. To shift resources away from them deliberately in an effort to assist weaker institutions makes little sense from either an investment or a strategic perspective.

Moreover, there are far better ways to pursue the USICA’s various social and economic goals. Chief among these is to strengthen technical training. There is ample evidence that the US has a shortage of workers with the technical qualifications needed for today’s labor market. Other countries have closed this gap by developing more effective training and apprenticeship programs. Improving curricula and school performance at the elementary and secondary levels would equip more young people for further technical training and for science education in universities.

While strengthening the US education system would yield large returns over the longer run, reforming immigration rules to admit more foreign STEM workers would strengthen America’s research capabilities immediately. These measures to improve the quality of the US labor force would do far more for innovation and competitiveness than many of the USICA’s provisions.

Elsewhere in the text of the bill, the authors have presumed, dubiously, that the government is good at identifying and funding specific applications of basic research. For example, they focus heavily on semiconductors, allocating \$52 billion for a new “Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors for America Fund” at the Department of the Treasury (\$24 billion of which would be appropriated for 2022 alone).

These funds are to be used to encourage the construction of domestic facilities “for the fabrication, testing, or advanced packaging of semiconductors at mature technology nodes.” But as Scott Lincicome of the Cato Institute has documented, the US semiconductor industry is already healthy and profitable, accounting for nearly 50% of global semiconductor sales. Recounting the history of failed efforts in the 1980s and 1990s to support domestic semiconductor production, he points out that most of America’s imported semiconductors come from its allies, further reducing the need for a strategic intervention in the sector.

Governments have a poor track record of identifying “winners” - be it a company or a category of technology - whereas private companies have proved better at transforming new discoveries into new products or cost savings. That is why the US state traditionally has stuck to funding basic research.

The USICA’s aim of strengthening America’s research capabilities is uncontroversial and praiseworthy, in principle. But while the NSF’s funding certainly should be increased, that doesn’t mean it needs a new directorate. And while American education and training certainly should be improved and made more accessible, that doesn’t mean the government should oversee applied research, or that funding should be redirected away from world-leading universities.

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O-P-E-D

By Michael Spence

How Great Powers Should Compete

MILAN - At the recent G7 and NATO gatherings, China was singled out as a strategic competitor, a calculating trading partner, a technological and national-security threat, a human-rights violator, and a champion of authoritarianism globally. China denounced these characterizations, which its embassy in the United Kingdom called “lies, rumors, and baseless accusations.” The risks that such rhetoric poses should not be underestimated.

Many in the West disapprove of China’s single-party governance structure, just as vocal elements in China disparage Western liberal democracy, which they argue is in terminal decline. The real danger, however, is that officials on both sides seem to have embraced a zero-sum framework, according to which the two sides cannot simply co-exist; one side must “win.”

By this logic, both sides must always be trying to crush the competition. So, for China, the West - especially the United States - must be seeking to reverse its rise (which, in reality, was facilitated in no small part by the US). And, for the West, China is determined to leverage its economic might, including its huge internal market, to reshape the global system in its image and to its benefit.

The more often leaders repeat these narratives, the more likely ordinary citizens are to become convinced that they are true. Rising fear and resentment on both sides increases the risk that the narratives will become self-fulfilling prophecies.

In the meantime, the focus on bilateral competition obscures the needs and interests of people in emerging markets and developing economies. Yes, China and the West espouse some version of multilateralism. But unfettered strategic competition precludes effective multilateralism, not least by disrupting trade and technology transfer - a crucial driver of development.

China and the West urgently need a new framework for understanding the state of the world and their place in it. Such a framework must recognize, first and foremost, that properly regulated economic competition is not a zero-sum game.

In static terms, normal economic competition bolsters price efficiency and helps to align supply and demand. In dynamic terms, it leads to what Joseph Schumpeter dubbed “creative destruction” - a powerful mechanism for translating knowledge, ideas, and experiments into new products, services, and cost-reducing processes. In other words, it leads to advances in human well-being.

There is no reason to think that cross-border competition cannot produce the same benefits. On the contrary, experience shows that it can, so long as supporting legal and regulatory structures are in place and the playing field is level. Admittedly, delivering these conditions - especially a level playing field - is difficult on an international scale, but that doesn’t mean it can’t be done.

Strategic competition is a different story. After all, there are powerful dual-use technologies - often emerging from non-defense sectors - that advance both economic and national-security objectives. Leaders should not pretend this is not the case.

But that, too, does not mean countries are condemned to play a zero-sum game, focused on making (or keeping) others weak. Instead, China and the West should agree to achieve and preserve a degree of economic, technological, and defense parity. This means abandoning efforts to block the diffusion of knowledge and technology - an enterprise that is rarely effective in the long run.

Such an approach would avoid greater fragmentation of the global economic system, which is particularly damaging to third parties. And it would deter offensive use of military or technological capabilities - vital in an environment where neither side trusts the other.

But a system that minimizes the need for trust does not justify mutual villainization. There is nothing wrong with preferring the governance system in one’s own country, including its particular balance of individual rights and collective interests. Such preferences are based on factors like personal experience, education, and values, not objective fact. There is no clear evidence that one particular system of governance guarantees economic and social development. Both democracies and single-party systems have produced good and bad development outcomes. It seems that the most important precondition for development is leaders’ commitment to an inclusive vision of human well-being.

When we assume that our own preferred system is objectively superior, and demonize alternatives, we end up mis-framing the terms and likely outcomes of economic and strategic competition. Worse, competition over governance distracts from more productive dimensions of interdependence.

Economic, technological, and military competition is inevitable. The question is whether it will be constructive. As it stands, the world is moving toward an equilibrium in which it will not be, with third parties, or “non-protagonists,” suffering the most.

But it is not too late to change course. Given the lack of information and trust, together with internal political dynamics, doing so will take considerable courage from leaders on both sides. The first step is for both sides to renounce the kind of provocative rhetoric we have seen in recent weeks.

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FEATURE

FEATURE

The world needs to act now before COVID-19 overwhelms Africa

By Mosoka P. Fallah And Zacharia Kafuko

Africa is woefully unprepared for a massive third wave of the kind that has been faced by South Asia recently.

So far Africa has survived the first and second waves of the COVID-19 pandemic in spite of its weak health systems, limited health care workforce and crumbling infrastructure. The continent as a whole experienced low official case and death rates either due to inadequate testing (and treatment) or other factors such as age, genetics and previous infections. This has led to a degree of complacency- many countries have abandoned social distancing, mask wearing, and hand washing while others have encouraged large social, political and religious gatherings. Decreased community testing has undermined any efforts to determine the true magnitude of community transmission or the spread of new variants. At the same time, Africa has the fewest vaccines of any continent in the world, with only 32 million people receiving a dose, from a total population of over 1.3 billion people. Compare this to India where 255.3 million people have received one dose and the US where more than 311 million doses have been administered. Accordingly, Dr. Matshidiso Moeiti, Regional Director for the WHO in Africa, has pointed out that, "In sub-Saharan Africa, we are at an average of one COVID-19 vaccine dose per 100 people, compared to a global average of 23, and 62 in high-income countries." This translates to 1% vaccines access, while the global average is 23% and the Global North is 62%.

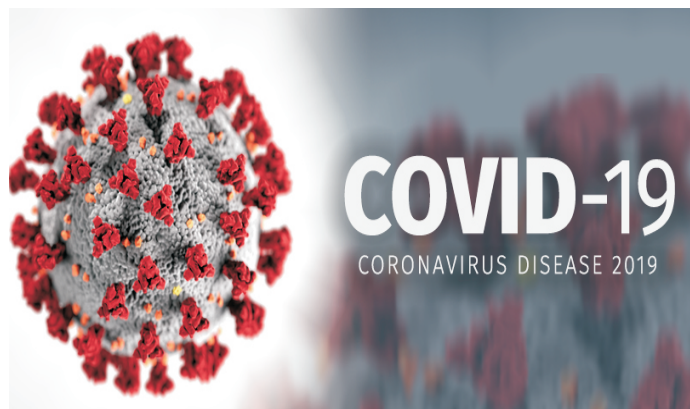
The continent has a dismally low supply of oxygen cylinders, monitors and other relevant tools needed to treat infected patients. Added to its original low supplies, the continent has received just 3,700 oxygen concentrators, 1,300 patient monitors and 700 ventilators through the United Nations Supply Portal since the start of the pandemic. For a continent with 1.3 billion people, these paltry supplies are nowhere near sufficient.

Dr. Moeti has spoken about the status of the pandemic in Africa on 10th June: "In the past week, 88,000 new COVID-19 cases were reported - an increase of 9 percent over the previous week. We are seeing rising cases in South Africa and Uganda, and cases have increased abruptly in 8 countries,



including Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria."

In Liberia, the B117 COVID-19 variant has been detected with a 64% mortality rate within 28 days, which is deeply worrying. The country has reported 202 cases in the past week, the highest number of cases in any previous one week period. In Uganda



patients are dying outside hospitals while waiting for beds. In Namibia, COVID-19 has overwhelmed all existing hospitals leading to the suspension of all life-threatening surgeries, while in South Africa the

intensive care hospitals are filling up at alarming rates. In West Africa, there are one to four variant strains in all 16 ECOWAS countries.

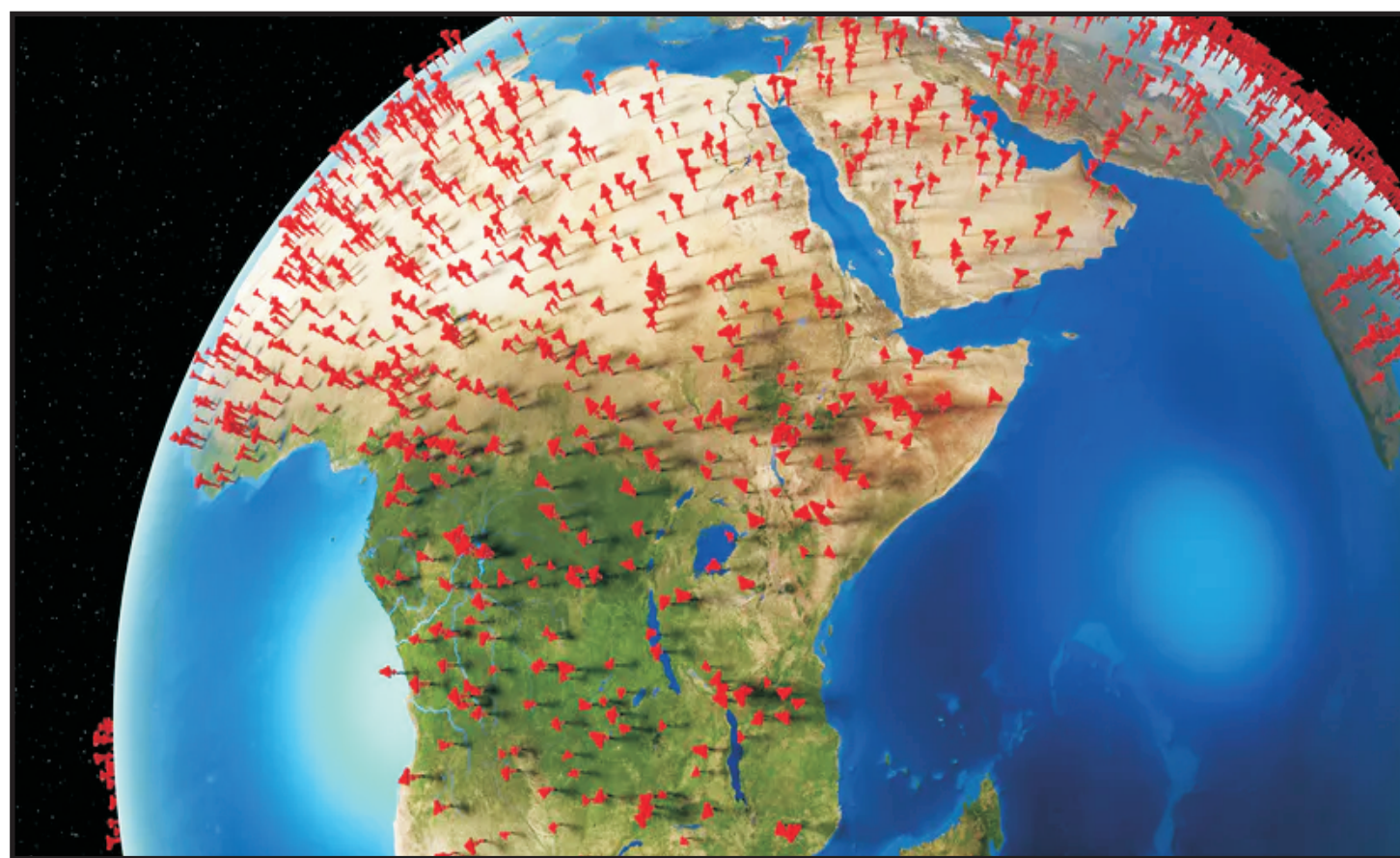
Africa is woefully unprepared for a massive third wave of the kind that has been faced by South Asia recently.

The COVAX platform-created to make vaccines available to the most vulnerable population has been hamstrung by vaccine nationalism and vaccine diplomacy. Most countries in Africa have received less than 2% of the vaccines expected through the COVAX platform. Ghana, the first country in Africa to receive the COVAX doses got 600,000 doses for its 31.4 million population- representing a 0.96% potential coverage for the two-dose vaccine regimen. Zambia received 228,000 doses against its 18.8 million population translating to a 0.6% potential coverage of the double dose vaccine. If we are to support African countries to vaccinate their populations, the COVAX donors need to rapidly ramp up their deliveries or we need to find ways to arrange bilateral vaccine donations.

We have been working with Ebola response veterans and a global team of doctors, scientists, bioethicists, and professors to advance practical solutions to avert a COVID-19 driven catastrophe in Africa. This involves a focus on vaccine donations now to the countries most in need; additional funding for COVAX to purchase and distribute 225 million more doses of vaccines for Africa; and tiered pricing for vaccines so African countries can procure vaccines directly.

To overcome the challenges we face, the world must come together- as it did during the Ebola crisis of 2014/15- to overcome geopolitical differences, counter bottlenecks in production and increase the pace of vaccinations globally. All countries should immediately underwrite initiatives aimed at increasing access to vaccines by supporting ethical standards that call for improved global vaccine access.

The COVID-19 situation in India recently has been an unmitigated disaster- the potential for a similar crisis in Africa is clear. Our continent is not adequately equipped to handle a major surge of the coronavirus. We must prepare for the worst and hope for the best.



MORE HEADLINE NEWS

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GOL suspends graduation, gala day, queen contest

-as COVID-19 rages

By Lewis S. Teh

As a means of curtailing rapid spread of the Corona virus here, the Government of Liberia, through Ministry of Education with immediate effect, suspends all social programs in schools including graduation, gala day, queen

gala day, field trip, parade, queen contest exercises until at such time the COVID-19 situation has ceased and the Ministries of Health and Education give permission or authorization.

At the same time Minister Sonii mandates school authorities to identify key content areas within the curriculum to complete all

Health and the National Public Health Institute (NPHIL) are to be strictly implemented and school authorities are herewith given the exclusive authority to send home students, who may fail to comply with these prescribed regulations.

However, Minister Sonii adds that younger children who are unable to go home by themselves should be kept in an isolated room, while their parents are being contacted to come for them.

He reiterates that school health kits have been distributed to all schools across the country, and that in the event where a school has not receive a health kits, it should immediately call 1416 or 0886-758-578 for intervention.

He says the Ministry of Health is authorized to conduct unannounced spot checks at schools uninterrupted, saying that the choice of school visit is left to the Ministry to determine the particular community the virus is on the increase.

Meanwhile, Minister Sonii cautions students desirous of pursuing bachelor degrees at the LICOSESS college, not to attend on grounds that the institution is authorized to offer associate degrees only, not bachelor degrees for now.

Editing by Jonathan Browne



contest, parade, and field trip, amongst others.

In a news conference Friday, June 25, 2021, at the Ministerial Complex in Congo Town, the Minister of Education, Prof. D Ansu Sonii, Sr. said, there will be absolutely no graduation,

requirements for the school year, noting that the Ministry is holding consultations leading to an adjustment in the closure of the school year from September 30 to August 30, 2021.

He emphasizes that the health protocols and regulations put in place by the Ministry of

UP lawmakers urged to support calls for war crimes court

The former ruling Unity Party strongly calls on its lawmakers at the Capitol to support and advocate for the establishment of the War and Economic Crimes Court, saying it will seriously frown

of the party”, says a press release.

The Unity Party reaffirms its commitment to the establishment of the War and Economic Crimes Court in Liberia as recommended by the



on any action(s) taken by any of its lawmakers to stall, thwart or contradict the party's official position on the establishment of the Court in Liberia.

“All UP lawmakers are encouraged to act in accordance with the decision

Truth and Reconciliation Committee, in the interest of justice.

In a two-paragraph press release, the party says it believes the establishment of the court will discourage the culture of impunity that currently exists in Liberia.

U.S. Embassy hails strides against trafficking of narcotics

The U.S. Embassy in Monrovia salutes the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA) Director General Marcus Zehyoue, who it says assumed the mantle of Director General last year after the sad passing of Marcus Soko.

In a statement to commemorate International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking over the weekend, the Embassy notes that in his tenure so far, Director General Zehyoue has followed in the footsteps of his mentor, the late Marcus Soko, by leading efforts to reduce illicit drug trafficking in Liberia and to strengthen Liberia's Drug Law.

The LDEA and its Liberian security partners have made tremendous strides to reduce the trafficking of narcotics in Liberia. The LDEA continues



to seize and destroy illicit drugs that enter Liberia through its borders and international ports, reducing the negative impact of

these drugs on the lives of Liberians. We encourage the LDEA and Liberian security institutions to continue to

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work together to combat illicit drug trafficking”, a release from the Embassy reads.

It says the primary duty of every government is to protect its citizens from threats, which include drug abuse and illicit trafficking. “But it is also the responsibility of ordinary citizens to support efforts to educate Liberian youth about the dangers of drug abuse.”

The United States

expresses delight to provide support for this year's International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking commemoration.

The U.S. Embassy Monrovia's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) office vows to continue to work closely with the LDEA and other law enforcement agencies and the Ministry of Justice in reducing

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 10

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MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Cummings tours hospitals

Days after President George Manneh Weah welcomed opposition Alternative National Congress (ANC) political leader Alexander B. Cummings' offers to help the government curbs the spread of the coronavirus here, the Cummings Africa Foundation has embarked on needs assessment visits to few hospitals in Montserrado, Margibi and Nimba Counties.

"As the COVID crisis worsens with an increase in infections and several deaths being reported, I am pleased to share that the Cummings Africa Foundation will get involved to help resolve this crisis," a statement released over the weekend revealed.

The foundation disclosed that a small team including

defeated "if we follow the rules and guidelines as provided by Ministry of Health."

He urged that people must continue to wear their masks, wash their hands frequently, stay away from crowds, take the COVID tests and vaccines and go to the nearest health center when they feel sick.

He continued that just as Liberians defeated Ebola together and collectively, they can defeat COVID, saying they must stay safe, follow the rules and also pray for the country.

Recently Mr. Cummings made an international appeal for help as the coronavirus rages in Liberia, and also offered to work with the government in whatever reasonable way in tackling the resurgence, which experts say, is the Delta variant.

Cummings also proposed the need to solicit additional support from Liberians in the diaspora and the donor community; increase the hazard pay of existing health workers and employ more health workers contact tracers and to immediately close all schools and ensure the completion of the semester from home, pending the end of the crisis.

Additionally, he suggested the need to work with community leaders and community-based organizations to create awareness and help with enforcement of Government of Liberia new regulations instead of the use of paramilitary forces; and to set up a hotline where people who have families or friends with severe symptoms of COVID-19 can call for help and be linked to the nearest isolation or health center.

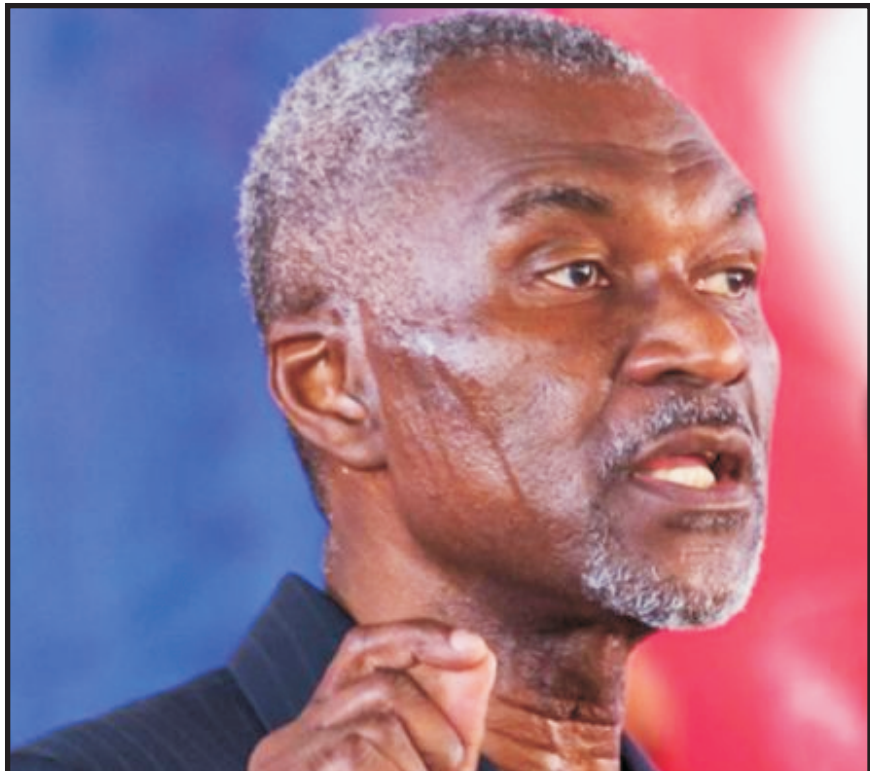
Following the ANC political leader's offer, President Weah welcomed the gesture, saying he is willing to listen to and work with Mr. Cummings, void of political hindrance.

"The coronavirus is no joke...Liberians are losing their lives every day to the plague. During a national crisis of this nature and magnitude, all hands of good citizens, void of political affiliation, are required on deck," Weah noted.

Mr. Weah recalled that he too worked with the regime of former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf during the Ebola outbreak here saying, this is what citizens do.

He added that he did the work during the Ebola crisis not because of President Sirleaf, but it was his desire to help save the lives of fellow citizens.

President Weah said if the help being offered by Cummings is without a political trace, it would go a long way in beefing up the health sector and finding a remedy to the unanticipated health crisis.



Dr. Wede Brownell, the Country Director of the Cummings Africa Foundation, Mr. Cummings and his Chief of Staff Atty. Moriah Yeakula paid a visit to the Fidelity Hospital on 20th Street, Sinkor, Monrovia.

"We were pleased to meet with the administrators and are grateful for their cooperation," the statement added.

The ANC political leader warned Liberians that COVID is raging but it can be

He said the Cummings Africa Foundation is open to working with authorities at the Ministry of Health to identify urgent gaps in the national response to yield quick interventions.

Cummings in his statement made series of recommendations to the Weah administration to take siege of the health situation which include to recast the budget to provide funding for the purchase of beds, personal protective equipment (PPEs), masks, vaccines, ventilators, oxygen, and massive awareness.

MFDP begins new IPSAS effective July 1, 2021

The Government of Liberia through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (Comptroller and Accountant General's Department) in consultation with the Auditor General of Liberia begins implementation of the November 8, 2017, updated version of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) Cash Basis of Accounting for the preparation of the government financial statements effect July 1, 2021, of the 2020/2021 fiscal year. A press release issued

for establishing the accounting rules and standards for central government. These will be set out in accounting regulations, established under this Act, and further detailed in instructions and guidelines issued by the Minister".

The release says implementation of the updated or modernized IPSAS Cash Basis of Accounting for all agencies is in recognition of recent updates to several standards by IPSAS Board in 2017, and their impacts on Cash Basis IPSAS as adopted by the Government of Liberia in 2009 for preparation of GOL



recently by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning advises ministries, agencies and commissions that are reporting using the IPSAS Cash Basis of Accounting to prepare financial statements using the updated version of IPSAS CASH BASIS - 2017.

The government's instruction is in compliance with the Amended and Restated Public Financial Management Act of Oct 22, 2019, Section 47.2, which states " The Minister in consultation with the Auditor General, shall be responsible

financial statements. Accordingly, a period of ninety days have been given to ministries, agencies and commissions as of the July 1, 2021 timeline to prepare the financial statements through the updated version.

Ministries, Agencies, Commissions and All Reporting on Government of Liberia Expenditures are requested to contact the Department of the Comptroller and Accountant General at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning for further details and guidance. -Press Release

Cont'd from page 6

U.S. Embassy hails

drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

The release notes that on June 26, communities all over the world, including in Liberia, marked the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Created by the United Nations on December 7, 1987, the day, also called World Drug Day, provides an opportunity to increase

awareness about the negative impact of illicit drugs.

U.S. President Joseph R. Biden has made clear that addressing addiction is an urgent priority for his administration and underscored the "heartbreaking toll" that addiction can have on individuals, families, and communities.

The theme of World Drug Day 2021 is "Share Facts on Drugs,

Save Lives." US Embassy Monrovia notes the problem of drug abuse and addiction, which can be linked to genetic predisposition, mental health circumstances, and environmental issues, is compounded by misinformation of many kinds.

However, it adds that this year's theme encourages the public to turn to reliable

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sources, such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), to learn more about health risks, drug policies, and evidence-based approaches to preventing and combating addiction.

In Liberia, drug abuse among young people is a growing concern with both parents and advocacy groups calling for stern intervention, particularly traffickers. -Press Release

Français

Le Président Weahouvre les bras à Cummings

Le président George Weah a salué l'offre du leader politique de l'Alternative National Congress d'aider le gouvernement à freiner la propagation du coronavirus au Libéria.

Le chef de l'ANC, dans un communiqué publié mercredi, a exprimé sa volonté de rejoindre le gouvernement dans la lutte contre la nouvelle souche de la covid-19, la variante Delta, qui se propage rapidement à travers le Libéria.

« Je propose de travailler avec le gouvernement de toutes les manières possibles pour nous aider à sortir de cette situation. La Fondation Cummings Africa est prête à travailler avec les autorités du ministère de la Santé pour identifier certaines des lacunes urgentes dans la réponse nationale pour lesquelles nous pouvons intervenir rapidement », a déclaré Cummings dans sa déclaration plus patriotique que politique.

Dans une interview, M.

Weah s'est félicité du geste posé par Cummings et s'est dit prêt à l'écouter et à travailler avec lui, sans entrave politique.

« Le coronavirus n'est pas une blague... Les Libériens perdent la vie chaque jour à cause de la maladie. Lors d'une crise nationale de cette nature et de cette ampleur, toutes les mains des bons citoyens, peu importe leur affiliation politique, sont les

bienvenues », a dit Weah.

Il a rappelé avoir travaillé avec le régime de l'ancienne présidente Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf lors de l'épidémie d'EBOLA. « C'est ce que doivent faire les citoyens. Je ne l'avais pas fait à cause de la présidente Sirleaf, mais plutôt pour aider à sauver la

▶ CONT'D ON PAGE 9



Côte d'Ivoire : le village de Mama se prépare au retour de Laurent Gbagbo, l'enfant du pays

Dix jours après son retour en Côte d'Ivoire, l'ancien président ivoirien Laurent Gbagbo se rend, ce dimanche 27 juin, à Mama, son village natal situé à 300 km d'Abidjan, dans le centre-ouest de la Côte d'Ivoire et non loin de la ville de Gagnoa. Festivités et célébrations sont au programme pour le retour de l'enfant du pays.

Laurent Gbagbo doit d'abord se rendre dans le village voisin de Blouzon pour se recueillir sur la tombe de sa mère, décédée alors qu'il était en détention provisoire à La Haye, puis il retrouvera les siens à Mama à quelques kilomètres de là. Mama qui se prépare donc à célébrer ce retour tant attendu.

Sur la grande place de Mama, qui porte le nom de l'ancien président, un groupe de femmes venues de plusieurs villages alentours, et même de Yamoussoukro, attendent déjà le retour du « Woody » dans son pays natal.

Certaines arborent des tee-shirts à l'effigie d'« Opah », le « papa » en bété, sur lesquels des messages de bienvenue sont adressés à Laurent Gbagbo. D'autres sont habillées de robe en pagne ocre, un tissu

renommé spécialement pour l'occasion « Allons à Gagno », la capitale de la région du Ghô. « Je veux voir le corps de mon président pour savoir s'il est réellement à Gagnoa », dit l'une d'elle. « C'est la joie, nous sommes excitées, nous sommes animées par la joie. C'est pourquoi nous sommes venues avant son arrivée. Nous l'attendons », rajoute une autre. De l'autre côté de la place, on s'active pour installer des tonnelles, et régler la sono. Hervé Goubo porte deux grands cylindres métalliques sur les épaules : « Ce que nous sommes

en train de faire, c'est pour que les gens s'asseyent. Mais vous savez, avec l'ampleur de ce qui arrive, ce n'est pas sûr que tout le monde ait de la place. Les 2 000 chaises ne pourront pas suffire avec tous ces gens ». Les femmes, les enfants et les hommes vont danser. Même si les informations ne parviennent aux organisateurs qu'au compte-goutte quant au programme de la visite de Laurent Gbagbo, les membres du comité local d'organisation promettent qu'il y aura foule pour.



Éditorial

COVID-19 : Le gouvernement devrait aller au-delà des simples mesures barrières

Le fait que le gouvernement du Libéria, par l'intermédiaire du ministère de la Santé, a publié la semaine dernière des directives nationales révisées sur la COVID-19 après l'augmentation du nombre de décès et des personnes infectées au quotidien montre que le gouvernement joue du bout des lèvres avec le peuple libérien quant à la gestion de la pandémie.

C'est un secret de polichinelle que les autorités ici, même au plus haut niveau, rechignent à appliquer les mesures de prévention de la COVID, en encourageant des rassemblements de masse, comme c'est le cas lors de la tournée nationale du président George Weah au cours des trois à quatre derniers mois, où les barrières, la distanciation sociale, le lavage des mains et le port des masques ont été totalement ignorés.

La résurgence du virus au Libéria est attribuée à une nouvelle variante indienne qui est plus mortelle que celle qui venait de Wuhan, en Chine, en 2019.

En moins d'un mois, le taux de mortalité n'est pas seulement alarmant, mais effrayant.

Avec des frontières poreuses et mal surveillées à travers le pays, associées à une sécurité plutôt détendue au principal aéroport international Roberts qui a été témoin d'un afflux de visiteurs étrangers, en particulier d'Inde et d'autres pays asiatiques au cours de cette même période, on devrait s'attendre au pire. Ce n'était qu'une question de temps.

Maintenant, nous voici en tant que nation, toutes les lumières de toute la région de la CEDEAO étant braquées sur nous. Nous sommes désormais considérés comme ceux qui représentent un risque pour les 14 autres États membres.

Les mesures nationales révisées publiées dernièrement sont ainsi dénuées de sens. Il faut au contraire des mesures strictes à tous les niveaux sans crainte ni faveur. Il nous faut un leadership exemplaire cette fois-ci nous voulons réussir ce combat.

L'un des problèmes critiques des directives qui continuent de faire l'objet de critiques est d'autoriser le maintien de l'ouverture des lieux de rassemblement comme les bars et les boîtes de nuit jusqu'à 21h00 ! C'est comme si on donnait une carte blanche aux gens de propager le virus.

Nous avons du mal à comprendre comment un groupe de personnes ivres dans un bar peut observer la distanciation sociale, pour ne pas dire le port de masques. Le gouvernement dit penser aux conséquences économiques de la fermeture de ces lieux. Mais il semble ignorer les répercussions imprévues des activités dans ces lieux.

Le Libéria risque de devenir un enfant problématique pour toute la région, à moins que des mesures efficaces soient prises pour mettre fin à la menace. N'est-ce pas ce que les autorités veulent ? Il nous faut appliquer de manière stricte les mesures préventives.

Enfin, il ne faut pas qu'il soit uniquement question de mesures barrières. Il faut aussi et surtout renforcer les capacités de nos agents de santé et de nos hôpitaux de répondre aux cas quotidiens. Il nous faut plus d'oxygène, de ventilateurs et de lits. Il nous faut du vaccin en toute urgence.

Français

Le Président Weahouvre

vie de ses concitoyens.

Le président Weahest convaincu que l'offre contribueragrandement à renforcer le secteur de la santé et à trouver unesolution à la crise sanitaire imprévue, à moins queCummings ait des motifspolitiques.

Cummings dans sa déclaration a fait une série de recommandations à l'administration Weah pour trouver une solution à la crise sanitaire. Il a conseillé de refondre le budget pour financer l'achat de lits, d'EPI, de masques, de vaccins, de ventilateurs, d'oxygène et de procéder à une sensibilisation massive, de solliciter un soutien supplémentaire des Libériens de la diaspora et de la communauté des donateurs, d'augmenter la prime de risque des agents de santé et d'employer davantage d'agents de santé et de traceurs de contacts, de procéder à la fermeture immédiate de toutes les écoles, de travailler avec les dirigeants communautaires et les organisations communautaires pour sensibiliser et aider à l'application des nouvelles réglementations, au lieu de l'utilisation de forces paramilitaires et de mettre en place une hotline que ceux dont les proches ou amis présentent des symptômes graves de la COVID-19 peuvent appeler.

Par ailleurs, s'exprimant sur le limogeage de l'ancien vice-ministre de l'Information Eugene Fahngon, le président Weahs'est dit déçu du fait qu'un fonctionnaire du gouvernement fournisse des informations fausses et trompeuses au moment où tout le monde se tourne vers le gouvernement pour obtenir des informations crédibles et des solutions viables relatives à leur survie et à celle de leurs familles.

Il estime que Fahngon n'aucune autorité pour s'exprimer sur les questions de santé, et en tant que membre de l'exécutif, il était hors de propos.

Dans l'une de ses vidéos en direct sur Facebook sur le sujet, « Legacy on the Brink...COVID-19 Variant », Fahngon a affirmé que les mesures mises en place par

l'administration Weah pour freiner la propagation de la nouvelle variante du covid-19 sont "immatérielles", et que "l'héritage du président en ce qui concerne la lutte contre le coronavirus est au bord de l'anéantissement".

Fahngon a également expliqué que le vaccin AstraZeneca, le vaccin utilisé au Libéria pour lutter contre le virus, a des effets secondaires et a demandé aux citoyens de ne le prendre. Il a dit être tombé malade après s'être fait vacciner.

« Le gouvernement chinois a exprimé sa volonté de fournir au Libéria son propre type de vaccin de la COVID-19, mais il y a des interactions politiques, ce qui pourrait être catastrophique à la fin. Tout dans ce pays est politique, même lorsqu'il s'agit de vies. Il y en a beaucoup, y compris certains hauts responsables du gouvernement, qui font de la politique avec ce vaccin et cela peut nous coûter terriblement », a ditFahngon.

Mais le président a déclaré qu'à aucun moment Fahngon ne s'est assis avec lui, en tant que chef des deux équipes de lutte contre la COVID-19, pour établir les faits, ni avec le ministre de la Santé ni avec les personnes désignées pour s'exprimer sur la crise sanitaire à laquelle le pays est confronté.

Le Président a mis sur pied deux comités de lutte contre l'épidémie de la COVID-19. Il s'agit du système de gestion des incidents (IMS) qui est le bras technique et opérationnel de la réponse COVID-19 du ministère de la Santé etqui est composé uniquement d'experts et de partenaires de la santé. Il s'agit aussi de Sparkle qui est composé d'experts, de représentants du gouvernement et des partenaires. Sparkleest chargé d'évaluer le fonctionnement et d'examiner les activités de l'IMS et de solliciter des ressources auprès des gouvernements et des partenaires étrangers.

Le président s'est félicité du public pour avoir suivi les mesures sanitaires mises en place. Il a aussi exhorté tout le monde à continuer de respecter ces mesures pour l'emporter sur le virus. Il a également remercié les infirmières, les médecins, les assistants médicaux, les sages-femmes, les traceurs de contacts, les administrateurs et tous ceux qui jouent un rôle dans le secteur de la santé.

COMMENTAIRE

By Richard Haass

Le cyberspace, le nouveau Far-West

NEW-YORK - Durant la Guerre froide, les sommets diplomatiques USA-URSS étaient surtout consacrés à des discussions visant à limiter l'armement nucléaire et leurs vecteurs - et aujourd'hui encore, les USA et la Russie discutent de ces sujets. Mais lors de leur récente rencontre à Genève, Biden et Poutine se sont penchés sur un autre domaine en vue de son éventuelle réglementation : le cyberspace qui constitue un enjeu tout aussi important.

C'est parce qu'un peu partout dans le monde Internet occupe une place centrale dans l'économie, au sein des systèmes politiques et militaires et dans beaucoup d'autres domaines. Les infrastructures numériques sont donc une cible de choix pour ceux qui cherchent à semer le chaos et créer des dégâts en utilisant un minimum de moyens.

Il est facile tant aux Etats qu'aux acteurs non étatiques de mener des cyberattaques et de nier ensuite en être à l'origine, ce qui rend ces attaques et le développement des moyens appropriés d'autant plus tentants. Nous savons quand et d'où un missile a été lancé ; mais il est plus long et plus difficile de découvrir qu'une cyberattaque a eu lieu et d'en identifier le responsable. De ce fait, la menace de représailles est problématique - alors qu'elle est au coeur de la dissuasion.

Cette question a été à l'ordre du jour de la rencontre Biden-Poutine parce que la Russie est de plus en plus agressive dans le cyberspace, que ce soit en créant de faux comptes sur les médias sociaux pour influencer la politique américaine ou en pénétrant dans des infrastructures critiques telles que des centrales électriques. La Russie n'est pas seule à agir dans ce domaine, ce qui renforce l'importance du problème : en 2015 la Chine aurait eu accès à des fichiers concernant 22 millions de personnes travaillant directement ou indirectement pour le gouvernement américain. Ils contenaient des informations pouvant aider à déterminer qui a travaillé ou qui travaille pour la communauté du renseignement américain.

De même, la Corée du Nord a attaqué Sony (accédant ainsi à toutes sortes de communications privées) pour empêcher la distribution d'un film satirique décrivant l'assassinat du dirigeant du pays. Tout cela ressemble à un Far West des temps modernes, avec beaucoup de gens armés agissant dans un espace en manque de lois et de shérifs pour faire respecter celles qui existent.

Traditionnellement, les USA sont partisans d'un Internet largement déstructuré ("ouvert, interopérable, sécurisé et fiable", selon une politique définie il y a dix ans), afin de promouvoir la libre circulation des idées et des informations. Mais leur enthousiasme s'estompe à mesure que leurs ennemis exploitent cette ouverture pour saper leur démocratie et voler des savoirs cruciaux pour le fonctionnement de leur économie et l'avantage comparatif dont ils disposent.

La question, plus facile à poser qu'à résoudre, est de déterminer des limites et comment les faire accepter. Les USA ont leurs propres contradictions. Ils pratiquent eux aussi l'espionnage dans le cyberspace (l'équivalent moderne de l'ouverture d'enveloppes à la vapeur pour lire une lettre dont on n'est pas destinataire) et ils auraient installé avec Israël des logiciels malveillants destinés à saboter le programme d'armement nucléaire iranien. Aussi, toute interdiction d'actions dans le cyberspace serait probablement partielle.

On peut espérer que la rencontre entre Biden et Poutine conduise à un accord sur les cyberattaques qui interdise de s'en prendre aux infrastructures cruciales comme les barrages, les installations de production de pétrole et de gaz, les réseaux électriques, les établissements de soins, les centrales nucléaires et les systèmes de commande et de contrôle des armes nucléaires, les aéroports et les grandes usines. La force cybernétique peut devenir une arme de destruction massive si elle s'attaque à des sites d'une telle importance.

Néanmoins, la vérification du respect du respect d'un tel accord pourrait s'avérer impossible, aussi les USA voudraient y introduire un certain degré de dissuasion pour veiller à ce que les signataires le respectent. Il pourrait s'agir de la volonté affirmée de mener des réponses symétriques : si vous attaquez nos infrastructures vitales, nous ferons de même. La dissuasion pourrait également être asymétrique : si vous attaquez nos installations, nous vous sanctionnerons ou nous frapperons vos intérêts ailleurs.

A examiner le passé (par exemple l'accord par lequel la Chine s'était engagée en 2015 à respecter la propriété intellectuelle) et compte tenu des enjeux actuels, un accord sur le cyberspace devrait également laisser une place à l'action unilatérale. Ainsi, les USA pourraient réduire la vulnérabilité de leurs systèmes cruciaux.

Les affirmations d'ignorance ou les dénégations de l'implication des différents gouvernements dans les cyberattaques (par exemple lorsque Poutine a déclaré que son gouvernement n'avait rien à voir avec l'utilisation de ransomwares) devront être rejetées ou faire l'objet de discussions. On peut faire une analogie avec le terrorisme : après le 11 septembre, les USA ont dit qu'ils ne feront pas de différence entre les groupes terroristes et les gouvernements qui les soutiennent ou leur offrent un sanctuaire. Dans ce cadre, la Russie aurait à rendre des comptes pour les cyberattaques menées par des groupes à partir de son territoire. Insister sur ce point devrait pousser les autorités russes à lutter contre ce type d'activité.

Finalement, l'Europe et d'autres pays pourraient se joindre à un accord russo-américain. Et si la Chine devenait elle aussi signataire, on pourrait y ajouter l'interdiction du vol de la propriété intellectuelle (et des sanctions en cas de non-respect). Un accord de ce type serait l'équivalent numérique du contrôle de l'armement nucléaire, et il est tout aussi souhaitable.

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FEATURE

FEATURE

'Crushed and Demoralized'- 112 Women in the SRC Concession Affected Communities Benefit from Micro Loans

The stories of these women are heart wrenching: The Salala Rubber Corporation, a subsidiary of a massive European Agricultural Corporation named SOCFIN, owned by two of Europe's Billionaires- Bolloré (French) and Fabri (Belgian) has for decades, grabbed not just the land of these poor communities but their wealth, culture, history and community driven entrepreneurship.

This aggressive imperialist investment has left many crippled in different ways: a single mother uprooted from her small farm; a mother of three abandoned by the father of her children and a pregnant mother expecting her third child abandoned by her boyfriend, just to name a few. Cumulatively, successive Liberian Government have failed them and left them to the mercy of a powerful corporation.

It was therefore a bit of relief for 112 indigenous women who have had to live rough as a result of the operations of the Salala Rubber Corporation (SRC) in Margibi and Bong Counties, Liberia. The struggling women were dislodged without mercy, from their livelihoods to make way for the expansion of the Plantation, owned by Socfin.

The Women, from eight project affected communities in the SRC Concession area are grateful beneficiaries of a micro finance loan scheme provided by the Natural Resources Women Platform (NRWP) under the "Bread for All" COVID-19 support program. Bread for All is an NGO based in Switzerland.

The eight targeted communities included Jorkporsu, Kollen-Dapolo, Diakia Town, Blomu, Dede-Ta 1, Dade Ta 2, Kuwah-ta and Moneytai, all located in Margin County.

Beatrice Kollie, 24 years old, with three children, is from Doakai Town. Beatrice had been involved with small rice farming (from-hand-mouth) as a means of livelihood. But due to the labor intensity and unsustainable nature of the farm, she had to abandon the farming work. She said the loan scheme could not have come at a better time as it gives her some hope. She showered praises on the Women Platform and her partner for the loan - after starting a small fish business. "I want to thank you people for helping us with money to sell and I also want to ask that you please increase the money in the second phase."

Comfort Graham is from Kollen Town and has lived all her life there but was uprooted from her small farm, which was her only means of survival, by the SRC operations. She's a single mother with seven children and would later venture into selling on a



credit basis, known locally as "sell pay."

"I used to take flour, sugar and other materials on sell-pay to bake bread for sale." She said since she got the loan from NRWP she does not credit goods anymore. She's very thankful to NRWP for the loan and pray for continuation of the project "so that the women can wake up and do something along with the men." Adding, "Let me bless God first because it was through God we got this money from you people."

Launching the loan scheme earlier on May 20, 2021 in Cinta Township, near the Salala Rubber Corporation in Margibi County, NRWP's Project lead and gender specialist, Windor B.K. Smith said the purpose of the engagement was to first educate women on business ideas and then empower them to get involve in small business initiatives.

"At the end of the meeting every woman will receive the amount of L\$4,250.00 each as micro loan to start a small business," she announced.

Ms. Smith encouraged the women to believe in themselves and do whatever it takes, to work with available resources to address issues they are faced with.

She challenged recipients of funds to repay so as to enable them benefit from phase two of the program. Saying, "but don't forget to pay back your loan."

As part of the exercise, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between NRWP and the micro loan recipients. Each of the women who received the loans were issued identification cards to keep weekly record of repayments.

Ms. Smith emphasized that everyone must pay back the loans to enable the continuation of the project.

During the engagement, she also drilled the women on the different kinds of businesses that one can take advantage of.

She named palm oil, fish, charcoal, peanut, among others that can be bought and sold on each of the community market days to earn fast profits.

At the close of the meeting, participants elected officers from the eight communities to head the micro loan project.

Each of the women leaders elected are responsible to recollect the micro loans in each of the communities and present same to the treasurer for safe keeping and transfer later to the micro loan focal person.

"I am encouraging every one of us who are about to receive the loans today to get involve into business and be able to pay back the loans within the three-month period given you. In this way, the program will extend to the next phase," said recipient Kerma Sackie.

Queita George said: "We want to thank you people for helping us. We promise to pay back the money in time."

Sonnie Cooper is a mother of three children from Kollen Town. Her children's father abandoned her and has had to scramble to keep her children alive. With the loan money, Sonnie only wants to focus on business since farming in the community is not profitable due to the lack of land space. "I don't even know what to tell you people but to say thank you because I never had anything doing again. I used to have a small business but the farming work made me to go out of money, so, I want to tell you people thank you again."

Finda Bengo is from Blomu. She's expecting her third child. According to Finda, her boyfriend ran away and left her with the pregnancy and the other kids. She has been struggling alone to manage herself, the unborn child and the two children. Her two children are out of school because she cannot afford their school fees. She used to work on SRC plantation as a security guard but lost her job.

For Finda, petty business has been her area. So, the loan will add value to her existing petty business. "I want to thank you people for the loan. I will use the money to add my business up and when we complete the loan payment, I pray that you people add the money up because things are expensive in the market."

Of the 112 women from the eight targeted communities, 19 came from Kolleh-Dapolo, 12 from Kuwah-ta, 20 were from Blomu, and 22 came from Doakai Town. Another 12 women were selected from Jorkporsue, while 13 from Money-tail Town, six from Dede-ta-1 and eight persons were also selected from Dede-ta-2 respectively.

No amnesty for war criminals

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

River Gee County Senator and stalwart of the Unity Party, Conmany Wesseh has reminded that there's no amnesty for war criminals especially, people who fully participated either as perpetrators or accomplices during the 14 years civil wars in Liberia.

Speaking in interview with this paper over the weekend, Senator Wesseh, who is a signatory to the Accra Peace Accord which gives birth to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, said the document did not at given space grant amnesty to war criminals contrary to claim by some war actors.

He explains that the

underscoring to create a balance between perpetrators and victims, there's a need for the establishment of a war crimes court.

However, he points out that taking into count the competing national demands with limited national budget, it appears that the establishment of the court is far-fetch.

He says establishing such court requires huge funding that will be used to gather evidences, materials, logistics, and hire professionals.

He cautions Liberians not to engage the establishment of the court with emotions as those accused are not yet guilty or there's nothing yet to prove guilt.

Commenting on the role of

"His presence along and signing of the report undermines the credibility of the report. He's an actor and key one forming part of the discussion leading or calling for the establishment of the war crimes court is a dark cloud created already," the River Gee Lawmaker says.

Asked whether he (Wesseh) fears Senator Johnson, who slain President Samuel Doe in 1990, the former ambassador recalls that he played even more fearful roles, while serving as advisor to former interim president Amos Sawyer, moving between battle lines and warring factions.

The TRC Final Report release in 2008, recommends prosecution for key actors,



establishment of a war crimes court for the country is necessary so those who reportedly committed crimes against humanity can answer to their charges and that others want to explain what actually happened during the bloody civil crises that left at least 250,000 persons dead, including women and children..

Sen. Wesseh notes that being prosecuted in court does not necessarily make a suspect guilty, as some alleged perpetrators too may just want to clear their names from allegations levied against them.

A former student leader and ambassador during the regime of ex-President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, he clarifies the act that established the TRC says it should recommend amnesty under terms and conditions of application of individual person making full disclosure of their wrongs and thereby expressing remorse for their acts.

According to him, some actors are yet to show sound of remorse especially, during the thematic hearings of the TRC back in 2007/2008,

Nimba County Senator Prince Johnson, who commanded the rebels Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia in the wars, he says it would have been expedient for Senator Johnson to have recues himself from discussions surrounding the establishment of said court.

Sen. Johnson has repeatedly maintained that he along with or warlords who signed the Peace Accord enjoy amnesty, and are therefore, protected from prosecution.

Wesseh continues that though Senator Johnson is part of the Senate leadership, it would have been professional enough and given the Senate a breathing space were the Nimba Senator to have stepped aside during matters relating to the war crimes court discussion.

He argues that for Senator PYJ to have signed the Senate Leadership's recent recommendation on the TRC Report to President George Manneh Weah harms the image of the report.

including warlords who allegedly committed heinous crimes and crimes against humanity.

The Senate Leadership at the Capitol on June 22, 2021 released a 21-page recommendation to President George M. Weah, among others, calling for the establishment of a Transitional Justice Commission instead of a war crimes court, to carry out restorative justice rather retributive justice.

The document was signed by nine members of the 30-seated Senate, including Senator Prince Y. Johnson and Senate President Pro-Tempore Albert Chie.

The Leadership asked the President to offer official apology on behalf of the Republic to the thousands of victims and Liberians generally for its role in the protracted conflict. **-Editing by Jonathan Browne**

A NOTE OF CONDOLENCE To

The Varmah & McGill Families
Following the Death of Ma Watta Varmah
Mother of Honorable Nathaniel F. McGill
MINISTER OF STATE FOR PRESIDENTIALAFFAIRS

JUNE 26, 2021

Today we have received with deep sadness news of the unfortunate passing of Madam Ma Watta Varmah, Mother of the Honorable Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Nathaniel McGill. Mother Ma Watta Varmah succumbed to the cold hands of death earlier today.

I came to know her personally and we created a special bond.

On behalf of First Lady Mrs. Clar Marie Weah, the entire Weah family and in my own name, I extend my profound sympathy to the bereaved family. The deceased offered invaluable counsel, especially during the 2017 elections whenever we stopped by her house. She was a loving and wonderful woman.

She was one of the biggest supporters of the Coalition for Democratic Change, and we cannot thank her enough for all her contributions.

Her passing has created a deep void in our hearts.

We pray that the Lord consoles the McGill family and all Liberians afflicted in similar manner.

May her soul and the souls of all faithful departed rest in perfect peace and may light perpetual shines upon them.

H.E. George Manneh Weah
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

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Ronaldo's historic Euro 2020 ends without world record



That's not to say Portugal have been great entertainers since winning Euro 2016. No, in fact pragmatism and even dull football have almost been a staple under Santos, and this was very much the case during the opening 45 minutes in Seville, with Belgium's difficulty in breaking down a typically rigid defence notable.

Though Romelu Lukaku's efforts at least kept the Portugal backline busy.

The occasion was perhaps understandably billed as Lukaku v Cristiano Ronaldo, though it was hardly a shootout between the pair as some might've hoped.

Instead, they were forced to graft in what was something of a slog, and that suited Lukaku a little more than it did record-chasing Ronaldo. The Inter star was first a nuisance in the 10th minute as he brilliantly used his frame to block Ruben Dias and tee up Eden Hazard on the edge of the box, though his subsequent shot was sliced horribly high.

The one area of Roberto Martinez's team that would cause most supporters concern would be their aging backline, but in the face of sheer desperation and an attack brimming with quality, they stood firm in Seville to see off Cristiano Ronaldo and defending European champions Portugal 1-0 on Sunday. It was a performance that

brought further credence to the growing idea that pragmatism rules on the international stage, with Belgium making the most of a wonderstrike and then offering little threat themselves at the other end.

A gauntlet was laid down to Portugal and, despite boasting a squad far superior to the one they possessed five years ago, Fernando Santos was seemingly unable to harness that greater collective talent.

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UEFA scraps away goals rule ahead of 2021-22 season

UEFA has announced the away goals rule will no longer be used in any of the organisation's club competitions for the 2021-22 season.

The regulation was first introduced in 1965 to decide the outcome of a two-legged knockout tie in cases where the teams were level on aggregate.

However, statistical data has shown a reduction in the gap between home and away wins, according to data

released by the governing body on Wednesday, as well as the average number of goals scored at home and on the road.

Following the recommendation of both its club competitions committee and women's football committee, UEFA has abolished the ruling for the upcoming campaign, with the change made ahead of the start of the qualifying phases.

"The away goals rule has been an intrinsic part of UEFA competitions since it was introduced in 1965," UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin



said in a statement. "However, the question of its abolition has been debated at various UEFA meetings over the last few years. Although there was no unanimity of views, many coaches, fans and other football stakeholders have questioned its fairness and have expressed a preference for the rule to be abolished.

"The impact of the rule now runs counter to its original purpose as, in fact, it now dissuades home teams - especially in first legs - from attacking, because they fear

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