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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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VP Taylor's conspicuous absence

-Did she boycott opening session?



Min. Lenn Eugene Nagbe

CT Com Liberia boss blasts Information Minister



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Continental News

Ethiopia PM shrugs off Trump's Nobel complaint

US President Donald Trump should take his complaint about being overlooked for the Nobel Peace Prize to the award organisers, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the 2019 winner, has said. Mr Abiy said he was not aware of the criteria used to select him.

He was credited for his move to make peace with neighbouring Eritrea.

Mr Trump said last week that he had "saved a country" from a big war, a possible reference to his work on another dispute involving Ethiopia.

Ethiopia and Eritrea fought a bitter border war from 1998-2000, which killed tens of thousands of people. Although a ceasefire was signed in 2000, the neighbours technically remained at war until July 2018, when Mr Abiy and Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki signed a peace

deal. For two decades, the long border was closed, dividing families and making trade impossible.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee said Mr Abiy was honoured for his "decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea". He told

reporters during a press briefing in South Africa that he was "not working for the prize" but for "peace in the region". "I don't have any clue about the criteria, how the Nobel committee selects an individual for the prize," he said. "If President Trump complained it must go to Oslo

not to Ethiopia," he added. He told supporters at a political rally last week that he had helped avert a war in "a country" and expressed surprise that his efforts were not recognised.

"I made a deal, I saved a country, and I just heard that the head of that country is now getting the Nobel Peace Prize for saving the country. I said: 'What, did I have something to do with it?' Yeah, but you know, that's the way it is," he said.

A Twitter account run by the Democrats in Congress teased Mr Trump saying he seemed to not know why Mr Abiy won the peace prize.

The tweet said the president had confused his meeting last year in November

with representatives from Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan, over a dispute about the use of the Nile waters, as worth of a Nobel prize.

Egypt believes if Ethiopia fills the Grand Renaissance Dam, set to be Africa's biggest hydroelectric power plant, in six years instead of 21 years, it would threaten its water security. Read more: The trouble over a giant Nile dam

A US initiative to find a solution over the River Nile standoff has so far failed. Mr Abiy has asked South African President Cyril Ramaphosa to mediate the talks.

However, representatives of the three countries are due to meet again this week in the US. BBC



Mr Abiy said he was working to promote peace in the region and was not looking to be awarded

US wants to cut troops in Africa

The United States wants to reduce its military presence in Africa, Washington's top military officer said, as France hosts Sahel leaders as it seeks to bolster the fight against jihadists in the region.

Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark Milley, said resources "could be reduced and then shifted, either to increase readiness of the force in the continental US or shifted to" the Pacific.

His comments came as he flew in for talks with NATO

counterparts in Brussels. The announcement follows President Donald Trump's call last week for NATO to do more in the Middle East and comes as French President Emmanuel Macron gathers his counterparts from Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger, Mali and Mauritania.

Milley said his boss, Defense Secretary Mark Esper, had not made up his mind what changes to make. "We're developing options for the secretary to consider, and we are developing those options

in coordination with our allies and partners," Milley said.

After 13 French soldiers were killed in a helicopter collision in Mali last month, Macron wants the Sahel leaders to publicly restate their support for France's 4,500-strong military presence, after local demonstrations against it.

The United States wants to reduce the number of its troops deployed across Africa over the next few years to focus more on responding to the threats posed by Russia and China.

Washington has some 7,000 special forces on rotation in Africa carrying out joint operations with national forces against jihadists, particularly in Somalia.

Another 2,000 soldiers are conducting training missions in some 40 African countries and taking part in cooperative operations,

in particular with France's Operation Barkhane in Mali, to which they provide mainly logistical assistance. One option would be to close a drone base in Agadez, northern Niger, which gives the US a major surveillance platform in the Sahel but has been estimated to cost around \$100 million. AFP



Some 2,000 US soldiers conduct training missions 40 African countries

Three teachers killed in Kenya

Three teachers were killed near Kenya's border with Somalia in a suspected attack by al Shabaab militants early on Monday, police said, in what appeared to be the latest in a string of assaults by the group in Kenya since the New Year.

A child was also wounded by a stray bullet when the militants attacked Kamuthe primary school, in Garissa County, a police report seen by Reuters said. The militants also

schoolchildren were killed following a gunfight between the Somali militant group and local police in Garissa. The attackers targeted a telecommunications mast in that assault as well.

The United States bolstered its presence in Kenya last week after al Shabaab killed three Americans in an attack on a military base in the East African country used by U.S and Kenyan forces. Al Qaeda-affiliated al



photo: Kenya police put road blocks

burned down a nearby police station and destroyed a telecommunications mast in the attack in the early hours of Monday, the report said. Al Shabaab has targeted Kenya in frequent attacks, part of a retaliation campaign against the country for sending troops into Somalia in 2011 after a series of cross-border raids and kidnappings.

But the group has stepped up the pace of its attacks in Kenya since the New Year.

Last week, four

Shabaab has waged an insurgency in Somalia since 2008, aiming to topple the government and impose its own strict interpretation of sharia, or Islamic law.

Last month, at least 90 people were killed in a bombing in Somalia's capital Mogadishu in the country's deadliest attack in more than two years. (Reporting by Humphrey Malalo; Writing by Omar Mohammed; Editing by Maggie Fick and Alex Richardson)

EDITORIAL

Hoping for a better economy

THE LIBERIAN ECONOMY under the two years old Weah administration continues to experience downward trend characterized by hyperinflation, rising prices, falling revenue, cash shortage, lack of jobs and salary delay, among others. The unpleasant situation has inflicted excruciating psychological and economic pains on ordinary citizens.

LIBERIANS ENDED 2019 with an acute shortage of cash in the banks, leaving depositors queuing at various commercial banks for money frustrated.

THIS COUNTRY CANNOT afford to continue on this route with persistent retrogression. The government should rise to the challenge by introducing policies to revise the economy and restore confidence.

THIS 2020 PROVIDES a blank check for the government, ordinary Liberians and foreign partners to rescue the economy. Yes, this situation requires all hands on deck.

HOWEVER, GOVERNMENT IS the main custodian of the economy and how it conducts the state of affairs would largely determine which way the economy heads. Needless to speak about the current downward trend with three-digit exchange rate, which clearly indicates how we are proceeding as a nation.

THE WEAH ADMINISTRATION should calm the current political and public dissent in the country to restore investor' confidence which would generate economic stability and growth.

THE ECONOMY STREET on a very bad note in the new year characterized by street protest and violence, creating panic and uncertainty. It is regrettable and unfortunate that we started this way.

GROWING DISENCHANTMENT AMONG ordinary Liberians over the dismal performance of the economy is not only self-inflicting but undermining economic prospects.

THIS SHOULD BE reversed and the government must take the lead by initiating dialogue void of politics. In other words, we need to be brutally frank when discussing the issues that confront us as a country. President Weah should listen to critics, as his government and tolerate their views rather than branding those opposing his style of governance as enemies of the state.

THIS COUNTRY RISKS going down the drain again like it happened during the civil war in the 1990s unless our leaders treat governance as a serious matter. The people have right to call their government to account whenever their wellbeing and happiness is threatened, as it is in the current instance. The President should exercise leadership by lifting the economy from its present state to give Liberians hope in this New Year.

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Tel: +231-06484201, +231-77007529, +231-886978282 / +231-775407211
www.thenewdawnliberia.com;
Email: info@thenewdawnliberia.com

COMMENTARY

By John Andrews

Erdoğan Wades into the Libyan Quagmire

Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is the epitome of today's strongman political leader, but his decision to send Turkish troops to Libya may be a step too far. By the time his Libyan gamble sours, as it inevitably will, he will have run out of both luck and friends.

WINCHESTER, UK - Foreign critics of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan deride him as a quasi-dictatorial megalomaniac. But Erdogan - who was Turkey's prime minister for 11 years before being elected president in 2014 - is now a reckless gambler, too. In short order, Turkey will send troops to Libya at the request of the United Nations-backed Government of National Accord (GNA), which has been besieged in Tripoli for the last eight months by the advancing forces of Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA).

This will be a military and diplomatic folly. Erdogan already has the distressing example of the Syrian conflict on Turkey's own doorstep. Does he really imagine that sending a few hundred - or even many thousand - Turkish troops to aid the beleaguered GNA will somehow resolve Libya's tragic and bloody turmoil, itself the result of the 2011 intervention by foreign powers that toppled Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi's regime?

If Erdogan expects either a GNA victory or an imminent peace settlement, he is deluding himself. Haftar's well-equipped LNA has the support of Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and (at least covertly) France. With mercenaries from Russia and Sudan on his side, Haftar must feel rather more optimistic than Fayez al-Sarraj, the GNA's prime minister. Support for the GNA from Turkey and Qatar, along with the fig leaf of UN recognition, weighs rather less in the military balance.

So, what explains Turkey's entry into Libya's dreadful conflict as yet another proxy warrior? One factor, often baffling to outsiders, is the ideological and political influence throughout the Middle East - or at least its Sunni Muslim parts - of the Muslim Brotherhood. Founded in Egypt almost a century ago, the Brotherhood favors a transition (peaceful, it has always maintained) to theocratic government. As its slogan proclaims, "Islam is the solution."

That is a problem for the ruling families of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain, all of which regard the Brotherhood as a terrorist organization seeking to undermine their power. So, too, does the oppressive Egyptian regime led by President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who mounted the 2013 military coup that ended the Brotherhood's disastrous year governing the Arab world's most populous country. Only Turkey - specifically, Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) - and tiny Qatar (very much at odds with neighboring Saudi Arabia) view the Brotherhood with enthusiasm rather than alarm. On the almost frivolous premise that my enemy's enemy is my friend, the fact that Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt support Haftar is excuse enough for Turkey and Qatar to support Sarraj and the GNA.

The bigger reason for Erdogan's adventurism in Libya, though, is that it fits his desire for Turkey to play a determining role in its region

for the first time since the demise of the Ottoman empire (of which Libya was once a part). On the surface, that ambition sounds reasonable enough. Turkey has a population of more than 80 million, the second-largest military in NATO, and a relatively developed economy. It deserves to be treated with respect - which is why the European Union's obvious reluctance to advance the country's membership bid is a blow to Turkish pride.

But Turkey's pursuit of its regional leadership ambition has come at a high cost. When the AKP came to power in Turkey almost two decades ago, Erdogan's mentor was Ahmet Davutoglu, an academic who then became foreign minister and eventually prime minister. Davutoglu was keen to expand Turkey's influence abroad, but under the slogan "zero problems with our neighbors."

How ironic, then, that Erdogan has created problems with almost all of his neighbors. The EU cannot accept Turkey's appalling record on human rights, especially following the military's failed coup attempt of 2016. Israel cannot abide Turkey's support for Hamas (which is aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood) in Gaza. And virtually everyone is exasperated by Turkey's policy in Syria, which features attacking the Kurds - the most effective fighters against the Islamic State - and ambivalence toward several jihadist groups. Significantly, Davutoglu has broken with Erdogan and formed a rival political party.

True, Erdogan's supporters can justifiably argue that Turkey has become a regional player to be reckoned with. The EU has to be financially generous, or else Turkey may let hundreds of thousands of Syrian and other refugees from war and poverty flood into Europe. Russia and Iran, which both support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime, recognize that a settlement of the Syrian conflict will depend on Turkey's acquiescence - hence the continuing three-party peace process that began three years ago in Astana, Kazakhstan. Even the United States under President Donald Trump has had to eat a slice of humble pie: Turkey, regardless of NATO sensitivities and American economic threats, stands by its decision to buy a Russian air-defense system.

But the Libyan venture may be a step too far. On December 5, the Turkish parliament ratified an agreement between Erdogan and Sarraj that sets a maritime border between their two countries. The Turkish-Libyan deal ignores international law - as the EU, Cyprus, Greece, and Egypt have pointed out. It also ignores geography, because the Greek island of Crete lies halfway between the two countries. And it threatens the January 2019 agreement between Egypt, Israel, Greece, Cyprus, Italy, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority to exploit the gas reserves of the eastern Mediterranean.

Erdogan is the epitome of today's strongman political leader. But by the time his Libyan gamble sours, as it inevitably will, he will have run out of both luck and friends.

O-PED

By Javier Solana

Trump's Iranian Precipice

Under President Donald Trump, the United States has no clear objectives regarding Iran, and hence no clearly defined strategy. In the Middle East, the US should have learned by now, that is a recipe for disaster.

MADRID - The new year began with yet another senseless foreign-policy decision by US President Donald Trump. The assassination of General Qassem Suleimani, who led the extraterritorial operations of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, was a reckless, provocative, and shortsighted move. Suleimani no doubt had an extremely pernicious influence in the Middle East. But he also was the leader of an armed branch of the Iranian state and enjoyed obvious personal popularity in his country, no matter how much Trump pretends otherwise.

Once again, the United States has acted excessively and set a dangerous precedent that its adversaries could use as an excuse to carry out similar operations. After the attack on Suleimani, Trump went so far as to threaten Iran repeatedly with the destruction of some of the country's precious cultural sites, which would constitute a war crime. Although Trump seems to have reconsidered, his chronic impetuosity only highlights the lack of proper planning. The assassination of Suleimani was a sensationalist move, probably intended mainly for domestic consumption. Yet, in the long term, will it be effective?

Obviously, the answer will depend on Trump's objectives vis-à-vis Iran. His administration has argued that the president's drastic intervention will have a deterrent effect on the Iranian regime, to which Suleimani was an absolutely indispensable asset.

That assumption is questionable. Although Iran's retaliation - in the form of missile attacks against two Iraqi bases that house US troops - has so far been relatively subdued, the regime will stick to its guns. Nor can it be supposed that the loss of Suleimani, for all his importance, will be insurmountable for the regime, which has already named Suleimani's trusted deputy as his successor.

The crux of the problem for the US is that it has no clear objectives regarding Iran, and hence no clearly defined strategy. In the Middle East, the US should have learned by now, that is a recipe for disaster. Today's tensions do not imply that either Trump or Iran's leaders are seeking war. Yet, on many occasions, states have stumbled into unwanted conflicts, especially when overconfidence makes them reckless. With his wild swings, Trump has managed to force not only Iran into a corner (which could prompt its leaders to adopt a more aggressive stance), but has also painted himself into one.

In the absence of a plan, it is no surprise that his administration constantly contradicts itself. Just when Iran was feeling the effects of a wave of brutally repressed domestic protests, the US relieved the pressure on the Iranian leadership. The huge crowds that turned out to mourn Suleimani do not lie. With Iran's legislative elections just a few weeks away, the US offered the most conservative and anti-American elements in the country a golden opportunity.

Now, however, the spotlight has returned to the Iranian regime, owing to its own mistakes. After Iran's leaders admitted - following three days of official denials - that Iranian missiles accidentally downed a Ukrainian civilian airplane, killing all 176 people aboard, the regime has once again become the target of popular outrage. The way the situation has played out serves as a reminder of Iranian citizens day-to-day troubles, which reflect the effects of domestic and foreign negligence.

The anti-regime protests roiling Iran are being echoed in other Middle Eastern countries where it wields notable influence. Overcoming their respective religious differences, both Lebanese and Iraqis have in recent months risen up against Iran's meddling, much of which was orchestrated by Suleimani himself. But Trump ignored Napoleon's famous maxim: "Never interrupt your enemy while he is making a mistake." Now, the Iraqi parliament has demanded (albeit symbolically) the withdrawal of US troops stationed in the country - which would be in Iran's interest. The Trump administration has responded chaotically, by mistakenly announcing a troop withdrawal and then denying that a pullout was imminent.

Nonetheless, the possibility that Trump might end the US military presence in Iraq is not to be dismissed, even though the withdrawal would likely be rather undignified. For now, NATO forces fighting the Islamic State have suspended their operations, and some US allies have begun to evacuate their troops from Iraq.

But this does not mean that the US is leaving the Middle East: on the contrary, the number of American troops in the region has increased by 15,000 over the last six months. And while US energy dependence on the Middle East may have diminished, the "pivot" toward Asia, announced by the Obama administration, hasn't happened yet. Obviously, a larger conflict with Iran would hamper US efforts to contain China, America's main global competitor.

To the long list of US follies must be added the perverse incentives that Trump has highlighted with his latest blow against Iran, which has raised an uncomfortable question: Would the US have acted the same way toward nuclear-armed North Korea? Iran fulfilled, to the letter, the 2015 nuclear deal signed by the main global powers - formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - and continued to fulfill it for a year after Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the pact. And yet, while Trump held amicable meetings with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, his administration subjected Iran to crushing economic sanctions - treatment that is unlikely to encourage the Kim regime to stake its future on denuclearization.

Although Iran has announced that it will now stop abiding by the JCPOA's restrictions on its nuclear program, it has not closed the door on the possibility of salvaging the deal. Moreover, US-Iranian tensions seem to have diminished slightly in recent days. But this may be a mirage: the downing of the Ukrainian plane has added a new element to the equation, which the Trump administration appears all too eager to exploit. Furthermore, Trump has not abandoned his intolerable demands and continues to pressure the JCPOA's other signatories to abandon the agreement.

In the end, the US will have to recognize an indisputable reality: in situations as critical as this one, which was created unnecessarily, diplomacy is not an option, but an obligation. To avoid catastrophe, which should be the top priority for all parties involved, this is without doubt the road that must be taken.

OPINION

By Brian Trelstad

Making Impact Investing Work

After decades on the margins of finance and philanthropy, impact investing is finally moving into the mainstream, with most major asset-management firms having launched impact-investment funds and strategies. But without stronger standards, greater diversity of players, and a wider focus, a promising shift could become corporate whitewash.

NEW YORK - There is a growing consensus that capitalism needs to be reimagined. The influential Business Roundtable in the United States recently issued an appeal for corporate CEOs to think about their impact on all stakeholders, not just their financial shareholders. Equally, we have no hope of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals unless private capital is mobilized to complement public funding. Many believe that so-called impact investing can be part of the answer.

The idea is not a new one. True, most people used to think about their finances as having "two pockets" (as Ross Baird of Blueprint Local puts it). One pocket was for fiduciary investments geared toward making as much money as possible, regardless of social or environmental considerations. The other pocket was for philanthropic efforts aimed at doing as much good as possible, while disregarding financial returns.

But the ends of the "spectrum of capital" started to merge in the 1950s. At that time, some purely fiduciary investors - namely, faith-based communities, civil rights organizations, and labor unions - realized that certain investments were morally repugnant or misaligned with their values. Chief among these were holdings in companies manufacturing tobacco products, producing pornography, or doing business in apartheid South Africa.

In 1968, the Ford Foundation pioneered a new tool known as program-related investment, which used low-cost loans as a substitute for grants to affordable-housing developers. Ford realized that by designing an investment to "crowd in" private capital, it could leverage comparatively scarce philanthropic funding by a factor of three- or four-to-one and still see a return of principal. Thus, a \$10 million philanthropic budget for affordable housing might translate into tens or hundreds of millions of investment dollars.

Then, in the 1990s, some intrepid investors, recognizing that simply excluding bad categories of investments from their portfolios was not enough, took program-related investing a step further. They focused on the connection between superior returns and how a company manages environment, social, and governance (ESG) issues. The early evidence from this approach suggests that treating employees well, pursuing boardroom diversity, and managing a firm's environmental footprint can indeed have a positive impact on financial returns.

Finally, in the early 2000s, a number of investors - including Bridges Fund Management in the United Kingdom, DBL Partners and SJF Ventures in the US, and Acumen Fund and Root Capital in emerging markets - recognized that another broad change was underway. A new generation of entrepreneurs was building businesses with the explicit intent of solving pressing social and environmental problems. And it soon became apparent that investing in such companies could have real-world impact and bring outside financial returns.

After nearly two decades of toiling in the wilderness, these organizations have continued to grow and gain credibility. What was once considered niche is now becoming mainstream. But with the rush of capital into impact investing, higher standards are needed. Specifically, three things must happen for impact investing to realize its full potential.

First, the industry needs more agreement on standards for assessing claims of impact, as well as mechanisms for independent verification. Slapping a "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDG) or "ESG" logo on your fund's prospectus does not make you an impact investor. Credible claims of impact should follow from rigorous due diligence, clear performance measures, consultation with end beneficiaries, accurate and independently verified reporting, and relevant sector benchmarking.

In this respect, the Impact Management Project's recent efforts to harmonize the alphabet soup of impact acronyms (such as IRIS, GIIRS, PRI, and GRI) are promising. But now we need to move from theory to practice; that is, from PowerPoint slides to user-friendly, cost-effective tools that are available to every asset manager and entrepreneur. And even with these harmonized standards and tools in place, we will need to ensure that impact claims are as legitimate as the reporting on formal financial statements.

Second, industry players must commit to recruiting a generation of talent that is proximate to the problems being addressed. A corps of predominantly white, male finance professionals based in Midtown Manhattan or Mayfair, London, will not understand the intractable global challenges that impact investments are supposed to tackle. Moreover, there is ample evidence to show that diverse teams tend to outperform homogenous ones. Asset owners, fund managers, and entrepreneurs must be representative of the communities being served.

Finally, as investors allocate funding to new impact- and sustainable-investing strategies, they also must account for the potentially negative effects of the rest of their portfolios. If a \$1 billion green fund serves as cover for an additional \$99 billion still invested in companies extracting fossil fuels or relying on exploitative supply chains, then impact investing will have failed. Likewise, philanthropic institutions and universities also must "look under the hood" of their endowments for investments that may run counter to their missions.¹

Rather than being a fig leaf, impact investing must be the thin end of the wedge, opening a space for traditional investors eventually to apply environmental- and social-impact assessments to every asset in their portfolios.

Will the next chapter be about real change at scale, or will the mainstreaming of impact investing be a hollow gesture? The stakes are high. But with operational definitions of impact, a new generation of talent, and a much wider lens, investing in our shared future might just become the future of investing generally.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE

From Up To Down After 24 Months – Does Vice President Jewel Howard-Taylor Have A Future In CDC?

By Martin K. N. Kollie

Activist and Columnist, martinkerkula1989@yahoo.com

Two high-ranking officials of CDC, Bong County Superintendent Esther Walker and CDC Chairman MulbahMorlu, are on record for narrating through leaked audios about a hardcore conspiracy or sinister plot to remove H.E. Jewel Howard-Taylor as Vice Standard Bearer of CDC and Vice President of Liberia. Does this billboard of an impending CDC Retreat substantiate or validate such startling revelation?

The Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) was birthed in 2004 and certificated by NEC as a political party in July 2005. Ambassador George M. Weah agreed to lead CDC as its political leader while pronouncing his candidature for 2005 presidential election at Monrovia City Hall in Sinkor on November 24, 2004.

After losing two (2) successive democratic elections in 2005 and 2011, CDC knew it could not come to power if it stood alone in 2017 general and presidential elections. Conceiving a convenient political marriage with NPP and LPDP was its last option and best strategy to guarantee victory. And it worked so perfectly for them under a grand coalition (CDC, NPP, and LPDP). After 11 years in opposition, a tripartite coalition dubbed and styled “Coalition for Democratic Change - CDC” was born on November 2, 2016 and accredited by NEC on December 19, 2016.

On December 28, 2016, Senator George M. Weah of Montserrado County was elected as Standard Bearer of this grand Coalition and he picked Senator Jewel Howard-Taylor of Bong County as his running mate. The Coalition (CDC, NPP, and LPDP) had three (3) major objectives for coming together, namely:

- 1) To deliver Liberia and Liberians from a failed Unity Party (UP) led Government;
- 2) To respond to the cries of Liberians by reducing the number of political parties;
- 3) To merge shared values and similar political philosophies or ideologies.

In order to ensure a more cordial collaboration and guarantee a glorious future for this new Coalition, a Governing Council was formed by LAW. According to “The Article of Collaboration”, the Governing Council is the highest decision-making body in the absence of Convention whilst an Executive Committee runs the day to day affairs of the Coalition:

- A) Structure of the Governing Council:
 - 1) CDC - Standard Bearer George M. Weah (1st in command)
 - 2) NPP - Vice Standard Bearer Jewel Howard-Taylor (2nd in command)
 - 3) LPDP - Political Leader Alex Tyler (3rd in command)
 - 4) Three Chairmen of CDC, NPP, and LPDP
 - 5) Three Secretary Generals of CDC, NPP, and LPDP
 - 6) Three Eminent Members from each Collaborating Party

Even though VP Howard-Taylor sits #2 at the level of the Governing Council, but the photos of LPDP Political Leader Alex Tyler and CDC Chairman MulbahMorlu are bigger and placed or positioned above her on this Retreat Billboard.

Before 2017 elections, VP Jewel Howard-Taylor’s photo was placed neck-to-neck with President George M. Weah on almost all campaign billboards. What has changed in 24 months? It seems like the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) of Pres. George Weah has forgotten so soon that it took the Jewel’s factor to secure victory in 2017 elections.

The new billboard for CDC Retreat has further confirmed public speculation of a prolonged impasse between Weah and Howard-Taylor. It has somehow validated past revelations of a grand conspiracy to axe JHT as VSB of



CDC and VP of Liberia. The latest revelation from MulbahMorlu via a leaked audio coupled with this new billboard says a lot. I wonder why Morlu is not being called in for investigation or why an impeachment proceeding has not even begun for President Weah up to now? But this is what happens when a nation has a rubber-stamped and compromised Legislature.

A few questions to ponder over:

a. Even though NPP is second in command of this Coalition, why place LPDP Political Leader Alex Tyler and Chairman MulbahMorlu’s photos above Vice Standard Bearer and Vice President Jewel Howard-Taylor’s photo?

b. Why make CDC Political Leader George M. Weah, LPDP Political Leader Alex Tyler and CDC Chairman MulbahMorlu’s photos far bigger than NPP Political Leader Jewel Howard-Taylor’s photo this time around when this was never the case in 2017?

c. During 2017 Campaign, Jewel was up, neck-to-neck with Weah on almost all campaign billboards, banners, flyers, stickers, etc. What has brought her down especially below Tyler and Morlu on CDC’s new billboard? Isn’t this an affront or a disdain to VP Howard-Taylor?

d. The theme of this impending retreat is “Celebrating the President for sustaining the peace for 2 years while undertaking massive developmental initiatives”. Why celebrate only the president and not the vice president too or even the entire government since it is teamwork? Why not choose this theme “Celebrating the CDC-led Government...” which covers everybody?

The theme suggests that everything and all things evolve with and revolve around ex-Soccer Star George M. Weah. This is a glaring semblance of FASCISM. Is President Weah a black fascist? The theme of this retreat coupled with his statues built or being built has made us to believe so. How can President Weah even be celebrated for 2 years of peace when hardship, corruption, and bad governance remain increasingly prevalent under his administration?

Thousands of Liberians recently protested against these vices on September 24, 2018, June 7, 2019, and January 6, 2020. In 2014, UN officials said, “Peace means dignity, well-being for all, and not just absence of war”. Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said, “Peace means access to education, healthcare and essential services for all.” What kind of PEACE will CDC be ‘celebrating’ President Weah for sustaining’ when over 70,000 civil servants are yet to be paid for months and US\$25m cannot be accounted for?

President Weah cannot be a champion of peace when he has hypocritically refused to guarantee JUSTICE for over 250,000 innocent Liberians who lost their lives during Liberia’s brutal civil carnage. How can President Weah be an Ambassador of Peace when he is playing politics with the establishment of a War and Economic Crimes Court? The entire CDC Retreat slated for February 14-15, 2020 is just another political gimmick and fiasco. I think CDC should be celebrating Weah for increased

hardship - high inflation - high unemployment - zero foreign direct investment - liquidity crisis - drop in enrollment as a result of hike in tuition and fees - food insecurity - depreciation of local currency - high tariffs on imports - lack of donors’ confidence - violation of our constitution - abuse of women, girls, children and minorities - mysterious deaths - police brutality - crackdown on critics through thuggish groups - patronage and partisanship - lack of basic social services - plan to remove VP Taylor - etc.

The crises confronting CDC and George Weah are just too far from ending. Key among those is how Pres. Weah and his closest confidants, including Min. Samuel D. Tweah, Min. Nathaniel McGill and NPA Boss Bill Tweahway, have hatched a plot to oust VP Taylor. JHT has become a major target of repression, ostracization and censorship. Credible information says she has even been denied a huge portion of her budgetary appropriation and other incentives since last fiscal year (2018/2019). The Executive Committee, the Diaspora Chapter, and the Bong County Chapter of NPP have all raised alarm against such mistreatment.

Inside sources privy to information confided in me and said, “H. E. Chief ‘Ponofalo’ Dr. Jewel Cianeh Howard-Taylor has not been going to work and attending major governmental functions for 3 weeks now due to due to high threat levels and inadequate support such as: No official armored vehicle for almost a year - Default or non-payment of leased property - Delay in processing checks and non-remittance of budgetary appropriation - Refusal to consult her before critical decisions are made or taken - and Lack of respect and courtesy to her office from especially from fanatics of CDC and pro-Weah protégés.

VP Jewel Howard-Taylor has really been playing her cool in past times. She has not even been attending CDC political rallies (e.g. campaign rallies of 2019 Montserrado Senatorial and Representative By-elections). The feud in CDC seems to be deepening as Liberia’s economic crisis worsens. Is NPP’s Jewel a packed car or more than a packed car? The latter would suffice.

Beyond this end, does Chief ‘Ponofalo’ Dr. Jewel Howard-Taylor really have a future in CDC ahead of 2023 elections? It is likely that the Coalition for Democratic Change may severely crack if she is ousted. History is not too far from documenting this CRACK which puts the Liberian people in a better position of reclaiming their socio-economic and political destiny. It will be more advantageous for Liberia and Liberians if CDC crumbles under its own weight ahead of 2020 and 2023 elections. The struggle to redeem Liberia and Liberians remain unabated.

About The Author: Martin K. N. Kollie is a Liberian activist, columnist, and an emerging economist who hails from Bong County. He is a former student leader at UL and former standard bearer of SUP. He currently lives in exile and can be reached via martinkerkula1989@yahoo.com

CT.COM Manager Christopher Hages Onanuga Addresses The Media

This is a rallying discussion that borders on several issues some of which includes my person, companies I own, as well as national matters of concern. I will start with my person.

I left the country June on my regular vacation and also to attend to medicals. In my absence, there were several rumors flying around, which if not addressed, will be unfair and unjust to myself and my companies because they border on the credibility of my companies. I am sure you understand that man without character and credibility does not exist. So first of all these rumors surrounded issues relating to my having to have had money for government, properties for government; that I was involved in money laundry, that I was also involved in defrauding institutions of government. These are allegations that I took very serious exception to.

Press conferences were held in my absence which I responded to; but today, I want to let you know that the Government of Liberia has acted responsibly to have allowed a full investigation into allegations against my person, and have come up with clear report that Christopher HagesOnanuga still remains credible, is credible and has a character to protect, as well as my six month account illegally embarrassed by the Guarantee Trust Bank in Liberia which my legal team is about to challenge.

These situations that took place did not augur well for the image of the country, nor did they provide better opportunities for investors. I am not known to be someone to shy away from responsibility because I understand the importance of making sure that you can challenge anyone who challenges your credibility and character. I am the owner of CT.COM - Liberia, CT.COM -Ghana, CT.COM -Nigeria, CT.COM-United States and CT.COM-Sierra Leone which I have just established. It's not impossible for someone who is selfless and humble and who understands the dictates of life, to go around misbehaving, knowing very well there is law in every country that we are located.

Today I am a happy man. I should be having thanksgiving, but I say to you members of the Fourth Estate, that it is impossible to be happy when internally you are sad. It is a gory situation for a country which has people who only seek the downfall of those who are succeeding, when we should be creating millionaires; when we should be having the opportunities to expand the horizon of Liberia. What we have done instead, is we celebrate foreigners, ignore our own, exploiting our resources for foreigners and abandoned our ability to create wealth amongst ourselves.

In furtherance of this, I have been an institution builder; I have paid taxes at every given point in my life in this country and I have been very compliant. So today, in as much as people are turning around and trying to investigate to know CT.COM Liberia, COOL 91.9, COOL TV, the National Excellence Award of Liberia that I established, operate and run, they will find out that they operate purely on perfection, and also operate with fairness of purpose.

The second issue I want to weigh up on, ladies and gentlemen, is the Ministry of Information Culture & Tourism. The Ministry of Information Culture & Tourism (MICAT) should be amongst most the top five, biggest ministries in the Republic of Liberia, because the ministry comprises three or four pillars of National importance, that could be assigned to ministries if the government has so desire. But today, we do not know what the core function of the Ministry of Information, Culture & Tourism is. The reason I say this is the Ministry of Information, Culture & Tourism has not done justice to the most important institutions that they supposed to do justice to; and that is the Fourth Estate. The only two or three functions of the Ministry of Information, Culture & Tourism that I know in Liberia are:

1. Holding reactionary press conferences on Thursdays;
2. Seeking to issue permits to host pageants in the Republic of Liberia;
3. Trying to make sure it can control every institution of Liberia that should be independent, and using these institutions to collect petty revenues whereas they should be providing subsidy to these institutions

Examples of such are the Movie Union and the Musician Union. What are these unions doing under the Ministry of Information? The Ministry has failed to cater to inspectorate activities in rural Liberia to find our tourist sites, or cultural heritage, our relics; and to begin to publish their findings, and give the chance to us to market them globally so as to pour international tourists into Liberia. Instead, their focus is on organizing dances on the Providence Island of Liberia and running Thursday-Thursday dramatic press conferences where media practitioners go and sit the whole day and without even a bottle of water served them.

That is disheartening, you know. It is a pity that the Ministry of Information that should run the country's culture and tourism, be the decisive war-room for communication strategy, ministry that should manage the President and the country's communication issues, has failed to the extent that the narrative of the country's outside image internationally is so negative that it is difficult to get a dime. If you take a closer look, the Ministry of Information is in darkness for eight weeks, nine weeks. At times,

We sent a team to conduct a research and detail surveillance on the Ministry of Information, and found that for officials to print formal document, they have to run on across the road to buy sheet of papers. Isn't that a disgrace? It is now time to take on institutions one-on-one to make them active to work. I am not going to shy away from this; the beautiful thing, is that Christopher Hayes Onanuga will not contest political positions. As for me I serve wherever I am.

Besides, I am not looking for the Minister's position; instead, my position is intended to put him on record to perform. Two days ago, he chose to block me on Facebook because every day I put something out that he has done wrong, and put in the solution. I am not a negative critic. The Minister of Information Culture & Tourism, Len Eugene Nagbe needs to wake up from the slumber and stop allowing this government to be destroyed. By the way, why a minister of his position should spends nine months out of the



country? What kind of Minister is that? For me this is Bull-crap, nonsensical, counter-productive, an embarrassment to the epitome of leadership. The Ministry Of Information Culture And Tourism is the strategic arm for providing managerial capacity for communication information in the Republic of Liberia. Let's put tourism aside.

Three days ago, the Minister of Information having received a lots of bombardment from me on social media about tourism, decided to put pictures of the Sharon Hotel on Third Street that they cannot give possession to the printing materials. And that a new beach open in Congo Town, When did he started putting pictures around? When did he started putting tourism agenda? Only when did he realize that I am on his back? Me -Christopher Hayes Onanuga- who have been passionate for tourism have been running tourism over the years because I attend every major tourism activity on this continent - buy the ticket, pay the hotel bills, sell the contents on this contents and outside this continent. The Minister of Information Culture and Tourism does not know about some of these events, and cannot be able to say anything regarding the various groups of tourists coming in this country that goes to Nimba, different places; but I have the statistics when the minister has no idea of these, which is fantastically embarrassing.

Let me tell you how much the Minister of Information Culture & Tourism pays lip service on tourism in this country. The Minister of Information, Culture & Tourism did not work during the last two years, under this new administration to be able to put one cent in the national budget for tourism; instead, he is going around talking tourism. That is crazy. If the Ministry of Information, Culture & Tourism is going around talking tourism, but doesn't understand that Eco and Industrial tourisms have two distinct agenda where one is to preserve the environment and the other is intended to celebrate structures. But these two, eco and industrial tourisms, have separate branches such as religious tourism, traditional tourism, etc. - say eight to nine branches. But guess what? In every country, tourism provides two to three times employment rate as compared to civil service.

Don't you think this country is supposed to be the richest country with all beauty of nature available to it? The is country is endowed with beautiful tropical the beaches, well defined and attractive the landscapes, fine ranges, fresh water lakes and the ever green forests. These when utilized in the tourism sector could make yields and provide multiple jobs for the youths of this country. Instead of investing in the sector here, They go to Ghana and buy beads - seeds that have fallen from trees for gift; seeds the old ladies polished and tie with rubber; they buy then 10-10 dollars forgetting to know that we have the biggest forest in Liberia. Why can't we empower the rural people to pick the same seeds, provide them with small tools to do the same thing they buy from Ghana for sale here?

The Ministry of Information is in the business of challenging Chris and CT.COM in doing the job because they own several franchises. Let put those franchises aside; my major concern is how to move the Tourism Sector forward. My major concern is if we decide to sit and watch how things are going wrong and don't speak, it will become a problem. I prefer to be a scapegoat; as Minister has blocked me on Facebook and even if he shut down KOOL FM, TV and my staff will be well. I prefer if he calls me anti-government, which I am not for good cause, I prefer to survive. But someone has to challenge each ministry that they have passion in, and put their feet to the fire.

There are several reasons why I have to talk. Because the Ministry of Information is my line ministry. As a journalist, as an entrepreneur in the media, we will be owed so much debt as publishers, and electronic and audio and visual media institutions, that the people working for us cannot earn deservingly as they earn three to four thousands Liberian dollars, even if the government does not patronize us. Even if the government patronizes us, they don't pay -one year, two years; you will be hunting for your change (money) and you cannot get it, because they say journalism is a profession of sacrifice. Oh! Does that mean that we should be prepared to sacrifice and be impoverished in a way that our child cannot get anything and die poor? You mean our children should not be educated to acquire knowledge because we born them. My staff will still be employed and catered for. But somebody has to speak out and I will not hold back. I will not hold back today, I will not hold back tomorrow. I will never hold back!

The Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism has 90% of square pegs in round holes. Somebody has to bring about change.

The beautiful thing is that you cannot deport me. On one of my parents is a foreigner. I was not born out of Liberia, I was born in flagba or blahgba. I am a full born citizen that could contest the office of the presidency of Liberia, but unfortunately I am not a politician. Fortunately I am willing to serve in other capacities outside government to make a unique contribution. We will hold their feet onto the fire.

Now the third part. The Ministry of Information Culture & Tourism was established by an Act of Legislature. The Liberia Intellectual Property Rights (LIPO) was established by an Act of Legislature. The Ministry of Information Culture & Tourism is on the Board of LIPO. And the Board the ministry is on is also seriously, consciously supposed to be executing what they are supposed to be executing. LIPO is established to give intellectual property rights, patency rights, trademarks and all other things that are supposed to make the sector of the industrious park works. And also in tourism, what has been happening? The Ministry of Information Culture and Tourism, when there was no LIPO, used to give permits for events, although that is not the prerogative of the Ministry. Notwithstanding, it was because there was no line agency to do it; therefore, they used to do it to collect small change.

It is not the right of the Ministry of Information to do that! Even though they are used to collecting petty cash other than doing their major jobs, LIPO has to function. But the Ministry of Information does not want LIPO to perform. CT.COM understands the engagement. So we have several franchises from LIPO and not from the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism. So the law is that whenever the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism wants to do anything with intellectual property, names or brands, they must go and consult with LIPO and check to know whether there is an ownership. LIPO gives out ownership for 10 years while the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism gives permit which last for one year.

I know or perhaps you have heard about the most beautiful girl of Liberia recently, which is owned by CT.COM. CT.COM realized that that there was a company that hosted the event, and we did not see the profit up to today. We wrote several times to the government; several times wrote to the Ministry of Information and no answer. Finally I spoke to the Minister of Information Culture and Tourism, and you guess his answer: "My man. LIPO try to take over our job, so we have to fight. You cannot be owing all those properties; you, yourself."

The Minister considering me an individual instead of CT.COM, a company. He is looking at LIPO as his rival instead of been an institution that is performing task as mandated in the Act creating her. Ministry of Information is doing what her Acts she shouldn't do. Her Acts did not list her to perform that role. So we realized that the Ministry was bent on stealing intellectual properties of people who individuals at the Ministry are closed to them; we decided to challenge it by law. The Court then initiated an order. First we did a unique kind of injunction. We went to the Insurance Company and collected an Insurance bond, in the event that we are guilty the amount that we indemnified will pay them. We did not stop there because we wanted justice. We went on to the LIPO office. We got LIPO to rule that the intellectual property that is being used is owned by CT.COM-Liberia. These documents were served the Ministry of Information which ignored them. In fact some other persons told us that even the Chief Justice will not be obeyed in the matter. The Injunction was served, a lady at the Minister's office refused to accept the court precept, said the ministry instructed her not to hold the paper from the court.

Gentlemen. If the court is made irrelevant by the Executive, where do we run for justice? After the events which do not provide any results that one can boast of, what has happened is that the Court now got a bill of information, the Ministry of Information delayed to and did not respond until the expiry period. Today they have the issue of contempt of court. Two things notable are: MICAT refusing to take the writ; and also refusing to respond. The essence of exposing these situations which we will keep will keep exposing, is to make sure that every day of our lives, Liberia will get better.

Another thing that took place that bothers is that KOOL 91.9 is a legal entity. And it is a company just like any newspaper or radio station institution. The Ministry of Information is the Ministry that gives permit on a yearly basis to operate. The Ministry of Information is a business entity in that light. And the companies are partners in business. You don't wait for the companies to go to you for their bills. As an entity, you are supposed to get the bills out to the companies so they can pay. That is how business runs. But what does Ministry of Information do? Sit down and wait for you no go there. When you go for your bill, they give excuses telling you "go come tomorrow; there is no light, we can't find the paper, or the computer off." Dramatized administration! Are you aware that for two years, we have been trying to get the bills paid for KOOL 91.9 and we can't get it? Isn't that nasty?

We pay our taxes to LRA. We go there even if they don't come we get it there LTA, I must refer to them, will write and send your bill and we are compliant. We went to the LRA, the Revenue Authorities (LRA), and we paid our taxes. The Ministry of Information wants certain institutions to be in default so that when they ready to close them, it will be easy based on default. Because if that not the case, they will show that they are not committed to maleficence, but the will be committed to perfect functioning of the agencies.

So it is now time to call a spade a spade; Leadership are in three folds. You either born a leader, you earn leadership or you were made a leader. It is a pity if you were made a leader and you are not prepared for it. This is how square pegs are in round holes without passion, without commitment without skills.

I say it looks like Len Eugene Nagbe is just in that shoes' thank you ladies and gentlemen

MORE HEADLINE NEWS MORE HEADLINE NEWS

Weah urges lawmakers to make 2020 productive

By Winston W. Parley

President George Weah has urged returning lawmakers to come with renewed vigor, strong determination, unrelenting commitment, and a dedicated spirit to do the work of the Liberian People.

“As you return to commence this 3rd Session, it is my fervent hope that you have come back with renewed vigor, strong determination, unrelenting commitment, and a dedicated spirit to do the work of the Liberian People,” he said Monday, 13 January at the commencement of the 3rd Session of the 54th Legislature.

“You will require all of these characteristics to make 2020 the most productive year since the 54th Legislature commenced its



duties,” he adds.

Although, his Vice, Jewel Howard Taylor who is the President of the Senate was conspicuously absent from

the opening of the 3rd session, Mr. Weah made no mention of her in his speech to the Legislative body. This comes amidst speculation that there

is a deeper strain in relations between the two.

However, President Weah thanks the lawmakers for their hard work during the just-ended 2nd Session during which he says they enacted many very important bills in support of government’s efforts to deliver to the high expectations of the people.

He notes that one of such Acts which he believe is worthy of note is the law resulting in the harmonization of Government’s salaries.

“For the very first time in our legislative history, you showed the courage, wisdom, and determination to trim the Government’s wage bill, and we applaud you for that,” President Weah says.

Notwithstanding, President Weah indicates that there are still a few bills pending before the lawmakers which require their urgent attention and action, so that government can continue to make progress.

“From my perspective, this year 2020, which marks the turn of the decade, is the most

critical year since my incumbency. It is the year when we will consolidate our gains and launch Liberia upwards and onwards on a solid platform of policies and practical programs that will begin to turn our economy around,” President Weah continues.

He notes that he will present his legislative agenda and report to the lawmakers on the State of the Nation in his Annual Message at the end of this month in keeping with the requirements of the Liberian Constitution.

In that Address, President Weah says he will give a detailed elaboration of his plans for the ensuing year, and clearly set out for lawmakers the new strategies and programs that will drive the Nation to further and faster growth and development.

During the 3rd Session of the 54th Legislature, he adds that he would like to encourage lawmakers to continue to work diligently in the supreme interest of the Liberian People.

EU, Solidaridad sign 5m Euros grant for cocoa program

By Winston W. Parley

European Union (EU) representatives and the officials of global network organization Solidaridad have signed a grant worth five million Euros in Monrovia to facilitate the implementation of a new program in the cocoa sector called Cocoa Value Chain Development Program (COVADEP) over the next four years.

The implementing entity Solidaridad which is already undertaking the Liberia Cocoa Sector Improvement Program (LICSIP) in Bong, Nimba and Lofa Counties, will now expand its cocoa program to Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties through COVADEP this year.

The signing at

Solidaridad’s office witnessed by Liberian officials in the agriculture sector came over the weekend after the organization was awarded the grant in 2019 worth 5m euros, out of which the EU provides 4m Euros and Solidaridad provides 1m Euros to implement COVADEP.

The program aims at reducing poverty through increased resilience of the cocoa sector and improve cocoa farmers’ livelihoods and food security.

During the signing, Mr. Isaac Gyamfi, Solidaridad West Africa Regional Director says COVADEP must bring Liberia’s cocoa to another level that all can be proud of in terms of its contribution to national development, the livelihood of the people who

are in the communities growing cocoa.

He says for the four years that Solidaridad has been in Liberia, the modest work that it has done in both cocoa and oil palm speaks tons in terms of the organization’s commitment to ensuring impactful programs and projects on the ground.

Mr. Gyamfi says he is aware that the Government of Liberia has huge agri sector transformation agenda, adding that Solidaridad wants its contribution by way of facilitating an effective and impactful program on the ground to feed ultimately into and transform Liberia’s agriculture sector.

“Africa needs its agriculture to transform, there is no question about it. We cannot feed ourselves and the world if we continue what I describe as mediocre agriculture. and that is what our continent has seen over the years,” he says.

Mr. Gyamfi notes that it’s time that Africa moves from those small productions system, high transaction cost, inefficient markets and inefficient agronomic practices to a very advanced stage where technology and innovation are allowed to drive change in the sector.

Also speaking at the signing ceremony, Mr. Ivan Borisavjevic, Team Leader, Resilience of European Union assures the EU’s commitment to the rural development sector in Liberia in trying to support the rural population.

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Earlier, Solidaridad Liberia Acting Country Representative Mr. J. Cyrus Saygbe says the [initial cocoa program] LICSIP was in three counties - Lofa, Bong and Nimba, but through COVADEP, Solidaridad is moving to the southeast.

He notes that the difference between the two programs is that COVADEP brings on board value addition, working with local partners and companies that are involved in producing and processing cocoa into cocoa powder and cocoa chocolate in Liberia.

According to Mr. Saygbe, through COVADEP, Solidaridad will get young university graduates from agriculture colleges and university students involved in agriculture and take them through two years program to make them entrepreneurs after graduation.

As a means of creating job opportunities for them, he adds that the young people will be trained in cocoa related intervention that will help them to have incentives added to get them ready to serve the local market.

Concerning road connectivity challenges in the southeast, Mr. Saygbe notes that Solidaridad will drive a lot of the interventions during the dry season because it cannot leave out the other parts of

Liberia due to deplorable road conditions there.

“Now is the dry season, we [are] going to make sure that we have a lot of the interventions roll out in those counties so that when the rain starts, we start now to nurture and see what is happening,” he says.

For his part, Mr. BoimaBafaie, Solidaridad Liberia Cocoa Program Manager explains that the EU provides 4m Euros while Solidaridad, the implementor provides 1m for the implementation of COVADEP which goes for four years.

He discloses that the new program targets 3000 farmers in expansion of the centers for cocoa development (CCDs) in addition to the three existing counties - Nimba, Bong and Lofa.

Mr. Bafaie notes that this will involve a setup of additional ten centers for cocoa development as one stop shop for small and medium enterprises to drive production and improvement within the supply chain of the private companies and producer organizations.

Mr. Bafaie adds that the CCDs will be supported with capacity to develop sustained production, diversification, rehabilitation support and marketing services to farmers.



Français

« Ne combattez pas le feu avec le feu », un groupe pro démocratie avertit Weah

Un groupe pro démocratie appelle le président George MannehWeah à répondre aux demandes persistantes des manifestants, avertissant que le fait de faire la sourde oreille pourrait générer une tension beaucoup plus grande.

L'Union du Fleuve Dugbe (DRU) appelle également le président Weah et son gouvernement à ne pas combattre le feu par le feu. Elle invite le pouvoir à respecter plutôt la beauté et les principes de la démocratie, en vue d'une paix, d'un développement et d'une croissance durables au Libéria.

Une manifestation pacifique a dégénéré en violence le lundi 6 juin, après que les forces de l'ordre ont fait usage du gaz lacrymogène pour disperser de force les manifestants.

Les forces de l'ordre tentaient d'empêcher les manifestants de cuisiner, de manger et de dormir sur les lieux, devant la présidence de la république.

Le Conseil des patriotes (COP), qui avait organisé une

manifestation de masse similaire le 7 juin 2019 pour exiger des réformes au sein du gouvernement du président George MannehWeah, a appelé à manifester le 6 janvier 2020.

La COP exige le limogeage d'un certain nombre de responsables gouvernementaux et la publication des avoirs du président Weah et des résultats de l'audit de la gestion des 25 millions de

dollars libériens injectés dans l'économie pour, dit-on, éponger l'excès de liquidités.

Après des semaines de menaces de la part d'un groupe pro-gouvernemental d'organiser une contre-manifestation le même jour, les partenaires internationaux sont intervenus, ce qui a sauvé le pays d'un chaos possible. Le COP avait été prié de suspendre sa marche du 30

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Plusieurs manifestants interpellés ont été inculpés

Plusieurs manifestants interpellés lors de la manifestation organisée le lundi 6 janvier par le Conseil des patriotes (COP) ont été inculpés de plusieurs chefs d'accusation par la police et incarcérés par la suite à la

prison centrale de Monrovia.

Les manifestants ont été inculpés d'émeute, désobéissance, mise en danger imprudente d'autrui et conduite désordonnée. Ils ont comparu devant les tribunaux le jeudi 9 janvier.

La manifestation, qui est la deuxième plus grande de son genre, a été organisée par le Conseil des Patriotes (COP) en moins d'un an. Elle a été organisée pour exiger du président George MannehWeah des réformes sérieuses afin de lutter efficacement contre la corruption,

la publication de la déclaration des avoirs, le limogeage d'un certain nombre de responsables de son gouvernement et la publication des résultats de l'audit sur la gestion des 25 millions de dollars décaissés pour, dit-on, lutter contre l'inflation.

La manifestation initialement pacifique a dégénéré en émeute lorsque les forces de l'ordre ont tenté de disperser les manifestants qui avaient tenté de faire la cuisine sur les lieux de la manifestation, devant le palais présidentiel et le palais de l'Assemblée Nationale. Plusieurs manifestants ont été blessés, certains ont été interpellés.



Editorial

Espérons que cette année l'économie se portera bien

L'économie libérienne sous l'administration Weah continue de connaître une tendance à la baisse sur fond d'hyperinflation, de la hausse des prix, de la baisse des recettes publiques, du manque de liquidités, du manque d'emplois et du retard des salaires, entre autres. La situation désagréable a infligé des douleurs atroces sur le plan psychologique et économique aux citoyens ordinaires.

Les Libériens ont terminé l'année 2019 avec une grave pénurie de liquidités dans les banques commerciales au point qu'il était pratiquement impossible pour les clients de faire des retraits à partir de leurs comptes en banque.

Ce pays ne peut pas se permettre de poursuivre cette voie qui est caractérisée par une régression persistante. Il est indispensable que le gouvernement relève le défi en introduisant des politiques nouvelles en vue de revoir l'économie et de rétablir la confiance.

Cette année 2020 est une opportunité pour le gouvernement, les Libériens ordinaires et les partenaires étrangers de sauver l'économie. Oui, cette situation nécessite la participation de tous.

Encore faut-il que le gouvernement, qui détient le principal levier de l'économie, fasse des efforts d'autant plus que seule son action détermine en grande partie la direction que doit prendre l'économie. Nul n'est sans savoir que la tendance à la baisse de l'économie actuellement, avec un taux de change à trois chiffres, peut avoir des conséquences fâcheuses. Cela reflète clairement la valeur du travail que nous avons fait en tant que nation.

L'administration Weah devrait calmer la dissidence politique et publique actuelle dans le pays pour restaurer la confiance des investisseurs, ce qui garantirait la stabilité et relancerait la croissance économique.

Hélas, l'économie emprunte déjà une très mauvaise voie au début de cette année vue les manifestations et la violence qui ont été enregistrées. Cela crée la panique et l'incertitude. Il est regrettable et décevant que nous ayons commencé ce nouvel an de cette façon.

Le désenchantement croissant des Libériens ordinaires face à la piètre performance de l'économie compromet davantage les perspectives économiques.

Il faut que le gouvernement prenne l'initiative en invitant toutes les parties prenantes à un dialogue franc et constructif, en dehors de tout clivage politique. En d'autres termes, il faut que l'on fasse preuve d'une franchise, tout en discutant les vrais problèmes auxquels nous sommes confrontés en tant que pays. Le président Weah devrait écouter les critiques et tolérer les opinions dissidentes, au lieu de considérer ceux qui s'opposent à son style de gouvernance comme des ennemis de l'État.

Ce pays risque de retomber dans les égouts comme cela avait déjà été le cas pendant la guerre civile des années 1990 si nos dirigeants ne considèrent pas la gouvernance comme une affaire sérieuse. Le peuple a le droit de demander des comptes à son gouvernement chaque fois que son bien-être et son bonheur sont menacés, comme c'est le cas en l'espèce. Le président devrait faire preuve de leadership en sortant l'économie de son état actuel pour redonner espoir aux Libériens cette année.

Articles traduits
Par Valéry G. Guhena
E-mail: valeryghn10@yahoo.com
Tel: 076 589 44 0881483394

Français

« Ne combattez pas le feu avec le feu »,

décembre, date initialement prévue.

Mais lundi, tard dans la soirée, les forces de l'ordre ont fait usage du gaz lacrymogène et des canons à eau pour disperser les manifestants qui tentaient de faire la cuisine sur les lieux de la manifestation. Le chef du COP, Henry P. Costa, a déclaré aux journalistes que « ... notre peuple était pacifique jusqu'à ce qu'il soit provoqué et gazé, et plusieurs d'entre eux sont blessés, nous dit-on ».

Il a démenti l'allégation de la police selon laquelle des armes à feu auraient été découvertes dans deux véhicules appartenant apparemment à un représentant YekehKolubah, membre du COP et féroce critique du président Weah et son régime.



"Nous voulons affirmer catégoriquement qu'à aucun moment, l'honorable YekehKolubah n'a mis des armes dans aucun de ces deux véhicules", a fait valoir Costa.

Plus tôt lors de la manifestation de lundi, le sénateur du comté de Montserrado et membre de la COP, M. Abraham Darius Dillon, a déclaré que le président Weah n'a aucune idée du leadership et qu'il n'est pas un bon leader.

Dans une récente déclaration publiée à Monrovia, le secrétaire général de la DRU, Aaron Manneh, a indiqué que le président Weah, en sa qualité d'ambassadeur de la paix, devrait plutôt dialoguer avec les dirigeants du Conseil des patriotes, au lieu d'avoir à affronter les manifestants à maintes reprises.

« Faisons de Monrovia et du Libéria un havre de paix. Que le pouvoir veille à ce que Monrovia et ses environs soient sûrs et sécurisés. Evitons le style de leadership de Samuel K. Doe et la déstabilisation de votre arrière-cour car cela pourrait entraver les opportunités d'investissement à court et à long terme », a prévenu l'organisation.

Selon M. Manneh, le droit de manifester est un droit constitutionnel, tel que garanti par l'article 17 de la Constitution du Libéria de 1986, et que ce droit n'a pas changé. Il a ajouté que la démocratie exige des pressions, une responsabilité et le gouvernant doit écouter tout le monde, y compris la majorité et la minorité.

Il a mis en garde contre tout acte susceptible de saper la paix gagnée au prix

de grands sacrifices des libériens et attiré l'attention du président sur la nécessité de faire la part des choses face aux conseils selon lesquels il faut détruire pour rebâtir, ajoutant que ceux qui lui donnent ce genre de conseils sont les vrais ennemis de son régime.

Il a réitéré son appel à un dialogue constructif dès maintenant, car, pour lui, c'est la seule voie viable « parce que le monde entier surveille la situation actuelle dans le pays. Ne combattez pas le feu avec le feu ».

Il a indiqué en outre que dialoguer avec les manifestants n'est en aucun cas un signe de faiblesse, mais l'expression de la volonté de renforcer la démocratie, la paix et le développement.

COMMENTAIRE

Par John Andrews

Erdoğan se jette dans le bourbier libyen

WINCHESTER, ROYAUME-UNI - Les détracteurs étrangers du président turc Recep Tayyip Erdoğan se moquent de lui en le décrivant comme un mégalomane quasi-dictatorial. Mais Erdoğan - qui a été le premier ministre de la Turquie pendant 11 ans avant d'être élu président en 2014 - est désormais également un joueur téméraire. D'ici peu, la Turquie va envoyer des troupes en Libye, à la demande du gouvernement pour l'Accord national (GNA) soutenu par les Nations Unies, qui a été assiégé à Tripoli au cours des huit derniers mois par les forces en expansion de l'Armée nationale libyenne (LNA) du maréchal Khalifa Haftar.

Ce sera une folie militaire et diplomatique. Erdoğan a déjà l'exemple affligeant du conflit syrien aux portes mêmes de la Turquie. Imagine-t-il vraiment que l'envoi de quelques centaines - voire plusieurs milliers - de soldats turcs pour aider le GNA aux abois pourrait de quelque manière mettre fin à la tourmente tragique et sanglante qui accable la Libye, elle-même le résultat de l'intervention des puissances étrangères en 2011 pour renverser le régime du colonel Mouammar el-Kadhafi?

Si Erdoğan s'attend soit à une victoire du GNA, soit à un accord de paix rapide, il se berce d'illusions. La LNA bien équipée de Haftar a le soutien de l'Égypte, des Emirats Arabes Unis, de l'Arabie Saoudite, de la Russie et (au moins secrètement) de la France. Avec des mercenaires russes et soudanais de son côté, Haftar doit clairement se sentir plus optimiste que Fayez al-Sarraj, le premier ministre du GNA. Le soutien de la Turquie et du Qatar au GNA, ainsi que la couverture liée à la reconnaissance par l'ONU, pèsent nettement moins lourd dans la balance militaire.

Dès lors, qu'est-ce qui explique l'entrée de la Turquie dans le terrible conflit libyen, en tant que nouvel acteur de cette lutte par personnes interposées? Un facteur, déconcertant souvent à l'extérieur, est l'influence idéologique et politique au Moyen-Orient - ou tout au moins ses parties musulmanes sunnites - des Frères musulmans. Fondés en Égypte il y a presque un siècle, les Frères favorisent une transition (pacifique, ont-ils toujours maintenu) vers un gouvernement théocratique. Selon son slogan, « L'islam est la solution ».

Il s'agit d'un problème pour les familles dirigeantes de l'Arabie Saoudite, des Émirats arabes unis et du Bahreïn, qui considèrent toutes que les Frères sont une organisation terroriste cherchant à saper leur pouvoir. C'est aussi le cas du régime égyptien d'oppression dirigé par le président Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, qui a monté un coup d'Etat militaire en 2013 mettant fin à une année de gestion désastreuse par les Frères du pays le plus peuplé du monde arabe. Seuls la Turquie - en particulier, le Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP) d'Erdoğan - et le minuscule Qatar (en profond désaccord avec l'Arabie saoudite voisine) regardent les Frères avec enthousiasme et sans inquiétude. Sur la prémisse presque frivole « l'ennemi de mon ennemi est mon ami », le fait que l'Arabie saoudite, les Émirats arabes unis et l'Égypte soutiennent Haftar est une excuse suffisante pour le soutien de la Turquie et du Qatar à Sarraj et la GNA.

La raison principale de l'aventurisme d'Erdoğan en Libye, cependant, est qu'il correspond à son désir que la Turquie joue un rôle déterminant dans sa région pour la première fois depuis la disparition

de l'empire ottoman (dont la Libye faisait autrefois partie). A première vue, cette ambition semble assez raisonnable. La Turquie a une population de plus de 80 millions d'habitants, le deuxième contingent militaire de l'OTAN et une économie relativement développée. Elle mérite d'être traitée avec respect - ce qui est pourquoi la réticence évidente de l'Union européenne à faire progresser la candidature d'adhésion du pays est un coup porté à la fierté turque.

Mais la poursuite par la Turquie de son ambition de leadership régional s'est faite à un coût élevé. Lorsque l'AKP est arrivé au pouvoir en Turquie il y a près de deux décennies, le mentor d'Erdoğan était Ahmet Davutoglu, un universitaire qui est ensuite devenu ministre des Affaires étrangères et, finalement, premier ministre. Davutoglu tenait à étendre l'influence de la Turquie à l'étranger, mais sous le slogan « zéro problème avec nos voisins ».

Quelle ironie, dès lors, qu'Erdoğan ait créé des problèmes avec presque tous ses voisins. L'UE ne peut accepter les pratiques consternantes de la Turquie en matière de droits de l'homme, en particulier après l'échec de la tentative de coup d'Etat menée par l'armée en 2016. Israël ne peut pas supporter le soutien de la Turquie au Hamas (qui est aligné avec les Frères musulmans) à Gaza. Et presque tout le monde est exaspéré par la politique de la Turquie en Syrie, qui consiste à attaquer les Kurdes - les plus efficaces combattants contre l'Etat islamique - et à entretenir une ambivalence envers plusieurs groupes djihadistes. De manière significative, Davutoglu a rompu avec Erdoğan et formé un parti politique rival.

Il est vrai que les partisans d'Erdoğan peuvent faire valoir à juste titre que la Turquie est devenue un acteur régional avec lequel il faut compter. L'UE doit être généreuse financièrement, au risque que la Turquie laisse des centaines de milliers de réfugiés fuyant la Syrie, les guerres et la pauvreté envahir l'Europe. La Russie et l'Iran, qui soutiennent le régime du président syrien Bachar al-Assad, reconnaissent qu'un règlement du conflit syrien dépendra de l'acquiescement de la Turquie - d'où la poursuite du processus de paix tripartite qui a commencé il y a trois ans à Astana, au Kazakhstan. Même les États-Unis sous le président Donald Trump a dû se résoudre à faire amende honorable : la Turquie, quelles que soient les sensibilités de l'OTAN et les menaces économiques américaines, maintient sa décision d'acheter un système de défense aérienne russe.

Mais l'entreprise libyenne pourrait être un pas trop loin. Le 5 décembre, le Parlement turc a ratifié un accord entre Erdoğan et Sarraj qui établit une frontière maritime entre les deux pays. L'accord turco-libyen ne tient pas compte du droit international - comme l'Union européenne, Chypre, la Grèce et l'Égypte l'ont souligné. Il ignore également la géographie, parce que l'île grecque de Crète se trouve à mi-chemin entre les deux pays. Et il menace l'accord de janvier 2019 entre l'Égypte, Israël, la Grèce, Chypre, l'Italie, la Jordanie et l'Autorité palestinienne sur l'exploitation des réserves de gaz de la Méditerranée orientale.

Erdoğan est l'incarnation même du leader politique fort d'aujourd'hui. Mais, lorsque son pari libyen tournera au fiasco, comme ce sera inévitablement le cas, il aura épuisé à la fois ses chances et ses amis.

PERSPECTIVES PERSPECTIVES

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 successfully 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!!

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VP Taylor's conspicuous absence

By E. J. Nathaniel Daygbor

It appears that the strained relationship between President George Manneh Weah and Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor is far from being resolved, as demonstrated Monday, 13 January by the conspicuous absence of the Vice President, who is also President of the Liberian Senate, from the formal opening of the 3rd Session of the Liberian Legislature at the Capitol.

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

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

about her absence.

Neufville notes that it would be very decent for the Pro-Tempore to speak to matter rather than him, insisting that he was not instructed to discuss the content of the communication with the media.

When also quizzed about the Vice President's health and her travels, he explains that VP Taylor is well and in the country.

However, during the ceremony, Pro-Tempore Albert Chie disclosed that Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor could not attend the ceremony due to some emergency issues.

Also when this paper contacted the offices of the Pro-Tempore about the communication from the VP, a senior staffer, Furcas Wilson, he was not instructed to comment.

He added that his boss was attending a lunch meeting with President Weah in the rotunda of the Capitol, so the Pro-Tempore was indisposed to provide instruction.

However, Mr. Wilson promised to provide copy of the vice president's letter to this paper today, January 14, if he's given the opportunity.

There are reports that for about five months now, staffers of the vice president are yet to be paid by the Ministry Finance and Development Planning.

Since the ascendancy of the Coalition for Democratic Change led-government to power, relationship between Vice President Taylor and President Weah have not been too rosy.

The Coalition for Democratic Change is a conglomeration of Congress for Democratic Change of President George Manneh Weah, the National Patriotic Party of Vice President Jewel Howard Taylor and former Speaker Alex Tyler of the Liberian People Democratic Party. -Editing by Jonathan Browne

CT Com Liberia boss blasts Information Minister

By Emmanuel Mondaye

Kool FM and CT Com Liberia Inc. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mr. Christopher Hayes Onanuga says he is shocked to note that the Ministry of Information is allegedly doing nothing much to address the growing problems confronting the ministry, other than running a smear campaign against reputable media institutions here.

Minister Nagbe's office was contacted but staff declined comment saying they could not speak for the minister who was out of office.

He told a press conference

Onanuga indicates that as a businessman and media executive here, he remains committed to exposing the ills at the Ministry of Information which he insists has turned to a reactionary ministry.

Meanwhile, Mr. Onanuga has denied claims in some quarters that he is in possession of government's properties, allegedly involved in money laundering, and defrauding government entities, terming the accusations as a black lie.

He narrates that in his absence, Minister Nagbe held a media engagement and allegedly made the allegations



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, but to the shock of many, the

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



in Paynesville recently that Information Minister Lenn Eugene Nagbe and his Ministry have designed an alleged scheme wherein documents of some media houses here would be delayed as a means of getting even with them in term of regularizing their operations in the country.

He claims that Minister Nagbe's smear campaign is against some credible entities that are putting the feet of the government to the fire to ensure that the right things are done so as to encourage investment in the country.

against him without any truth.

Onanuga wonders why he has not been arrested since his return to the country if he was truly involved in money laundering or other acts as alleged by the minister.

He challenges Minister Nagbe to focus on how he can adequately propagate the policies of the government and stop providing fake information to the public about his institution which is a registered business operating in the country.

Mr. Onanuga argues that Minister Nagbe cannot show anything tangible that he has done as Minister of Information since he was appointed.

He threatens to take the appropriate action against Minister Nagbe if he fails to prove his false, baseless, and unfounded information released to the public at the appropriate time.

When the office of the Information Minister was contacted, coupled with a visitation to the office of the Deputy for Public Affairs at the Ministry, our reporter was informed by staff there that no one at the ministry could speak to the press on the matter in the absence of the Minister. -Edited by Winston W. Parley

JUDICIAL BRANCH
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

00004526

Judge's Chambers
 Sixth Judicial Circuit Court
 Civil Law Court "ANNEXED "B"
 Montserrado County, Republic of Liberia

SITTING IN ITS DECEMBER A.D. 2019 TERM
 BEFORE HIS HONOR: ROLAND F. DAHN

ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE PRESIDING

IN RE: THE PETITION OF MISS. HENRENA MARTUE BANKS OF THE CITY OF MONROVIA, COUNTY OF MONTSERRADO, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, PETITIONER, PRAYING THIS HONORABLE COURT FOR A DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME TO BE ISSUED IN FAVOR OF HER TO BE KNOWN, REGARDED AND CALLED AS "GARPIE MARTUE WULAMILIN", WHO WAS BORN ON DECEMBER 16, 2000, IN THE CITY OF MONROVIA, MONTSERRADO COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA.

COURT'S DECREE OF CHANGE OF NAME

Petitioner filed a Petition requesting this Honorable Court to order the change of her name from "MISS. HENRENA MARTUE BANKS TO GARPIE MARTUE WULAMILIN".

During the hearing, the Petitioner testified that the change of her name requesting this Honorable court is intended to reflect her true and full family name and render her identity more explicit and absolute.

After conducting the necessary interrogation requested by law in these proceedings the court had observed that the intention is just, legal and that there is no objection to the change of her name proposed by her and is therefore adjusted as follows:

That the Petitioner having shown with justification and satisfaction that she was born on December 16, 2000, in the City of Monrovia, Montserrado County, Republic of Liberia, and that the change of her name substantially will promote her interest in all of her undertakings just identity more firmly and being satisfied that she has met all legal requirements for the change of her name in this jurisdiction. It is therefore decreed as follows:

That the Petition having been heard same is hereby ordered granted and we now render that the name of "MISS. HENRENA MARTUE BANKS" is now changed to "GARPIE MARTUE WULAMILIN" beginning the 18th Day of December A. D. 2019.

This Decree shall be registered in the Office of the Registrar of Deeds and other official documentations within ten (10) days from this date and also be published twice in any recognized newspaper operating in the Republic of Liberia within twenty (20) days.

AND IT IS HEREBY SO ORDERED.

COURT SEAL

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF THIS COURT
 THIS 18th DAY OF DECEMBER A.D. 2019

ROLAND F. DAHN
 ASSIGNED CIRCUIT JUDGE PRESIDING
 SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT "ANNEXED" / MONTSERRADO
 COUNTY

REGISTERED ACCORDING TO LAW IN VOLUME 12 - 2019 PAGE(S) 00004526

Speaker Chambers promises “participative leadership”



By Bridgett Milton

House Speaker Bholaf Chambers vows to promote a more participative and achievement-oriented leadership, going forward in the New Year.

Speaking Monday, 13

January at the formal opening of the 3rd sitting of the 54th Legislature, the Speaker challenged his colleague lawmakers to direct their energies and mental effort to nation-building, peace, unity, economic growth and development.

He says concrete steps must be taken for the visualization of sound economic growth, which he describes as key to the nation’s transformative agenda. “We all have thought of undertaking and /or funding progressive priority projects for all of our people”, says Speaker Chambers, and underscores that this can only happen in a vibrant economy, critical for the proper funding of people-centered projects.

He says when the economy is stable, the society will certainly develop therefore, as direct representatives of the people, dedicated to speedy national economic recovery, concentration should be directed at creating an environment for enhanced business-friendly climate in the country.

Meanwhile, Speaker Chambers discloses here that during the 2nd session of the House of Representatives, a total 80 bills were introduced on the floor with 58 bills passed into law and 22 sent to committee room.



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Xavi in talks to take Barcelona job, Qatari club confirms

Xavi is in talks with his former club Barcelona to take over as coach, his current team, Qatar’s Al-Sadd said Saturday, although the Spanish great himself stayed tight-lipped about his “dream” job.

Spanish media had earlier reported that Barcelona had asked former captain Xavi to take over from the under-pressure Ernesto Valverde.

“I will not deny that. There are negotiations about Xavi

and everyone is talking about them... but I can say that Xavi so far is at Al-Sadd,” Muhammad Ghulam Al-Balushi, Al-Sadd’s sports director, told the Qatar-based BeIN broadcaster.

“The final decision is in the hands of Al-Sadd’s management, in the hands of the manager, and the hands of Barcelona’s management,” he added ahead of Al-Sadd’s 4-1 semi-final victory against Al-Rayyan in the Qatar Cup.

Xavi declined to confirm



the speculation at the post-match media briefing but said he had met Barcelona’s director of football Eric Abidal during his recent trip to Qatar.

“I’m focussing on Al-Sadd. Yes Abidal is my friend, I met him many times,” he said.

“They were here to talk to me and we discussed many things. And they were here to check how is Ousmane Dembele.

“I cannot inform you too much, just that I met Abidal and he is my friend.”

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