

PART TWO

THE SPLENDOR OF HOPE: GEORGE B. N. AYITTEY AND HIS BOOK [*AFRICA UNCHAINED: The Blueprint for Africa's Future*, Palegrave, 2005]

Book Review and Commentary

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I. Introduction: Tradition v. Modernity

In the first part of my book review and commentary, I introduced George B. N. Ayittey as a contrasting author to my critique of Jeffery Sachs's book, *THE END OF POVERTY*. In that part of my article, I wrote, "I find his thesis of globalization very interesting, but not in accord with my anti-globalization sentiments. The books I read [1) *AFRICA IN CHAOS*. New York: St. Martin Press, 1998; 2) *AFRICA BETRAYED*. St. Martins Press, 1992; and portions of *INDIGENOUS AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS*. New York: Transnational Publishers, Inc., 1991.] show great mastery of research tools and disciplined inferences. His latest book *AFRICA UNCHAINED* is an excellent book that should bring us down to Earth after our arterial flight with Sachs' book. I shall discuss that book in Part Two. Having said that, I want it to be absolutely clear to anyone reading this article that my only reason in writing it is to promote the cause of Ethiopia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and dignity. Thus, by necessity the tone of this article carries that underlying interest."

Some African scholars have criticized Ayittey as someone who had no working experience anywhere in Africa. It is true that Ayittey after finishing school in Canada did not go back to his native country, Ghana. He has been teaching in the United States since finishing school in Canada. His last teaching post, as the Distinguished Professor of Economics, has been at the American University. Thus, according to his critics, his critical work on African economic problems, African leadership, and African governance lacks concrete benefits of real life experience in Africa. I do not consider the absence of work experience in an African country a crucial handicap in analyzing and/or synthesizing Africa's problems, especially for someone who is an African by birth and who spent his formative years in an African community as Ayittey did, and who has kept regular and intense connection with the "homeland." Ayittey, with his proper training in economics and great concern for the welfare of African people, is certainly well qualified to speak or write about the numerous problems facing Africa and the people of Africa. However, this does not mean we have to accept everything he says without question. We should put his ideas to all kinds of tests and scrutiny in order to appreciate what is beneficial and discard what is not, just like anyone else.

Ayittey's *AFRICA UNCHAINED* sharply contrasts with Sachs's *THE END OF POVERTY* in terms of style and more importantly in its content. If we start with their

book titles, for example, we can see that for the two authors the associated values underlying their respective main thesis are quite different: in the case of Sachs, it is “security”; in the case of Ayittey, “freedom.” Both authors are passionate about their subject matter, the result being that we are blessed in having two books that are highly readable, greatly complementary, informative, and very educational. However, if these books are read separately, without the benefit of the contrasting evaluation of the reader, their impact as separate items may well be drastically diminished. “Sachs’s book is global and panoramic in its scope, short on details, but long on vision. By contrast, Ayittey’s book is focused and limited to one Continent, and combative in its approach and indignant in its disposition. The authors are from different backgrounds too: Sachs is an American, and Ayittey is a Ghanaian. Both are distinguished economists and educators. Even though the two books are profoundly different in content, nevertheless, they are both a testament of great hope for a suffering humanity. Between the two books, I believe, we are served immensely, and our money is well spent.” [See First Part, “Splendor of Hope”]

There is also the fact of the upcoming May 15, 2005 Ethiopian election that makes my review of Ayittey’s book particularly timely. Sachs has defended his thesis of economic development from a trajectory he called the “poverty trap.” His argument in support of his idea of the “poverty trap” had largely undermined the significance of most African leaders’ corrupt and violent leadership as the cause of poverty and suffering in Africa. As far as I am concerned, the most important role of a government, any government at that, is to be a government of the people where there is accountability, transparency, frequent elections, independent judiciary, and strong defense. This is not to suggest that economic matters are not significant. The relationship of Politics to economics should not be seen as some kind of perpetual competing interests, but as an enabling and necessary structure. In the African nation-state, a responsive and democratically elected government has far greater role than a government in the developed world as a catalyst, vanguard, or “head of a family” to bring about any degree of economic development. We hear often politicians challenging the preeminence of issues of political and human rights over economic development by giving the example that a hungry man’s first desire is to satisfy his hunger than fight for freedom of speech or elections. Such argument is reductionist, dishonest, even racist. There is no doubt in my mind that poverty with human dignity intact is far more bearable than poverty with political suppression, as is to be found in all developing countries.

II. Ayittey’s Thesis

An admiring critic recently has called Ayittey “the Jeremiah of Africa” at the same time stating, “Ayittey is often criticized, mostly by his fellow intellectuals, for his brutal assessments of conditions in Africa. They describe him variously as an ‘Uncle Tom,’ a ‘Sell-Out,’ or an Afro-pessimist.” [E. Ablorh-Odjidja, “The Coming of African Cheetah,” 25 March 2005, in This Week Ghana, www.thisweekghana.com/ThisWeek/Review.ablorh.africaunchained.htm]

The question of putting negative labels on the personality of Ayittey, especially labels superficially gleaned from the records of where Ayittey had worked or who were his sponsors, is not that difficult. One can easily lump him with some of the most conservative American groups and institutions, such as the Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute et cetera. I believe such generalization overlooks an important fact that the conservative institutions [Ayittey is identified with] are using a certain truism, brought out by Ayittey on African political and economic reality, in order to promote their own agenda. Unlike Ayittey, such institutions and the people who are in control of those institutions do not at all have benign disposition toward African People. On the other hand, I give Ayittey the benefit of the doubt in that his criticism of current and past African leadership is motivated in the best interest of the people of Africa and not a “sell out” to the West. In fact, Ayittey is a passionate defender of the common person of Africa. May be, as we shall see further in this article, at times his faith in the native people of Africa may have over-simplified the complexity of the problems of underdevelopment and issues of modernity in Africa.

Ayittey’s thesis is very direct and simple, at times surprisingly naive for a sophisticated man with the benefit of great education and exposure to the ways of the world. He believes that the problem of Africa’s economic underdevelopment (of perpetual famine and civil strife) has to do with the deficient African leadership from the time of independence to date and the solution is to be found in the “*Artingas*” the “*Cheetahs*.” He states the thesis of his book to be the following: “This is the basic trust of *Africa Unchained*: unleashing the entrepreneurial talents and creative energies of the real African people—the peasants, affectionately called the Artingas in Ghana because of their loyalty, dependability and trustworthiness.” This approach overlooks the obvious fact that Africa was not in great shape either before colonialism. In fact, its economic weakness was one of the main reasons that attracted all kinds of colonialists including private adventurers who wanted to carve out their own private empires.

Ayittey’s staunchest critic is a fellow Ghanaian Kissi Edward, Ph.D, especially on the question of Ayittey’s emphasis on reverting to tradition in order to solve Africa’s economic and political problems. Edward’s interest and expertise in Africa’s problems is as genuine as that of Ayittey. His dissertation was titled “*Famine and the Politics of Food Relief in United States Relations with Ethiopia, 1950-1990*,” which he defended in 1997. Since then (after graduation), he has been involved in conferences and seminars dealing with the diverse problems of Africa especially on issues involving human rights. By considering the educational background of the two scholars, we may have a better understanding why Edward’s underlying discontent with Ayittey’s thesis is focused on the allegation that Ayittey does not fully understand the traditions of even Ghana let alone that of the many communities within the Continent. What seems to have bothered Edward in Ayittey, under all that protestation, is the way statements by Ayittey or scholars or experts in general creeps into the policy making processes of national governments of powerful rich nations, such as that of the United States Government, wherein such policy ultimately affects in a real life-death situation the lives of ordinary people in Africa or else where. Nevertheless, we need be careful here, as they say, in

trying to throw out the baby's used bath water that we did not end up throwing the baby too.

Edward wrote, "I study Africa within the context of international relations, especially Africa's relations with the United States. I have, therefore, seen in the US archives what faulty analysis, (or should I say faulty intelligence) can do to nations and nationalities. My disagreements with Ayittey are based on what I see as the obligations that I have to challenge misplaced assumptions and assertions about nations and nationalities in Africa (and have mine challenged too) from colleagues whose unrestricted access to the Western media and American policymakers make them producers of ideas or knowledge about Africa that would ultimately creep into international policies that would affect ordinary people in my village. Today, the assertions of journalists like Robert Kaplan about Africa find themselves in US policymaking towards Africa. His famous, but later debunked article about West Africa, some years ago ("The Coming Anarchy"), was sent to many US diplomatic missions in Africa. I have also read articles of scholars that are attached to policy files in Record Groups 59 and 84 in the US National Archives. So someone somewhere is listening." To begin with, the picture drawn by Edward on the role of scholars and experts in policy making processes of governments, if limited to just himself and Ayittey, does not seem to illustrate that much of an asymmetry in the influence those two scholars exert on the government of the United States. The difference between Edward and Ayittey is not in the identification of the problems Africa is faced with, but in their suggested solutions, which is anyways open to multiple solutions. If Edward is asked a "yes or no" type question whether many African leaders are corrupt and violent, he has to answer in the affirmative. On the other hand, if Ayittey is asked whether millions of African "peasants" have been negatively affected by some of the traditions of Africa's diverse cultures or traditions, he may have to answer in the positive.

Even though of less importance, it is to our benefit to know about the same theme of criticism against Ayittey repeated in "chat" groups such that the emphasis seems to be that Ayittey is not well connected with the reality of African communities to make the type of judgments he had made in his books and articles. For example, from one chat group, an individual stated, "Furthermore, if Ayittey is that serious about African economic development why has he spent all his career in a Western university not even bothering to sometimes [sic] instruct students in Africa--as he can easily arrange?" The problem with the critics' blanket generalization is the fact that it is more of *ad hominem* form of argument, attacking the person rather than addressing the issues of disagreement. Sadly, Ayittey is not above such strife, for he too had some choice phrases, such as "hippo generation" to describe his critics. Very often, I have read articles unnecessarily focusing on "the person" of an author in trying to discredit the ideas promoted by such an author. This is a disservice to us all since the ideas of such an author are left still unchallenged, and we are still left poorer by the experience of going through such writings of supposed critics.

Moreover, the critics of Ayittey are missing the point; Ayittey never once claimed that there is a single tradition for all of the communities in Africa. The way Ayittey perceived of "tradition" is a general conception of the lives of communities in pre-colonial Africa.

However, this is not to say that Ayittey is clear of errors. For example, on a far more important level, he has oversimplified the problem of underdevelopment and corruption in Africa by introducing psychological concepts, such as “loyalty, dependability and trustworthiness.” The same nature he admired in the “*Artingas*” (peasants) is a statistical certainty to be found in varying percentages in all human groups. Therefore, it is not enough to identify or ascribe a “nature” to a group without really looking up-close what the group is doing under what social circumstances. In other words, the problem of Africa’s underdevelopment is more of a system failure more than the mere changing of personalities. There is no foolproof way of knowing whether, for example, an “*Artinga*” once acquiring political power will not turn into a corrupt leader. There are numerous examples of individuals, who otherwise would have remained agreeable little peasants, who turned into monsters in power. One good example is the case of Mengistu Hailemariam. Mengistu was born to a low working peasant family (domestics); he grew up in utter poverty, and lived most of his life in the margins of power as a low-level military functionary, until he unleashed the worst brutality and corruption ever in all of Ethiopia’s history once he acquired power through military takeover after 1974. As most dictators, he turned out to be a despicable coward too, who sneaked out of Ethiopia looting government property and over two hundred million dollars in cash and gold.

There is an indescribable dynamics at work between social (cultural, economic, and political) conditions and the individual in/at any level of social (class) structure, that it would be very unwise to categorically identify a certain group as the only source of great leaders. At best what we can do is to put in place a structure to insure that the “exit” and “entrance” to political power are well lit and clearly observed by everyone, and then guess wisely the possibility of installing (dare I say, electing) the right person for the right political job. Moreover, the disagreement between experts as to the solutions to problems facing African nations could be simply instances of different experts speaking different languages in their specific fields (discipline). For example, Edwards is a distinguish scholar in political science/international relations as opposed to Ayittey who is an economist. Maybe a holistic approach would find the contribution of both individuals equally important and complementary in understanding the diverse and complex problems faced by all African nations.

III. Mirror Images

Are governments the mirror images of the people they govern? Thomas Carlyle wrote in a Chapter he titled “Captains of Industry,” in his exquisite small book of a collection of his essays, *PAST AND PRESENT*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 231, 1896), “In the long-run every Government is the exact symbol of its People, with their wisdom and unwisdom; we have to say, Like People like Government.” Other than being an admirer of Carlyle’s great writing skill, whose prose sublimates into poetry, I trust his wisdom as ageless too. After all, he stated in another Chapter, “The English are a dumb people.” [Carlyle, 135] Nevertheless, there were others who expressed similar sentiments, such as Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821), the Papist, “Toute nation a le gouvernement qu'elle mérite.” [*LETTRES ET OPUSCULES INÉDITS*,” (1851) vol. I, letter 53 of 15 August 1811.] In addition, our own contemporary Lester Lave, professor of economics,

rhetorically expressed the same idea, “People deserve the government they get and get the government they deserve.” In fact, numerous people had expressed in similar forms or slightly modified version of the same idea countless times.

There is a real temptation to accept the idea that people deserve the government they have because governments embody the will of the people no matter how that will of the people may have been expressed, for example, through election, acclamation, concession, acquiescence et cetera. I concede there is very limited truth in such idea, however, only to a very specific extent, in the sense that no government can exist without some form of a support structure made up of several thousand citizens no matter how few in number compared to the total population. Hitler would never have succeeded in his diabolical schemes without the support of tens of thousands of Germans. Stalin would never have succeeded in leading a murderous regime without the help of millions of Russians. Mengistu Hailemariam would not have been able to unleash his “Red Terror” liquidating thousands of innocent Ethiopians without the help and enthusiastic participation of tens of thousands of Ethiopians from all walks of life. We can go on and on listing every brutal dictator that ever existed in the World, and the fact would remain that society in some way is responsible to varying degrees on the success of any such government of a brutal dictator at any given time. In other words, there maybe a very thin line between the representational aspect of a government and the national “ethos” of a people. We all are afraid to make any such conclusion because it is very easy to jump from such assumption to a far more divisive and devastating action of circumventing groups of individuals with distinct “nature” that would easily lead to other holocausts.

To put all the blame of a nation’s underdevelopment on a leader may be as faulty an assumption as putting all the virtues in the tradition of a society. In as much as I criticized Jeffery Sachs for applauding proven corrupt and violent dictatorial leaders of some African nations, I may need to substantiate such criticism with contrasting views of ideal leaders supportive of the democratic process. Such a task of structuring an ideal prototype is not that difficult to do; however, the real problem is how to sustain such a system to great length as to render it a way of life or a “routine.” Ayittey has indicated, “[t]rue freedom never came to much of Africa after independence. In many African countries, independence was in name only; all that occurred was a change in the color of the master—from white colonialists to black neocolonialists—and the oppression and exploitation of the African people continued relentlessly.” [Ayittey, 33] He did not allow for the fact that soon after independence many of the new African leaders showed hopeful leadership. The real puzzling question is why did such leadership that was powered with new idealistic visions of modernity and prosperity collapse so quickly and so badly? Could it be the pressure of the local population’s inertia that overwhelmed those new leaders rather than the leaders corrupting the system or the people?

If there is such overwhelming evidence of the participation of a large segment of the population in any violently oppressive government, is our aspiration of a responsive and representative government and leadership utopian? The search for a perfect political structure by the elite members of society seems to either be triggered or in the alternative symptomatic of profound social changes taking place at much accelerated pace at a

particular time in the life of a community. Socrates almost two thousand five hundred years ago under similar pressure of profound social change advocated his version of an ideal political structure. When Thomas Moore wrote his extremely important book, Utopia, at such an early stage of secularist development of political structures, Europe was in the throes of economic and social profound changes. Four centuries later, the period of “Enlightenment” directly affected and brought about capitalism and contractarian ideas of governments. Socialism and communism are just extensions of that same thesis of the relationships of the individual as member of a community and the role of political leadership to bring about a utopian society.

Thus, we have to accept the idea that all contemporary efforts of political scientists, philosophers, economists et cetera as part of the same continuous narrative started by the early Greeks and others. [The ancient Greeks were not Europeans; there was no Europe at the time of the height of Greek political philosophy. The Greeks belong to the ancient world occupying the northern part of that ancient world that comprised of African and Asian people of the Nile and the Tigris and Euphrates in equal parts. Thus, we Africans need not be shy in claiming and reveling in the glory of ancient Greeks as one of our own spiritual and philosophical dimensions. We certainly have better claims than present day Europeans and Americans for such proximity or affinity to the ancient Greeks.] Ayittey’s magnum work dealing with the political and economic life of Africa and its population need be considered as part of such narrative and not outside of it or in opposition to it. Moreover, I find works by African elites on African concerns far more rewarding and much closer to the point than works by individuals who did not grow up in the culture of an African community be it urban or rural. For example, if we just look at the dedication pages of Sachs and Ayittey, we see very different approaches by the two authors. Sachs dedicated his book to family members, whereas Ayittey dedicated his book to hundreds of named and unnamed victims of abuse, violence, murder et cetera from all over Africa. In as much as Sachs first thought is of his family secure in their middle class lives of opportunity and wealth, so did Ayittey think of his family members who happen to be victims of economic and political oppression. Neither author could have related to the world any differently than they did, if both are honest people with genuine concerns. I happen to believe they are.

Ayittey identified the problems of leadership in Africa covering the period since independence in detail in two very important chapters (Chapter 6: The First Generation Problems, 173-236; Chapter 7: The Second Generation Problems, 237-306). Although Ayittey gave few specific named examples of failed leadership and failed national governments, the character flaws of leaders and the systemic corruptions of national governments analyzed in Chapters 6 and 7 would mostly describe every African leadership and national government that existed in Africa since independence. Ayittey is far more courageous than a number of authors I have read where there seem to be some form of a consensus among African authors (historians, political scientists, and economists) not to ruffle people with power in African nations. Except for very courageous African academicians, almost all protest writings comes from foreigners, mostly Westerners.

IV. Ayittey's Solutions

I would have been satisfied just learning from Ayittey's identification of the complex and numerous problems facing African nations even if he did not provide solutions. His discussion on possible solutions on such African problems comes as an added bonus. Ayittey discusses his vision of the future for Africa in several chapters starting with Chapter 8: How to Develop Africa, 307-335; Chapter 9: The Indigenous Economic System, 337-364; Chapter 10: The Antinga Development Model, 365-399. Ayittey may be accused of many things but not of restraint in his boundless optimism.

It is fashionable these days to beat upon "socialism" as a failed experiment in Africa by few national leaders after independence in the 1960s. Ayittey did not seem to see any distinction between statist models of the Fascistic kind from the ones attempted in Tanzania, Ghana, Guinea and recently Zimbabwe. I cannot equate "socialism" with brutality in the African setting or in general. The collapse of the Soviet Union or many national governments of the Eastern Block nations does not at all represent the failure of "socialism" because such nations did not practice "socialism" nor put in place a socialist government structure to begin with. They were more of a dictatorship of the few who used effective propaganda to arm and mobilize a segment of the population to carry out their lust for power. For example, Mengistu's regime and political ideology has nothing to do with socialism although superficially it claims to be a government of the "workers" of Ethiopia. Mengistu shares the many savage and brutal characteristics of numerous African leaders, but not their government structures that led to such genocidal violence unleashed on their own people. In other words, it is a gross mistake to ascribe brutality, failed economy et cetera to socialist model, ideology, or practice in Africa or in general.

Ayittey seems to believe that positive change of economic prosperity is bound to happen through the dynamic efforts of people whom he identified as the "Cheetahs." He seems to have been convinced of such thesis absolutely. He stated, "Africa's hope lies with the cheetah generation—the new and angry generation of Africans discussed in the prologue. They tend to be Young African graduates, who are dynamic, intellectually agile, and pragmatic." [Ayittey, 391] Ethiopian sages have far profound insight on such issues. They tell us that it takes more to feed a hungry beast than the one that has already his fill. The moral of the story is that the "Cheetah" new leaders are as hungry as when the old leaders were when they started out their career before they became bloated with wealth and sated. Let us not forget, except for Emperor Haile Selassie, who was already in the line of succession of a dynastic rule thousands of years old, and the traditional ruler of Morocco, every other African leader who participated in the formation of the OAU could be described at that time in the manner Ayittey described his heroes—members of the Cheetah generation. In other words, having new sets of leaders with different perspective on economic theories or new social behavior, or even new political ideology, in no way can be perceived as entailing good governance.

Concerning his use of the "Cheetah" as a symbol of Africa's future great leaders and entrepreneurs, who would transform Africa's dismal economic and political situation, I disagree. He used the wrong animal as a symbol. I wish he had used a different symbol

than the Cheetah. The Cheetah is a solitary animal that hardly co-exist in groups of its kind. It is also tittering on its last legs on the brink of extinction. Moreover, the Cheetah has the weakest bite of all the “big cats” that makes it a poor choice as symbol for leaders who need to form great communities around them and use far more decisiveness (bite) in their actions than the mere bite of a child. I would have preferred the “hyena” or the “wild dogs” of the African plains as great symbols for the new vanguards of our effort for economic prosperity. Both animals are great hunters with far better success at bringing down prey than the Cheetah, and they are the most community-oriented animals that take care of groups and their young as a community. The hyena in particular is the great sanitation expert that keeps the Serengeti and other numerous national reserves (parks) clean. The slums of African sprawling urban centers need most an efficient leaders to clean up the mess of “modernity.” Nothing can symbolize such duty better than the hyena. Although hierarchical in their social structure, even the weak, the crippled, and the old have a better chance of survival in those animal groups than in any other animal groups or types including the Cheetah.

Simply put, Sachs’s solution is to throw more money at a problem, and Ayittey’s solution is to throw in more leaders, but from a different group. Neither solution on its own would bring about the change that both authors want for Africa’s poor. It seems that there may be a crucial fact that has eluded us all thus far, about Africa and its diverse population, which fact may have retarded not just European type political and economic development but any meaningful accumulation of knowledge and the building of highly interconnected and interactive social or political systems and institutions. Without discovering that subtle reason that is hindering us from solving our social, economic, political et cetera problems, any suggestion by anyone, whether distinguished or charlatan, would simply be like shooting in the dark blank bullets to hit a target that may not even be there.

One problem I see that may fly against universally appreciated situation is my negative appreciation of the so-called African “extended family” structure. As far as I can see, families are extended in Africa not because of closeness, but rather because of loose relationships. Starting from the relationships of parents to each other and all the way to children to uncles and aunts, to nephews and nieces, cousins etcetera, in a kind of pecking order each member derive some benefit out of the relationship down the line. From my own experience, with great risk of overgeneralization, I find African adult males to be the most selfish and self-centered human beings, and adult women only to a lesser extent, compared to the many different people I encountered in my life from other cultures. Even in the relatively affluent African American community, the same loose relationship prevailed among the black community despite the fact such community had encountered the worst forms of hostilities. By contrast, Western families may look superficially like a system of disconnected individuals, but that is a misreading of the great bond that exists between families and members of the community to the exclusion of other groups. I do not believe specific economic setbacks would explain away such dramatic difference of social behavior. This has nothing to do with race, but learned behavior reinforced by a community at large over a long period of time.

Standing at street crossings and observing the flow of traffic of both pedestrians and vehicles is my favorite pastime in order to learn about the behavior of people without intruding into anybody's privacy. It is amazing to see how quickly and clearly one could develop samples of behavior and predict to great exactitude how different members of a diverse community, such as Washington DC where the diverse people of the world seems to be represented in miniature, would behave in their driving and response to people who are crossing a street at marked crossings, or non-marked crossings, with signal lights, or against signal lights et cetera. The degree of care or respect shown by drivers of vehicles to defenseless pedestrians in a crosswalk tells a lot about the higher relationships (social, cultural, political, and economic) between an individual and the community.

V. International Banking

In order to stop embezzlement and misappropriation of the wealth of a nation by its leaders, the participatory international banks must be held accountable and equally criminal. In all legal systems, any person receiving stolen goods is investigated as a criminal. Once the identity of the goods is established as stolen property, the burden of proof shifts to the person who has received such stolen goods to show that he has no knowledge whether such property is stolen. Over 140 billion dollar was embezzled in the period after independence by African leaders as was claimed by Olusegun Obasanjo, the new Nigerian President [Ayittey, 406], who seems bent on restoring some degree of accountability in his country as well as elsewhere in Africa. It is to be recalled that most of the looting was done in the last two decades by a handful of leaders from Nigeria, Zaire, Ivory Coast et cetera. It is also obvious that Military dictators have done most of the looting as well as the damage to the structure of civil society in Africa. Military career is a disgraceful or disgraced occupation in Africa. It is the one black stain that African nations would have difficulties in removing.

One other significant problem facing African nations is the flight of capital, which must be addressed carefully by all nations around the world. Very often, the flight of capital is linked to the instability of the political and economic system of a nation. In this, we can include the desire to maximize profit and to retire the initial capital outlay as quickly as possible, as an effort that can be tied to the same problems of instability. The problem is very complex and vexing. The economic solutions suggested by Ayittey do not really address such problems since his focus was at generating wealth-producing enterprises. The maintenance of such wealth once created seems not to have been of much concern to Ayittey. I suppose the "free market," much counted upon by Ayittey, might be the force that would inhibit capital flight out of Africa

It will be very hypocritical to condemn only the thieves and embezzlers of African national wealth and not prosecute the receivers of such "stolen goods." International banks, their top officers, and other facilitators who either knowingly or negligently accept cash deposits, and deposits of other valuable commodities, such as gold, diamond etcetera who should have known due to their specialized duties as bankers, accountants, auditors of the legitimacy of the goods received by such banks and other institutions, should all be held accountable. Laws and legal procedures must be instituted and put in

place in order to counter such further depletion of Africa's national wealth by leaders and their cooperative international banks and corporations and their officers.

VI. Where Ayittey Failed and Conclusion

As I have stated at the beginning of this commentary, Ayittey has written a great book; however, there are few instances where he has failed miserably because of overstating his ideas or from unsubstantiated assertions. It is only proper to point out such problems to do him justice. At times Ayittey makes oversimplified or exaggerated statements. One can see, for example, his knowledge of Ethiopian history is quite shallow when one reads his egregious remarks such as stating that "In Ethiopia, Muslims have long been persecuted, under both Emperor Haile Selassie and Comrade Mengistu Hailemariam." [Ayittey, 115] The fact of the matter is Ethiopian rulers have mostly been the model of tolerant-leadership when it comes to Christian-Moslem relationships. Taking into consideration how Gagn Mohammed, who was fully armed and financed by Ottoman Turks, devastated Christian Ethiopia in the Sixteenth Century, the steps taken by Ethiopian Emperors to insure that such attack does not occur again is very mild and fully justified and appropriate. At any rate, Ethiopia is the only nation in that part of the World where Moslems flourished as members of a community with a majority of Orthodox Christians. Whether it is in Egypt, the Sudan, Nigeria, Algeria, Tunisia et cetera where you find Moslem majorities, the persecution and violence against Christians to this day is relentless and abhorrent. He did not mention the suffering of Coptic Christians in Egypt and the Sudan, of Jews in North Africa, etcetera.

Ayittey has completely ignored the border disputes of African nations. He seems to have the least concern about such factors being deterministic to the economic and political policies of nations. Africa is divided up on the basis of colonial treaties entered between European colonialists and with few local leaders. There is no "rhyme or rhythm" to the current borders of African nations. We can find tribes or clans split into three or more nations, even family members can be identified with different national identities imposed on them. It is a mistake to overlook such basic problem of destabilization due to border conflict or uncertainty in any discussion dealing with economic or political development in the African Continent. There is also the creeping problem of religion closely connected with issue of national identity and nationalism. Ayittey did not take religion into consideration either, which is a major oversight in a book of that nature.

Another area that Ayittey barely touched was the pernicious interference of the American Government in covert operations such as the ones carried out by the CIA, in the internal affairs of African nations. Even in connection with the well-known cases of the Congo, Ghana, and South Africa, there is no discussion of the depth of interferences of the United States Government in the internal affairs of those nations and people. Closer to home, he did not mention how the CIA undermined the interest of Ethiopia as a nation by financing rebel secessionist groups, such as the EPLF and TPLF. Those two groups are now in power in the new nation of "Eritrea" and Ethiopia respectively even though Ayittey was more than ready to criticize President Clinton for praising the leaders of the two governments in 1998. The bloody invisible hand of the United States Government is

not so invisible to the victims of its callous foreign policy. Ayittey seems not to appreciate how destabilizing and disruptive foreign triggered subversive activities can be to local economic growth. In fact, at a closer look at how Ayittey systematically avoided to criticize the government of the United States belays the suspicion expressed by some of his critics that he is not an objective scholar writing about the economic and political problems facing African nations, but an agent of conservative United States political and economic forces. There by using his skill and academic position, he is attempting to whitewash the bloody hands of the Government of the United States, a Government that caused most of the failure of African Governments.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of having systems of political and economic structure, laws and regulations in African nations. Leadership and individual initiatives are all indispensable, however, without a system of law and regulations, those leaders and entrepreneurs will all deteriorate into to tyrants and corrupt and oppressive officials and criminals. The relationships between people and their leaders require great skill to maintain. Its laws and regulations as much as its culture preserve the structure of society to great extent.

We Africans are faced with very many serious problems and least of which is the intrusion of “fly-by-night” foreign experts. For example, even though I have far better understanding of Western political life than Western scholars have of African political life, I still see areas in Western political life that defies my understanding even after having lived for almost thirty years in such communities. Such form of restraint is absent in Westerners. It is commonplace to find the Kaplans of the world having paid a fortnight visit to an African nation making outrageous over-generalized remarks about the state of decay of African communities and people with no hope whatsoever of recovery and growth in the future. The fact of the matter is that in the long run the people who would suffer steep decline are not the people of Africa, but that of the Western World with their excessive greed, moral decay, rapidly declining physical constitution, health et cetera, I see no reason for the West to rejoice or thumb its nose at Africans. In this sense, I applaud the optimistic vision of Ayittey even if his reasoning is at times riddled with highly suspect positions. At any rate, Ayittey’s book is an effective antidote to Sachs’s poisonous exaggeration and hyperbole on the virtue of African leaders. Φ

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