

An open letter to Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

By Jucontee Thomas Woewiyu

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Dear Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf:

The Rest of Your Apologies

I write this letter to first compliment you for finally mustering the courage to apologize to the Liberian people for the callous and deadly statement you made on the BBC in 1990 while prosecuting the second and Taylor led version of NPFL wars. You said "Level Monrovia, we will rebuild it," and not "Level the Executive Mansion" as contained in your statement of apology. As you said, you regret making what you now term as a "stupid comment." If you truly regret making a statement that resulted in the death of thousands of your fellow countrymen and women, why replace it now with a false one?

I am also writing this letter to refresh your memory about other reckless and deadly statements you made in the past that must be included in your apology if you are honest in seeking forgiveness from the Liberian People whom you are also seeking to rule.

Your Level of Involvement

First, let us clarify the matter of what level of involvement and part you played in the founding of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and the prosecution of its wars: The Quinwonkpa failed coupe in 1985 and the version led by Charles Taylor which started in December of 1989. As you know, the NPFL organization was the same but operated with different foot soldiers in each version under your stewardship as we will see later on in this letter.

Your position in that organization, especially the Taylor version, was not as petit and as limited as you continue to describe it to have been. "Level Monrovia we will rebuild it" could have only come from the real Head of State and Commander-in-Chief whose Army was the NPFL as you saw yourself. You issued the order, and it was executed. It included the notorious Octopus, which finally wrecked Monrovia. Fifteen years have gone by and Monrovia is still without water and electricity. During the course of this period, you were the second most powerful person in the United Nations Development Program (UNDP); but zero came to Liberia by way of your influence. You even undermined the promotion and employment of qualified Liberians in that UN organization during your tenure. For now, I will leave your UN record to speak for itself.

Preparation for Invasion

My first trip to the Ivory Coast to meet with Charles Taylor, Harry Yuan, Moses Duopu and others to assess the level of military plan of action for the purpose of removing Doe was sponsored by you and others in the wake of the failed Quinwonkpa coupe in which you played a major role. At the time, you were personally supporting Harry Yuan in the rapid re-recruitment of his fellow Nimbaians and Clarence Simpson was supporting Moses Duopu, the late Counselor Gbaydiah and others in the Ivory Cost to launch another arm attack on the Doe Regime following the botched Quinwonkpa coupe.

If you can recall, after my visit, to the Ivory Coast, the three men split up in search of a possible

training base and support. Duopu went to Nigeria, Harry Nyan went to Senegal and Taylor went to Burkina Faso. It was Taylor who first found the possible avenue to accomplish the mission.

With your knowledge and support I again went to Burkina Faso to ascertain the truth to Taylor's claim that he had found the ultimate opportunity to train men for another attempt to remove the Doe Regime by force of arm. The sponsors, especially Thomas Sankara, wanted to know that there was a political support for an arm rebellion by civilians to remove the Samuel Doe's military junta. With your knowledge and consent, I gave the sponsors the assurance they needed to kick off the process of recruitment and training.

Upon my arrival back in the United States, I went straight to your sister's house on Long Island where you were living. While we were discussing the issue of Taylor leading this round of arm rebellion, Byron Tarr arrived. When you told him what you were putting Taylor up to, he was totally opposed on the ground that Taylor was corrupt. He gave in only when you asked him if he had any other viable alternative, given that you people had tried more than 10 times to get rid of Doe but failed.

The Libyan Connection

You accepted and agreed to create a political alliance to replace the junta. Since you could not go to Tripoli, Libya, during the training of the men and the planning stage, you appointed a Special Envoy, Mr. Harry A. Greaves Jr. For reasons not necessary to be stated here neither you nor Mr. Greaves ever went to Tripoli but you stayed abreast of the progress of the training until it was completed.

Following the training of the men and while they were waiting in the Diaspora you and I met with Taylor in Paris where you promised to arranged for a ship to drop the men in Liberian waters from the Sierra Leone side. There was also talk about you arranging with President Momo of Sierra Leone for the offensive to be launched from Sherbro Island. I believe, relying on that, Taylor went to Sierra Leone to follow up and he wound up in jail. What a way to treat your General.

Major's Involvement

At the beginning of the war, a meeting of all the political stakeholders was held in the home of Mr. Taylor Major, Virginia, USA, in February or March of 1990. We demanded the meeting because we suspected that you were holding back from the other politicians as to the political alliance that was expected to be formed by you as was agreed upon in the beginning. At that meeting, Dr. Sawyer and others were surprised and angry because you had kept them in the dark for more than two year. Dr. Sawyer was particularly angry and vocal. Following a long hectic discourse from the beginning of the meeting, it was grudgingly agreed by the participants that the Alliance would take form and provide the political plan of action to be put in place when the regime was deposed.

But we discovered later on that the political alliance never took form because of your personal ambition to directly assume power when the regime was removed. Following that meeting at the home of Taylor Major in Virginia, USA, you invited me to another meeting with Clarence Simpson and Taylor Major in the home of the late Mr. Chris Maxwell. We spent the whole night with the four of you trying to convince me to agree that we should forget about the alliance idea and let the government be given to the Liberian Action Party because the party won the 1985 elections. I said it was a very bad idea. I maintained that these were the very types of maneuvers that always destroyed all of our efforts in the past.

A Secret Meeting with Charles Taylor, and Jackson F. Doe's Disappearance

A few months after the meeting in Virginia, in my absence, you went to the war front at Gborplay, Nimba County, where the NPFL still had its headquarters and told Charles Taylor and other leaders of the organization that you and I had agreed that the government would be given to Liberian Action Party once the Doe regime was deposed. Upon my arrival at that forest headquarters, I was confronted with a Court Marshall of a life threatening nature for supposedly selling out the revolution in advance while others were still fighting and dying. Only God and my friendship with Taylor saved me. I was able to walk away with my life.

I have always wondered as to what this careless and selfish statement of yours had to do with how Jackson Doe ended up when he crossed over to NPFL land. Did those people see Jackson Doe as the LAP you wanted the government turned over to? How come Jackson Doe's disappearance was never really a big concern of yours until lately? When Jackson Doe crossed over from Fendell to Kakata in mid 1990, I was in Sierra Leone at a peace conference. Taylor told me it was a big day of jubilation in Greater Liberia. To let you know he was well; that he had been given a nice and fitting home in Buchanan. A month or so later, Jackson could not be found. I did not hear of your outrage as you were in the "Level Monrovia, we will rebuild it" mode. Say something to the Jackson F. Doe family.

Your break from the NPFL was not so much on account of what happened to your colleagues as you claim. You know, I know, and some of your people know that it was about your determination to take power directly from the war front. By late 1990, the NPFL controlled 90% of Liberia. At one of the peace talks in Sierra Leone, it was agreed by all the politicians and an agreement was signed that the NPFL should form an Interim Government and call for elections as soon as possible. The only exception was that Taylor should not lead that Interim Government; that he should run for President if he wanted to. Taylor asked me to go to Washington and convince you for us to convene an All Liberian Conference in Greater Liberia to determine the issue of who should head the next government. I spent a week in Washington. You invited several persons to that meeting. They included Dr. Gaywhea Macintosh, Dr. Edward Clinton, and Dr. Byron Tarr who was then working in Lesotho. Doctors Clinton and Macintosh and I made it to the Ivory Coast in anticipation of your arrival for us to proceed to Liberia.

A Double Crossing and Back Scratching

While waiting for your arrival in the Ivory Coast, you called to say that the venue of the meeting had been changed to Banjul, The Gambia. I found out later that after I left, you had another meeting with some people including Randall Cooper who then represented the NPFL in the U.S. at the home of Ethelbert Cooper. At that gathering you masterminded a petition to President Jarwara of The Gambia to host the meeting. Randall, not realizing that this was a double cross, signed the document on behalf of the NPFL.

Dr. Gaywhea, Clinton and I advised that you come with us to meet with Taylor and the men so that we could convince them to move the meeting to Banjul since you said this was what the African Leaders wanted. You refused. In anger, Dr. Gaywhea continued his journey to Greater Liberia and helped to form the National Patriotic Reconstruction Government, and Clinton returned to Ethiopia. You thought that the Banjul meeting would have given the government to you as the sole heir of Liberian Action Party. When it did not appear likely, you decided to skip the meeting.

From a distance in Washington, D.C., you did the next best thing which was to maneuver to give the interim leadership to "Moose," Amos Sawyer. Liberians say, "You scratch my back I will

scratch your back." It should not be a surprise that Moose is scratching your back today with his support for your presidency despite your history.

Your Financial Contributions to the War Efforts

Let me refresh your memory on the financial contributions to the Taylor war efforts from you and your sources. Twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) was the initial amount by your consortium (Clarence Simpson and Taylor Major), when the war started. I am the founding Chairman of the Association for Constitutional Democracy of Liberia (ACDL).

I do not recall any of the two persons named above being members. I do not also remember any money coming to the NPFL from ACDL. What I recall is that you asked me to let Dr. Sawyer take over ACDL so that he could revive it since he was doing nothing. I did. Yet, you keep saying that you and some ACDL friends made a \$10,000.00 contribution to the NPFL. Come to think about it, maybe the \$10,000.00 you gave one time came from ACDL. That says even what became the Doctor's Club also supported your NPFL war efforts.

Let me not forget the \$50,000.00 contribution that you passed through Mr. Allen Brown Sr. who was then running an insurance business in the Ivory Coast. You had earmarked the money to specifically buy rice for the fighting men and it was done. Another \$150,000.00 was contributed by some of your friends and delivered to Dew Mayson, Ethelbert Cooper and Emmanuel Shaw to be forwarded to the NPFL. If you recall, those bad boys ate the money and we were only able to recover \$75,000.00 of it six months later. Needless to mention your other undocumented financial and personal contributions made before and during the wars. The trip to Paris by you and me to meet with Charles Taylor must have cost you a pretty penny. Several trips you made to the Liberian boarder to meet with Taylor and the fighting men should add up to a substantial sum.

Monies you gave Taylor in Paris and on each of the trips you made to the frontline should also be far substantial. A conservative estimate of your contribution to the NPFL should be about half of million United States dollars. How you managed to reduced that to \$10,000.00 is perhaps one of you "stupid comments," but I hope that this letter clears it up for the public.

Other Overdue Apologies

The account of events above should clarify your involvement and contribution to the two NPFL wars. The following are other events that involved a series of your "callous and stupid comments" and behavior that you must include in your apology to your fellow Liberians if you wish to be taken seriously:

" Between 1983 and 1987, I was President of the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA); 1988-1990 I was Chairman of the Board of ULAA. It was I who invited you to Philadelphia to deliver the keynote address during our annual conference in 1984 when you called the President and officials of Government in the Doe regime a bunch of "fools and idiots"; another one of your series of "stupid comments." With a Harvard degree, I am sure you could have said the same thing without using those street words to make the point. Liberians should be able to recall the financial, emotional and human lives it cost to free you from that lion's den. Say sorry.

" In an effort to get you out of the country following the court proceeding against you for the "fools and idiots" comment, friends and supporters of yours arranged your secret exit out of Buchanan. In the process, the immigration officer named Jackson who assisted you to leave

through Buchanan killed himself so as to avoid the cruel death that awaited him at the hands of the Doe death squad. Have you ever met to console the family of that poor man who gave his life for you? To this day, more than 20 years later, you have not shown any appreciation for his ultimate sacrifice. Something as simple as looking for his wife and children and consoling them would have gone a long way. Very costly, stupid and inhumane behavior. Say sorry.

" In 1985 or so, the Massachusetts Chapter of ULAA under the leadership of Mr. John Grupee arranged a rally and meeting at Northeastern University. I, along with other officials of ULAA and the Liberian Community around the United States, attended that conference to hear our most famous lady speak. During the question and answer period of the program, a young man made a brief statement and asked a question which went like this: "Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf, no station is permanent in life. I used to be a wheelbarrow boy in Liberia and today, I am graduating from Northeastern University this summer.

"When you were Minister of Finance, we wrote you a letter and you stamped it 'BULLSHIT!' and sent it back to us. When you become President," the fellow continued, "would you tolerate the views of others without calling them bullshit?" The fellow asked. To my and the dismay of the entire audience, your answer was, "Yes, when I was Minister of Finance, I had a stamp which had BULLSHIT on it. During that time, if someone sent me some communication I did not like, I would stamp it 'BULLSHIT' and send it back to them."

In fact, someone told me recently that you also sent such a stamped letter to Baccus Mathews back then. Is there any amount of apology that you can give to your fellow citizens for such an insulting and demoralizing treatment? You need to honestly apologize to the wheelbarrow boys and to all of your fellow citizens whom you insulted with your "BULLSHIT" stamp.

" Immediately following the 1997 elections you declared your intentions not to recognize President Charles Taylor and in a childish-tantrum manner you ran out of the country, in President Taylor words, "like a cut tail dog" leaving the thousands who had risked their lives to campaign and vote for you to fend for their lives. You cut speech from those of your partisans who made it to the National Legislature because they refused to boycott the government to which they were elected by their people in defiance of your childish demand. Apologize to them and your fellow Liberians for such uncivilized behavior. Promise your current supporters that you will not run away again when you lose this election, which is sure.

" Samuel Dokie was one of your ardent supporters during the 1997 elections. In the face of the adversity between him and his former rebel comrade, Charles Taylor, he called you "a God sent leader." Dokie and his entire family didn't make it after you ran and left him holding the bag. A few weeks before Dokie and his family were wiped out, Taylor was making a joke in his innermost circle that you had abandoned Dokie; that you accused Dokie of embezzling your campaign funds in Nimba; that you were complaining about Dokie personally eating the cow that you gave him for your arrival feast in Sanniquelle instead of cooking it for the feast. All of this pointed to Dokie's enemies that they didn't expect any problem from you for whatever they did to him. Sure enough, when Dokie and his entire family were brutally murdered, the silence from you was as expected. It took more than 30 days before your party put out a one-paragraph statement on the Dokie murder. Say sorry to the Dokie family for selling him out with your cow meat talk.

" Do you remember another Nimba man you sent to his untimely death? In 1985 or so, you had been safely evacuated to the United States following your trial for calling General Samuel Doe

and his government officials a bunch of "fools and idiots." During one of our many meetings, you mentioned to me that General Quinwonkpa wanted to see and confer with me concerning an upcoming mission he was being asked to make. You said that apparently the General needed my blessing. At that time the General lived somewhere in the Washington, D.C., area of the United States after also been rescued from the ravage of the Doe regime. I asked you as to what the mission was about. You said "The boys have been working on a fool-proof program to remove Doe through a 'surgical military operation.' Men have been trained in Sierra Leone and are in waiting." You said further that "The only problem is that the boys do not have a popular figure to lead the incursion for the acceptability of the military guys in Monrovia.

"They have asked me to convince General Quinwonkpa to lead the incursion," you said. I also asked you for the names of some of the players behind the plan. You said 'Moose' (Amos Sawyer) Boima [Fahnbulleh Jr.] and others." For reasons that have no bearing on this letter, my first reaction was that I had nothing to say to the General. I told you that I thought the General should enjoy the hospitality of his host whose kindness landed him in the United States. That was the end of that discussion.

I challenge you therefore, Mrs. Sirleaf, to pick up the Holy Bible and swear that you and I never had the conversation as outlined above. You sent Quinwonkpa anyway. Needless to deal with the reasons while the mission failed because it boils down to the same double crossing syndrome. It suffices to say that 20 years later his wife is looking for answers for what happened to her children's father from the mission on which you sent him. They had made it to the great United States where you got your Harvard degree, but you sent him back in the fire to fetch you power. Don't you think you owe his poor widow and children an apology? I know you do. Say I'm sorry, Mrs. Quinwonkpa!

I truly hope that the factual and historical events I have outlined in this letter will help to jar your memory so that you can do the right thing - tell the truth.

Sincerely,

Jucontee Thomas Woewiyu
August 30, 2005

Former Spokesman of the Rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia
Former Defense Minister of the Rebel National Patriotic Reconstruction Government