

Address to the Diplomats

By

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Entebbe

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I have invited you to talk, essentially, about some internal issues of Uganda. This is because some of you, especially the Western countries, are always interested in the internal affairs of African countries which, of course, has got its problems. Therefore, we try to enlighten you as much as possible if it will help you.

The politics of Uganda has been characterized by reactionary ideology (not progressive, not patriotic) before colonialism, during colonialism and after colonialism.

Before colonialism, following the collapse of the Bachwezi Empire around 1500 AD, this area was being dominated by small kingdoms and chiefdoms: Bunyoro, Buganda, Ankole, Tooro, Rwanda, Burundi, Karagwe, the chiefdoms of Buhaya in Tanzania, Busoga, Lango, Alur, etc.

This area is occupied by African people divided into four groups: the Bantus, the Nilotics (Luo), the Nilo-Hamitic and the Sudanic (Lugbara, Madi, etc). These are either similar people or they are people with linkages. The interlacustrine Bantus are people with, more or less, a common language; a language that is mutually intelligible, the different dialects notwithstanding. The Nilotics also speak, more or less, one language with different dialects. The Nilo-Hamitic (Itesot, Karimojong, etc.) speak the same language with different local dialects; so do the Sudanic. Nevertheless, these languages are also linked with either borrowed words or words that indicate a common origin in the distant past. Take the Lugbara word for syphilis – ‘*oya*’. In Runyankore, syphilis is ‘*ebihooya*’!! Take the Luo word ‘*wang-kac*’, meaning a gate. In the Kabaka’s palace, you find one of the gates is called precisely that – *wang-kac*. The

Iteso word '*aicha*' which means being bright (day light coming). In Runyankore, the word *kutsya* means the time the morning mist clears. *Bwankya*, in Runyoro-Rutooro means tomorrow. The Luo word for daughter is *nyara*. In Runyankore *kunyaara* means both to urinate and to sperm. See the closeness of these words. In one of the Nubian words – *mboro* – means daughter. You know what *mboro* means in Bantu dialects of this area and also in Swahili. You can see the closeness of these words. Above all, we have Swahili, which is a Bantu dialect, developed at the East African Coast, whose advantage is that it belongs to no tribe.

Nevertheless, these similar or linked people were governed by different tribal kings or chiefs. They were not being governed together since 1500 AD. However, trade among these units was very extensive. Actually, it was one trade area. Textiles (cotton, etc.) were

coming from the Coast, all the way to the Great Lakes. Cowrie shells (*ensimbi*), which were used as currency, glass beads, were coming from the Coast and so were the guns (*embundu, ebyaatsi*). The interior was exporting ivory, mainly, to the Coast. Copper (*ebikomo*) and brass (*emiringa*) were coming from Congo (Buleega). This trade was inconvenienced by the extortion of the chiefs along the way. There was, for instance, a notorious Ruswaruura of Bujinja (Biharamuro – Tanzania) who was a great extortionist of merchandise according to Hannington Speke and Stanley. On the other hand, there was the affable and benevolent Rumanyika of Karagwe who helped traders and travellers who went through his kingdom.

What is amazing about these kings and chiefs is that Vasco Da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1498. Hannington Speke did not come to Uganda until 1862. That is a gap of about 364 years. These

self important kings and chiefs were aware that a new group of people using the powerful technology of guns and gun-powder had arrived at the East African Coast. Yet, for almost 400 years, these kings never took steps to strengthen themselves by learning this technology or by creating alliances to improve their unity. Instead, they were promoting war and greed among themselves. They were continuing to perpetuate the divisions among people who were similar or linked as I have already pointed out. The colonialists, having improved their technology of guns in the 1880s (Congress of Berlin 1884/5), parceled up a hopelessly divided Africa among themselves.

Once the colonialists took over Africa, except for Ethiopia, they continued to promote these divisions among the tribes. They killed the indigenous trade among the Africans and, instead, brought their own hoes (*enfuka*, *enkumbi*, etc.), pangas (*emihoro*, *jambia*,

etc), axes (*empango*), clay-pots (*enyungu*), plates (*entatika*, *enyabya*), from outside. Africa became a market for their products as well as a source of cheap raw materials for their industries. On top of the tribal divisions, they added new divisions – religious divisions. The Africans who had been converted into Christianity and Islam were soon fighting a ‘civil war’ on behalf of God. Some confused elite groups emerged (priests and, later on, some politicians) pushing these disoriented ideas of sectarianism. These wrongly polarized groups paralyzed inter-community interaction during much of the colonial era. Fortunately, for the Africans, colonialism did not lead to our extermination or to a radical change of our population as happened to the Red Indians, the Incas, the Aztecs, the Aborigines, etc. This was due to our strong genes that evolved because of our advanced agriculture that involved the domestication of animals. These domestic animals have got zoonotic diseases

that also affect human beings. These domestic animals, therefore, inoculated us against many of the European diseases. There is a Professor called Jared Diamond who has written a book titled: Guns, germs and steel (2005) – showing how the Europeans used these (guns, germs and steel) to exterminate, dominate and enslave peoples of the world. The Africans survived the germs but were enslaved by the gun and steel. The Africans used steel but for rudimentary purposes – spears, swords, knives, pangas, axes, hammers, etc; but they did not make machines.

Africans, eventually, regained their independence. We were assisted by three factors to regain our independence: the Communist Revolutions in Russia and China; the inter-imperialist wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45 that weakened those marauders; and the anti-colonial struggles of the African peoples. Even with independence, many of the political groups did

not cure themselves of the bankrupt ideology of sectarianism born out of opportunism and failure to capture the legitimate interests of the people. That is why Africa has stagnated even 50 years after independence; it is still backward. Many countries in Africa are still least developed; even those that have been peaceful all the time are still under-developed. I like to use the measurement of the kilo watt hour (kWh) per capita to highlight this. Here below is a sample of some countries in the world:

A table showing a sample of kWh/capita of some selected countries:

Canada	15,879.86	2007 est.
Iceland	53,348.87	2009 est.
Japan	7,298.64	2008 est.
China	2,584.69	2008 est.
India	484.18	2007 est.
Thailand	2,003.29	2008 est.
Malaysia	3,510.20	2007 est.
Korea, South	8,265.47	2009 est.
France	6,904.60	2007 est.
Germany	6,651.44	2007 est.
Belgium	8,143.15	2007 est.
Austria	8,323.43	2008 est.
Denmark	6,218.75	2008 est.
Netherlands	7,394.35	2008 est.
Norway	27,543.11	2008 est.
Portugal	4,543.69	2007 est.
Brunei	7,543.79	2008 est.
Namibia	1,336.64	2009 est.
South Africa	4,380.04	2007 est.
Tanzania	75.96	2007 est.
Uganda	70	2011 est.
Botswana	1,304.88	2007 est.
Rwanda	20.95	2007 est.
Burundi	12.73	2007 est.
Kenya	121.43	2008 est.
Algeria	819.40	2007 est.
Chad	8.82	2007 est.
Congo, DRC	84.56	2007 est.
Ghana	234.27	2007 est.
Senegal	112.31	2007 est.
Nigeria	126.20	2007 est.
U.K.	5,546.2	2007 est.
United States	12,484.17	2008 est.

Source: internet – CIA records

This is due to the problem of ideological disorientation among the elite of Africa. They do not know what is primary and what is secondary. They are spurred on in this mistaken thinking by some external forces which either do not know what Africa needs or do not care.

The NRM has always fought these erroneous tendencies. We believe in industrialization. You cannot talk of industrialization without talking about electricity. When we were still fully depending on donor support, we could not address decisively this issue. Now that we have got our own money, we are beginning to address it. Our kWh per capita is now 70. Next year, after commissioning Bujagali and other mini-hydro stations, our kWh per capita will be about 100. By 2016, after Karuma, Isimba, Ayago and the use of oil and gas our kWh per capita will be about 500.

On the ideological side, we hold in total disdain sectarianism of any type. We promote patriotism and the authentic interests of the people. As a Munyankore, I have told you that my Banyankore neighbours, who produce milk, beef and matooke as I do, only help me in accumulating big volumes which is important by making it easy for traders and processors to get the quantities they need. Beyond that, I am assisted by the Ugandans in Kampala to buy what I produce. Therefore, my prosperity is supported, mainly, by the Ugandans of Kampala and other East Africans who buy what I produce. Therefore, for somebody to promote *Bunyankoreism* without subordinating it clearly to the *Ugandaness* of Uganda and Pan-Africanism is to act against my legitimate interests. It is to act against the interests of the producers and to work for the interests of the parasites.

Since 1965, we have been fighting this war – the ideological war against those who push parochialism, sectarianism and gender chauvinism. The victory of NRM in the last elections represents the final victory against opportunism, obscurantism and parasitism of the reactionaries in Uganda; hence, the desperation of the opposition groups. In the Bible, from the Gospel of St. Matthew, 7:24-27, it says:

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Those who built a house on sand, that house collapsed when the wind blew hard. However, he who built his house on firm ground (NRM), it survived the force of

the blizzard (*eihunga*). This ‘*walk to work*’ and other antics of the opposition are kicks of a dying horse. The NRM is getting much stronger, not least, because we have our own money to build our economy. Recently, I commissioned the Mpanga min-hydro power station in Kamwengye. It produces about 18 mgws – (10% of the Nalubaale power station). The dam and the power station were built by the Srilankan investors together with some Ugandan investors. The transmission infrastructure (i.e. a transmission line, rural electrification and sub-station at Kawunde) was built by the Uganda Government at the cost of US\$ 12.5 million (equiv. 30 billion shillings). The Srilankan investors spent US\$ 26 million on the power station and dam. The opportunists have no more room in Uganda if they persist with their betrayal. As far as the little issue of ‘*walk to work*’, those who want to walk can do so provided they inform the Police so that other people’s interests are not harmed. That is all.

Therefore, Uganda is headed to transitioning to a middle income country by 2016. Nobody will stop us. We are going to ensure discipline. I will put before the in-coming Parliament, an amendment to the Constitution prohibiting bail for the following cases: murder, treason, rape, defilement, child sacrifice, rioting and economic sabotage except if the six months are exceeded. I will also seek to put in the Penal Code a section on economic sabotage.

With discipline, Uganda is unstoppable. You have seen the roads we are working on such as – Kampala-Masaka. That road is being done by the Central Government using our own money. Busega-Mityana road is also being done by the Central Government using our own money. The electricity lines to Karamoja from Katakwi to Moroto and Mbale to Moroto are funded by Uganda Government. Very

many roads and electricity lines are being executed using our own money. I am grateful to the European Union for reconstructing Masaka-Mbarara road and to the World Bank for constructing Gulu-Bibia road and Arua-Oraba road.

The greatest problem for Ugandans before 1986 was lack of security of persons and property. This was because of a very indisciplined Army. Since Independence in 1962 up to 1986, I do not remember any incident when indisciplined soldiers who killed people were ever punished especially for homicide, robbery, rape, etc. This was the greatest cry for the people of Uganda. A total of 800,000 Ugandans died between 1966 and 1986 in extra-judicial killings. There are 33 mass graves in the Luwero Triangle each one containing about 2,000 skulls. I recommend that you visit some of these graves if you want to know anything about Uganda. Some of the actors in these

tragedies are now parading themselves as human rights activists. That is why the NRM evolved **the 10-Points Programme** as stated here-below:

1. Restoration of Democracy;
2. Restoration of Security;
3. Consolidation of national unity and elimination of all forms of sectarianism;
4. Defending and consolidating national independence;
5. Building an independent, integrated and self-sustaining national economy;
6. Restoration and improvement of social services and rehabilitation of war-ravaged areas;
7. Elimination of corruption and the misuse of power;
8. Redressing errors that have resulted in the dislocation of some sections of the population;
9. Co-operation with other African countries;
10. Following an economic strategy of a mixed economy.

By disciplining the Army, we have contributed greatly to the recovery of Uganda. Incidentally, the Army is

the only institution that was thoroughly reformed. The old Army was disbanded and a new one was created. That is why the Army is exemplary in many ways. The other institutions have never been reformed – especially, the Judiciary and the Civil Service. We are in the process of reforming the Police. The Civil Service will also be reformed. I have started with some Inspection Agencies in my office – one for inspecting health services and the other one for auditing civil works. This effort will extend to other aspects e.g. National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS).

As I pointed out above, we are determined and now able to deal with the foundation programmes of the economy: electricity, roads, the railway, piped water for towns, ICT infrastructure, education infrastructure and health infrastructure. Fortunately, the telephones are being handled by the private sector. Especially the first three programmes (electricity, roads and railways)

will be handled largely with our own money. However, if those Development Partners who are able were to provide soft loans or grants, they would be greatly appreciated. I no longer accept diversions. Uganda does not need support in those small things such as support for elections, etc. We want support for the foundation programmes such as electricity, roads, the railways, piped water, ICT, education, health and modernization of agriculture.

There are, however, three gaps in the system that sometimes cause problems. These are:

- i. corruption;
- ii. a relaxed Judiciary that sometimes gives bail for very serious offences such as murder, rape, child sacrifice, defilement, treason, rioting, etc; and
- iii. an irresponsible press that always highlights negative stories while suppressing the positive ones.

While the roads, electricity, railways, etc, constitute the hardware of the economy, elimination of corruption, effective law and order maintenance mechanisms and a responsible press constitute the software of the economy. These can be disincentives to investment in the economy. We are, therefore, going to close these gaps through legislation or even Constitutional amendments in order to protect the lives, property and opportunities of Ugandans from irresponsible actions of evil minded or irresponsible people. These will have the effect of stopping bail for the following offences: murder, rape, defilement, treason, economic sabotage, etc., except where the 180 days have been exceeded.

On the political side, we are also encouraging inter-party dialogue to discuss further refinement of the democratic practice in Uganda. As we stand today,

Uganda is one of the most democratic countries in the world. Apart from the 238 directly elected constituency Members of Parliament (MPs), there are 112 district women MPs, 5 youth MPs, 5 MPs representing people with disability, 5 MPs representing workers and 10 MPs representing the Army. I have not heard many countries with these political opportunities for so many stakeholders.

Some groups are interested in Uganda's electoral process. I want to inform you that the NRM led the reforms of electoral process from the moment we gained political power in 1986. We amended the 1962 election laws to eliminate the following loopholes:

- (i) separate ballot boxes;
- (ii) separate ballot papers;
- (iii) an enclosed polling booth;
- (iv) delaying the counting of votes;
- (v) gerrymandering constituencies

- (vi) oral tests for fluency in English were replaced with requirements for certificates of education.

The new electoral law (since 1993) provided for:

- (i) one ballot box;
- (ii) one ballot paper;
- (iii) voting in the open although we cannot see which candidate you tick
- (iv) counting immediately after voting so that what remains is just totaling up;
- (v) constituencies to coincide with administrative boundaries;
- (vi) Certificates rather than oral tests for fluency in English;
- (vii) Candidates' agents at all polling stations.

The only outstanding remaining problem has been multiple registrations by those who try to cheat. We have, of course, been using popular vigilance to stop

this. That is why the voters' registers are displayed so that the locals can check for mistakes – intentional or not. However, many times people do not bother to be vigilant. Finally, we are solving this through technology. With the National Identity Card (ID), we shall, in future, have voting depend on digitally-read thumb-print, which is linked to the central memory in the computer; any duplication will be removed.

On corruption, the problem has been with the civil service. Article 164 (1) of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda gives civil servants powers over money, contracts for procurement, etc. What I have already said about the civil service above is part of the answer. This is rigorous inspection and punishment for offenders. In the medium term, we are also going to address the issue of enhanced pay for doctors, scientists, teachers and, eventually, all the civil servants.

Thank you.

Entebbe - 10th May 2011