

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

“ Let us not look back in anger;  
Nor forward in fear,  
But around us...in awareness.”  
James Thurber

Why should you devote the time and effort to read a book about a small West African nation? Because this work raises issues about U.S. foreign policy that apply not only to Liberia, but to American foreign policy toward developing countries throughout the world.

This book addresses three issues relevant to U.S. foreign policy themes:

1. *Making common cause with one evil-doer in order to defeat a greater evil-doer.*

In implementing its foreign policy to protect national security, the United States has allied itself with heads of state (and other parties) who horrifically violate the human and civil rights of their country's citizenry, precisely because of U.S. willingness to overlook such actions. During the Cold War, the focus of the U.S. on the defeat of Communism was compromised by it making common cause with Samuel Doe of Liberia, one of the most vicious dictators in the history of Africa. This U.S. policy contributed to the conditions that led to the effort to depose Doe, an act that culminated in a brutal, 7-year civil war, and the catastrophic suffering of Liberia's citizens. The wartime destruction of Liberia's infrastructure, and death and displacement of its people, which persist to this very day, prompt one to consider these questions: 1.) Was the trade-off worth it? 2). Did Liberia's strategic importance in U.S. policy that was designed to win the Cold War supersede the welfare of its three million citizens?

2. *The timely treatment of post-conflict nations.* Following the end of Liberia's civil war, the citizens elected a permanent government in free and fair national elections. In the promotion of democracy and nation building, there was an immediate need for the U.S. and other world powers to help stimulate the country's economy and rebuild its infrastructure, with relatively small expenditures. However, the U.S. and others failed to act at the opportune moment. Conditions further declined and Liberia's destabilization soon impacted much of the West Africa region, by the spread of conflict to Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. As a result, the involved parties (primarily the U.S., France, Britain, and the United Nations) have spent billions of dollars trying to restore peace.

3. *Focusing on a country's leader instead of its people.* In conjunction with points one and two described above, the U.S. has often developed its foreign policy relative to the leader of a country, rather than the citizenry. From the start of Charles Taylor's military effort to depose Samuel Doe, the U.S. worked to prevent him from assuming the presidency of Liberia. This U.S. policy prolonged the civil war unnecessarily. After Taylor's election as Liberia's president in 1997, the United States implemented a policy that undermined

## 2 CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

his administration, by denying all but minimal humanitarian aid, and imposing sanctions for his role in fostering regional conflict. While containing Charles Taylor, the U.S. policy fostered both the rise of rebel groups who sought to depose him militarily, and the worsening of the humanitarian crisis to catastrophic proportions as a result of the renewed warfare.

Liberia, then, is a *case study* of these vital themes of American foreign policy. How the United States resolves the situation in Liberia will indicate how well it will deal with the rest of the world, especially developing nations, in the years to come. U.S. relations with Liberia, even if formulated with the best of intentions, have had unintended consequences—the unnecessary suffering of the very people whom it purports to help.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF LIBERIA

It is essential to know something of Liberia's past history in order to understand the special relationship that exists between the United States and Liberia. It evolved from the founding of this West African country.

In 1816, a distinguished group of United States citizens established the American Colonization Society (ACS). Its goal was to found a colony in West Africa, later called Liberia (for "liberty" . . . the land of the free), for freed blacks. In his 2002 study, Edward Lama Wonkeryor wrote that the stated goals of the ACS were:

- To rescue the free colored people of the United States from their political and social disadvantages.
- To place them in a country where they may enjoy the benefits of free government, with all the blessings which it brings in its train.
- To spread civilization, sound morals, and true religion throughout the continent of Africa.
- To arrest and destroy the slave trade.
- To afford slave owners, who wished, or were willing, to liberate their slaves, an asylum for their reception. (Vermont Colonization Society, 1858)

In December 1816 the Reverend Robert Finley, a Presbyterian clergyman from Basking Ridge, New Jersey, organized the American Society for Colonizing Free People of Color (commonly called the American Colonization Society). The goals of the society appealed to many northern and Southern whites who held a variety of objections to slavery; Finley was able to enlist the help of such prominent men as John Randolph, Daniel Webster, Andrew Jackson, Henry Clay, and Judge Bushrod Washington, nephew of George Washington. (Williams, 1984).

As previously stated, the ACS was formed in 1816, and it became active in many states. The states with ACS chapters included Alabama, Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont, and Virginia. Many distinguished policymakers, including President James Monroe, actively cooperated with the ACS. The aim of the ACS was to expediently and

practically address the perceived problems of freed African Americans in the United States by establishing a colony either on the American continent or in Africa. Equally important, when Abraham Lincoln became president of the United States, he endorsed many positions of the ACS, especially the ones that dealt with relocating African Americans to Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Since black Americans were in minority and could not co-exist peacefully and equally with whites (dominant majority) in America, ACS supporters felt that ACS, by establishing a colony to accommodate blacks, could lead blacks to achieve freedom and self-determination as a political, ideological, and Christian entity.<sup>1</sup>

Despite its stated goals, however, among the ACS were members who wanted to rid the United States of the emancipated slaves for fear that their continued presence would have an incendiary effect, prompting those who were still enslaved to seek their freedom particularly through uprisings or other violent resistance. Henry Clay said he was determined to “rid our country of a useless and pernicious, if not dangerous portion of its population.” The liberal wing of the colonization movement, however, believed that a successful colony in Africa would prove that Africans were capable of self-improvement and deserving of freedom. As with nearly all that happened over the years between the United States and Liberia, there was altruism combined with self-interest and that dichotomy continues to this day.<sup>2</sup>

The members of the ACS also were aware of the earlier effort of Paul Cuffee (also Cuffe), a wealthy African-American Quaker to help American blacks emigrate to Africa. For this reason, the Reverend Samuel J. Mills, a “professional fundraiser for many sectarian benevolent societies, and the advance man for the newly formed American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color in the United States...” corresponded with and

solicited Cuffe’s opinion, not only on African colonization, but also on many facets of black-white relations in America. Cuffe’s considered replies made a deep impression on Mills. No doubt Cuffe’s judgments weighed heavily as well with other promoters of the American Colonization Society.<sup>3</sup>

Born near Bedford, Massachusetts, Cuffee was notably one of the first in the 19th century black colonization movement to call for emigration to Africa. After founding in 1811 the Friendly Society of Sierra Leone, Cuffee, a shipbuilder and shipowner, financed and captained a voyage that took 38 settlers there in 1815. His plans for future expeditions ended with his death in 1817. “Cuffe’s death terminated the first phase of the black nationalist movement in the United States.”<sup>4</sup> The ACS also sent its first settlers to Sierra Leone; after the settlement failed, its survivors were sent to Liberia.<sup>5</sup>

The U.S. Congress appropriated an initial \$100,000 to the ACS to buy the land in what became Liberia, build houses and forts, acquire farm tools, pay teachers, and help the settlers care for, and defend themselves. The first settlers arrived on the shores of Liberia in a U.S. Navy ship supported by grants from the U.S. Treasury. In 1822 the king of the Bassa country agreed to sell land at Cape Mesurado to the new settlers. The price: 6 muskets, 1 box of beads, 2 hogshead of tobacco, 1 cask of gunpowder, 6 iron bars, 10 iron pots, 1 dozen knives, forks and spoons, 6 pieces of blue baft, 4 hats, 3 coats, 3 pair of shoes, 1 box of pipes, 1 keg of nails, 20 mirrors, 3 handkerchiefs, 3 pieces of calico, 3 canes, 4 umbrellas, 1 box of soap, and 1 barrel of rum. Total value: \$300.00. The contracting parties pledged themselves to live in peace and friendship forever.<sup>6</sup>

#### 4 CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Between 1821 and 1843 the American Colonization Society resettled a little more than 4,000 African Americans in West Africa. Initially called Christopolis, the capital of Liberia was named Monrovia in honor of the sitting U.S. President James Monroe. There were other American contributions to Liberia's founding: its constitution was written at Harvard Law School; the Capitol building was a replica of the U.S. Capitol; its main port was named for U.S. President James Buchanan. Incidentally, Francis Scott Key, the author of the Star-Bangled Banner, was one of the founding members of the ACS. Liberia's flag bears a single star, hence the "Lone Star" country, and eleven stripes, representing the 11 signers of the Declaration of Independence, and the red, white and blue of the American flag.<sup>7,8</sup>

Most of the leaders of Liberia from that period to this day were educated in the United States. At first, few African Americans in the United States were convinced of the viability of the new nation of Liberia. However, after the Fugitive Slave Act was passed in 1850 (easing the process whereby a white person who claimed ownership of a black person in American could sue for possession of that person, but denying black people the right to testify in their own defense), more blacks reconsidered their position toward emigration to Africa. Between 1822 and 1867, the ACS resettled about 23,000 blacks, of which approximately 12,000 were freed slaves, in Liberia.<sup>9</sup> Initially structured as a group of independent colonies, Liberia became first a commonwealth (1838) then a republic (1847), formed by mergers and acquisitions of land from the indigenous populations.

As indicated above, Liberia was not the first experiment in resettling blacks who had been enslaved in North America and Europe, in Africa. Nearly 3,000 American slaves, known as the Black Loyalists, escaped to British lines during the Revolutionary War and were resettled in Nova Scotia in 1783.<sup>10</sup> Because of the harsh climate, lack of promised land grants, and anger at their treatment by the government and hostile populace, they sent a representative, Thomas Peters, to England to petition the British government for the land they had been promised.<sup>11</sup> While there, members of the Sierra Leone Company persuaded Peters to recruit Black Loyalists to settle in Sierra Leone, which the company had founded as a place to settle destitute blacks from London and freed slaves. Slightly less than one-third of the Black Loyalist population left Nova Scotia for Sierra Leone in 1792, and founded Freetown, which became the capital city.<sup>12</sup> A majority of 543 Jamaica Maroons, who had successfully fought the British for years until they were finally expelled and sent to Nova Scotia in 1796, resettled in Sierra Leone in 1800.<sup>13</sup>

In his book, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*, Joseph Ellis provided insights into the attempts to relocate freed slaves abroad. He described the 1790 petitions to the U.S. House of Representatives of two Quaker delegations which sought to abolish the slave trade. This effort brought about a spirited open debate on the subject of slavery which, until then, had been a forbidden issue for public discussion. Ellis cited Congressman James Jackson who made the case for the South to retain slavery and summarized his argument as follows:

Those advocating emancipation...need to confront the intractable dilemma posed by the sheer size of an African population that, once freed, must be removed to some other location...(W)here could the freed blacks be sent? Those advocating an African solution might profitably study the recent English efforts to establish a black colony in Sierra Leone, where most of the freed blacks died or were enslaved by the local African tribes.<sup>14</sup>

One can imagine Congressman Jackson's surprise at the eventual growth and development of Sierra Leone despite his dire warnings.

In March of 1790 a prominent Virginian by the name of Fernando Fairfax drafted a "Plan for Liberating Negroes within the United States" which envisioned "that the bulk of the freed slaves would be transported elsewhere, the Fairfax plan favoring an American colony in Africa on the British model of Sierra Leone." Ellis concluded that two issues prevented any effort at that time to emancipate the slaves, the first being compensation of the slave owners which would cost the new government an exorbitant amount of money, and second, the problem of where the newly freed slaves would go. He wrote:

Two unpalatable but undeniable historical facts must be faced: First, that no emancipation plan without this feature (relocation) stood the slightest chance of success; and second, that no model of a genuinely biracial society existed anywhere in the world at that time, nor had any existed in recorded history...The subsequent failure of the American Colonization Society and the combination of logistical and economic difficulties in the colony of Liberia exposed the impracticality of any mass migration back to Africa...<sup>15</sup>

Whenever there were serious suggestions to free the slaves and keep them here in the United States, the Southern states that depended upon slavery for their economic prosperity threatened to leave the Union (as they would do years later, leading to the Civil War), a tragedy which the newly formed country could not afford as it struggled to establish itself.

From the time of their arrival, the Americo-Liberians, who brought American values and culture, clashed with the indigenous peoples of Liberia, who had their ancient tribal culture and ethnic differences. The motto of the early governments, "The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here" was biased, presenting only the settlers' viewpoint; after all, the indigenous people already *were* there. Tensions between the two groups continued for many years, leading to short periods of armed conflict. To the outside world, Liberia was America's colony in Africa. But in truth Liberia was the first independent black republic in the period of colonial history of that continent. Besides Ethiopia, an independent republic that was never colonized, it took another 100 years before the other African nations achieved their freedom from their colonial masters. Great Britain (Sierra Leone) and France (Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea), among others, still exert hegemony over their former colonies.

One of the accusations against the new settlers that has reverberated throughout history until the present was that the emancipated slaves emulated their former white masters in terms of their treatment of the indigenous tribes. Among historians, there are differing views on this point. Some maintain Americo-Liberians saw themselves as entitled to appropriate native lands by force. Others write that settlers believed in "civilizing" the indigenous people, intermarrying with them, and bringing them into the body politic of Liberian republican government. As discussed in successive chapters, this same issue was raised when Sergeant Samuel K. Doe (an indigenous Liberian) overthrew President William R. Tolbert, Jr. (an Americo-Liberian) in a bloody coup d'état on April 12, 1980.

The memoirs of a number of early settlers gave conflicting accounts of life in the Republic. For example, the Reverend Daniel H. Peterson wrote in 1854 of his visit to Liberia the previous year,

## 6 CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

During the morning we went ashore at the port, and were received with much joy, and in a very friendly manner, by all the people...I must say that I never saw a more attractive place...I had never before seen freedom and liberty existing among our people, until I saw it in Monrovia, Liberia...There is nothing to be compared with this on the face of the earth for the colored nation, nor ever has been since the days of Noah.<sup>16</sup>

Yet William Nesbit, who wrote an account in 1855, said of his four month stay in Liberia:

Monrovia, which is eligibly situated on high land on Cape Montserrado, contains about eighteen hundred of population, colonist, and native, and presents an ancient and dilapidated appearance...the climate has a blighting effect...As there are no horses, cattle, or beasts of burden of any kind, all the labor has to be performed by the naked natives..the face of the country is one magnificent swamp...All are traders...thus they get their living, entirely neglecting agriculture and everything else that would tend to develop the resources of the country...I am not able to imagine any more abject state of misery...The unhealthfulness of the climate is proverbial...I would a thousand times rather be a slave in the United States than in Liberia.<sup>17</sup>

In 1857, Reverend Samuel Williams, in response to Nesbit's view, described his four years in Liberia.

Monrovia has about fifteen hundred inhabitants, and is a beautifully located place, on a high elevation...The productions of Liberia are very numerous...They can raise cassava, sweet potatoes and yams...and buy rice from the natives...It is now more for the want of fences than any other cause that they have not horses, asses and oxen...The morals of Liberia are as good, perhaps, as those of any other country...They have the orange, lemon, lime soursop. Guava, pawpaw, mango, plum, and pine apple...the fresh meats are nearly the same as we get in our own market, with the exception of goat meat. They have beef, pork, mutton and venison of a very good quality.<sup>18</sup>

Reverend Williams bewailed the indolence of many of the colonists ("all love to have a servant wait on them"). Reverend Williams's account, appearing to be the most credible, wrote:

Liberia, like all other countries is not a paradise...Nor is it on the other hand a purgatory; but like all other lands, it has its sweets and its bitters, its sorrows and its pleasures, its life and its death.<sup>19</sup>

Agents of the ACS served as governors of Liberia for 25 years following its establishment. On July 26, 1847, Liberia declared its independence, the first independent black republic in the colonial history of Africa. The Republic of Liberia was unique in that it became the only part of the continent that was governed by blacks. A U.S. born governor Joseph Jenkins Roberts was its first president. It should be noted that 16 of the 19 men who served as Liberia's president were educated in schools and colleges in the United States. Liberia's Declaration of Independence includes this passage:

The Western coast of Africa was the place selected by American benevolence and philanthropy for our future home...In coming to these shores of Africa, we indulged the pleasing hope that we should be permitted to exercise and improve those faculties which impart to man his dignity—to nourish in our hearts the flame of honorable ambition, to cherish and indulge those aspirations which a beneficent creator hath implanted in every human heart; and to evince to all who, despite ridicule, and oppress our own race that we possess with them a common nature, are with them susceptible of equal refinement, and capable of equal advancement in all that adorns and dignifies man.<sup>20</sup>

Although a number of European countries recognized Liberia shortly after it declared independence, the United States waited another 15 years until President Abraham Lincoln finally extended recognition in 1862. According to political scientist J. Gus Liebenow, “the Civil War had removed the principal objectors to the presence of a Black envoy in Washington, D.C.”<sup>21</sup> This was the first example, in a lengthy series, of a begrudging United States’ policy towards the country it founded.

As the Honorable Rachel Gbenyon Diggs, former Liberian Ambassador to the United States stated:

Far from rejecting the institutions, values, dress and speech of a society that had rejected them, the settlers painstakingly attempted to reproduce a similar culture in their own home.<sup>22</sup>

The Liberian Constitution, for example, provides for a President, a Senate and House, and a Supreme Court. All along Liberia’s coast one passes little settlements that bear such familiar names as Virginia, New Georgia, Louisiana, Hartford, Greenville, and Lexington. Until the mid-1990s the American dollar was the official currency.

#### THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

As the new nation of Liberia put down its roots in the African soil and began a slow but continuous development as a peaceful nation, it is important to be aware of what was happening throughout the rest of Africa...events that soon made Liberia unique as the only independent black country on the continent. Before Liberia was established, and until the 1880s, most of the continent of Africa was still ruled by Africans and barely explored. Yet, by 1902, 5 European powers and 1 extraordinary individual had grabbed almost the entire continent, giving themselves 30 new colonies, 10 million square miles of new territory, and 110 million new subjects.

Students remember learning in school about Stanley and Livingstone (and those immortal words: “Dr. Livingstone, I presume”). David Livingstone was the world’s best-known explorer, as well as a dedicated missionary and philanthropist. Henry Morton Stanley was a young reporter for the New York Herald who “found” Livingstone in the heart of Africa and reported the explorer’s exploits to an entranced American readership. Thomas Pakenham recounted Livingstone’s experiences in his seminal work, *The Scramble for Africa*:

For among the giant lakes and waterfalls (that Livingstone had discovered), the teeming populations where geographers had supposed all was desert, in

that Arcadia he had found the heart of darkness, a new outburst of the slave trade. He called it ‘the open sore of the world’ and believed he could find the means to heal it by making an ‘open path’ from civilization.<sup>23</sup>

Livingstone exposed the horrors of the slave trade then still in progress. His call for Africa to be redeemed by the three Cs—commerce, Christianity, and civilization—was aimed at the conscience of the civilized world. He was looking for the source of the Nile River which he thought would bring commerce and civilization to the interior of Africa. Instead he discovered the previously unknown source of the Congo River. As Pakenham wrote: “Four times the size of the Nile...the Congo would serve, far better than the Nile, as the open path to bring commerce and Christianity into the heart of Africa.”<sup>24</sup>

Livingstone died in Africa in 1873. His last words were: “All I can add in my solitude, is, may heaven’s rich blessing come down on every one, American, English, or Turk, who will help heal this open sore of the earth.”<sup>25</sup>

Then in 1876 King Leopold of Belgium announced to the world that he was embarking upon a crusade to end the slave trade. The King said he was prepared to spend his own money for this humanitarian cause. As stated earlier, so much of what happened in Africa was ambiguous—King Leopold’s intentions were no exception. In the guise of humanitarianism, Leopold’s true intent was to colonize the Congo and gain for Belgium the extraordinary riches, especially gold, that was in abundant supply there. In public, King Leopold said: “To open to civilization the only part of our globe where it has yet to penetrate, to pierce the darkness which envelops whole populations, is, I dare say, a crusade worthy of this century of progress.”<sup>26</sup> A few months later the very same King Leopold wrote to his ambassador in London: “I do not want to miss a good chance of getting us a slice of this magnificent African cake.”<sup>27</sup>

Once other European powers realized Leopold’s actual intent, they moved quickly to take their own slices of the pie. Coming at a time when most European countries were experiencing a great depression, their hope was that Black Africa would prove to be an Eldorado, a huge new market and tropical treasure house. Soon colonial fever swept Europe, and overseas empire was identified with national prestige. Thus began the scramble for Africa that ended up with most of the continent coming under oppressive colonial rule. Under an 1890 Anglo-French agreement, Britain got The Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Nigeria while the French acquired Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal, Guinea, Gabon, the Niger and French Congo. Only Liberia stood alone as a self-governed and independent nation-state. Other countries went to Germany, Portugal, Italy, and Spain.<sup>28</sup>

Almost from the beginning of its existence, Liberia was threatened by these colonial powers. In particular the British, who had recognized Liberian sovereignty in 1848, and the French, who had given recognition in 1852, sought to take pieces of Liberian territory and annex them to their neighboring colonies. President Grover Cleveland, in an 1886 message to Congress, spoke of the “moral right and duty of the United States” to help Liberia since “it must not be forgotten that this distant community is an offshoot of our own system.” When there was a need for action, however, these bold words proved meaningless. While the U.S. sent one of its warships to the area whenever Liberian land was threatened, Cleveland and succeeding administrations refused Monrovia’s plea for military assistance to defend their soil. Because of the U.S. failure to act, the British forced concessions of Liberian territory to Sierra Leone in 1883 and 1903. Similarly, the French forced Liberia to cede part of its territory to Côte d’Ivoire (the Ivory Coast) in 1892 with

the signing of a treaty. These events resulted in tension along the borders of the three countries with consequences that resonate to this day.<sup>29</sup>

#### AMERICO-LIBERIANS VERSUS INDIGENOUS LIBERIANS

While the rest of Africa looked to Europe as its ruler, the Liberian settlers felt very special ties to America. As Ambassador Gbenyon Diggs wrote:

Because of these special ties, ...one of Liberia's formidable national challenges was its social and political imbalance. The founders had conceived an African state where settlers and aboriginal tribes could co-exist peacefully. Yet in the face of clashes in cultural differences and disparities in customary and statutory laws, the People of the Republic remained disunited and divided by fear and distrust. It was almost a century later that a concerted effort was made to remove many of the odious distinctions through a Unification Program.<sup>30</sup>

This disparity between the Americo-Liberians (sometimes called "Congos") and the indigenous peoples (often called "country" or "tribal" people) still was apparent during the administration of President William V. S. Tubman (1944–1971).<sup>31</sup> The distinguished American actor Ossie Davis was stationed as a GI in Liberia from 1942 to 1945. In his book (co-authored with his wife Ruby Dee), *With Ossie and Ruby—In This Life Together*, he described his experiences with the Americo-Liberians:

The Americo-Liberians were descendants of the repatriated slaves, and though they spoke with a lilt that sounded like West Indian calypso, they looked so much like us, it was amazing. They were now the ruling class. They had nice homes and were wealthy but their servants, drawn mostly from the other indigenous tribes, were by and large poor and could not vote. The Americo-Liberians behaved toward them as any other ruling class, obviously forgetting what it had meant to be slave. That bothered me a great deal. I felt proud to be there among my people, in a double sense of the word, but I also felt ashamed.

The Americo-Liberians, black though they were, tended to live like Europeans or Americans, and that surprised me. They had new cars; they regularly sent their children off to Europe or America to college, and they fraternized with their peers at Firestone. They seldom mixed with the natives, with whom I had already bonded, who were authentic Africans and much more fun. I was not only uneasy with the class conflict I felt was brewing in Liberia, I was disturbed by it. But most of the soldiers on the post were not. They, too, quite easily took to treating all the natives, not as brothers and comrades, but like servants, in much the same way folks treated black folks down in Georgia.

This arrogance disturbed me, too, and I began to entertain a horrible suspicion. For most of my life, I had believed that black folks were in many ways morally superior to white folks, especially in our dealings with each other. I was profoundly disappointed that the Americo-Liberians, the children of slaves themselves, would come to Africa and behave as if they themselves were the slaveholders now.<sup>32</sup>

This friction between the two groups was extremely important later—in 1980—when Samuel Doe, allegedly representing the indigenous people of Liberia, perpetrated a coup d'état that overthrew the Americo-Liberian President William R. Tolbert, Jr. Many observers believe, however, that the Americo-Liberian versus Indigenous Liberian problem was a convenient excuse for a bloody coup that was much more complicated and based upon other imperatives.

#### CONCLUSION

The earliest policy of the United States towards Liberia, from its founding to the late 19th century, created serious problems for the developing nation. By delaying its recognition of the independent Republic for a period of 15 years, due to the racism of the day, the U.S. weakened Liberia's position as a sovereign nation. In particular, U.S. failure to assist Liberia in preventing parts of its border territory from annexation by the colonial powers of Great Britain and France was an egregious error that led to still unresolved tensions with Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Edward Lama Wonkeryor, "America's African Colonization Movement: Implications for New Jersey and Liberia," *Liberian Studies Journal* Vol. XXVII, Number 1, 2002, pp. 28–29.

<sup>2</sup> Wilson Jeremiah Moses (ed.), *Liberian Dreams: Back-to-Africa Narratives from the 1850s*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998, p. xvii.

<sup>3</sup> Sheldon H. Harris, *Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return*, New York, Simon and Shuster, 1972, pp. 74, 251–253.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 27, 29, 39–71. Cuffe Slocum, Paul Cuffe's father, was brought from the west coast of Africa to Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts in 1728 at age 10 or 11.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Charles Lucas, *The Partition & Colonization of Africa*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, reprint New York: H. Fertig, 1922[1972].

<sup>6</sup> Moses, pp. xxi, xxiii.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

<sup>8</sup> In 1999 I gave a speech on the subject of the Rule of Law to about 1,500 Liberians gathered in Monrovia for a National Reconciliation Conference. Behind me on the podium hung the Liberian flag. At the conclusion of my address I said: "My hope is that one day *your* star spangled banner will hang over *your* home of the brave and land of the free." After I concluded, an old chief from the country approached me and said: "Mr. Hyman, that was a very good speech, but you made a big mistake." "What was that?" I inquired. With a sly smile he said: "Don't you know that you can't 'spangle' a single star?" I never condescended to a Liberian again.

<sup>9</sup> J. Gus Liebenow, *Liberia: The Quest for Democracy*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987, p. 19; Rachel Gbenyon Diggs, Presentation to Vanderbilt University, October 25, 2001, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Graham Russell Hodges, ed. *The Black Loyalist Directory: African Americans in Exile after the American Revolution*. (New York, 1996). In 1775 Lord Dunmore, Royal Governor of Virginia, issued a proclamation for slaves and indentured persons to receive freedom in exchange for fighting for the British, and 2,000 persons joined the British side. Other proclamations followed, including the Philipsburg proclamation when they realized they were losing the war, issued by Sir Henry Clinton, the British

Commander-in-chief at New York. It stated that any Negro who deserted the rebel (American) cause would receive full protection, freedom, and land. After the Americans won the war and the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783, British forces and their supporters went to New York to wait for evacuation. Although General George Washington, on behalf of the Americans who wanted to regain their “property,” demanded that the British return all slaves who had joined them before November 30, 1782, Sir Guy Carleton, who was the new British Commander-in-chief, refused. Instead they made an agreement for the British to pay money to the Americans. A joint British-American Commission identified the Blacks who had joined the British before the surrender, issued them “certificates of freedom,” inspected all Blacks on ships in New York harbor awaiting departure (a total of 114 ships between April and November, 1783), and recorded the names and status of more than 3,000 persons in a document called the *Book of Negroes*. This included those who escaped, the slaves and indentured servants of White Loyalists, and Blacks who had bought their freedom. Before and after that period, there were an unknown number of ships with Blacks loyal to the British that also left New York and other ports. The estimates were as high as 5,000 black people who resettled in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, the West Indies, Quebec, England, Germany, and Belgium. Of that number, 3,500 went to Nova Scotia.<sup>11</sup> White resentment of the Black Loyalist farmers and skilled tradesmen, who were willing to work for lower wages, was evident in the Nova Scotian settlements. On July 1784, the racial tensions between whites and blacks erupted into a race riot by white soldiers against blacks in the community of Shelburne, causing the Black Loyalists to flee to Birchtown.

<sup>12</sup> James W. St. G. Walker, *The Black Loyalists—The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone 1783–1870*, 1992. On January 15, 1792, fifteen ships with 1196 Black Loyalists, including the prominent leaders David George, Boston King, and Moses Wilkinson, left Halifax for Sierra Leone.

<sup>13</sup> The bellicose behavior of the Jamaica Maroons, who disliked the climate and agrarian life, led the Nova Scotian government to arrange for their resettlement to Sierra Leone in 1799. The Sierra Leone Company initially objected to this plan for two reasons: many of the Black Loyalist settlers had rebelled against the company one year after arrival and the Company did not want a second hostile group; most Maroons were not Christians, in opposition to the religious goals of the colony. Upon their arrival in 1800 and at the behest of the Sierra Leone Company, the Maroons repressed the revolt of Black Loyalists.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Moses, p. 47.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.

<sup>20</sup> Gbenyon Diggs, *The Role of America in the Liberian Experience*, speech, p. 1, no date.

<sup>21</sup> Liebenow, p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> Gbenyon Diggs, Vanderbilt University speech, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Pakenham, *The Scramble for Africa*, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1991, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction.

**12** CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>29</sup> Reed Kramer, “Liberia: A Casualty of the Cold War’s End,” *CSIS Africa Notes*. July, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Diggs, Vanderbilt University speech, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> The term “Congo” was a name given to the Africans who were rescued from slave ships that were intercepted by the British to halt the slave trade. Many of these individuals settled in Liberia, rather than return to their native countries.

<sup>32</sup> Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, *With Ossie and Ruby—In this Life Together*, William Morrow, November 1998, pp. 126–132.