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TUESDAY - FEBRUARY 19TH, 2019

75 CENTS

BREWERY LAYS OFF 73 EMPLOYEES

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

Commonwealth Brewery, the country's largest beverage company, has laid off 73 employees. It is also in the process of restructuring its retail division.

A statement from the company yesterday confirmed that the 73 workers will be made redundant due to increased operational costs, as well as increased competition from imported beer brands.

Director of Retail, Ron Hepburn said this was the first major exercise of this nature since the company went public, adding that "though the restructuring exercise will be a visible and impactful

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"GOV'T AGENCIES BREAKING LAWS"

BY LEAH COOPER
 Journal Staff Writer

Queen's Counsel Fred Smith recently expressed concerns surrounding the country's law enforcement agencies and their treatment of Bahamians citizens over the years.

Mr. Smith said that the behavior of officers from Immigration and the Royal Bahamas Defense Force (RBDF), in particular, have been most regrettable.

He added that there have been many officers from these organizations that have often broken



Fred Smith, QC

the law in their treatment of the public, often being the subject of liti-

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FOUR MURDER ACCUSED ARRAIGNED

BY JAMEELHA MISSICK
 Journal Staff Writer

Police wrapped up investigations into another four murders after escorting to

court the men allegedly behind the crimes.

Appearing before Magistrate Kara Turnquest-Deveaux were 28-year-old Mario Brown, 25-year-old Ricardo

Mitchell, 23-year-old Keno McKenzie and 33-year-old Walleck Medurek.

Brown stood accused

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Three Stabbed In Grand Bahama

BY LICEA BASTIAN
 Journal Staff Writer

Police in Grand Bahama are investigating a stabbing that has left three males with injuries, two of them still detained in hospital.

Assistant Superintendent of Police, in Grand Bahama, Terecita Pinder, reports that on Sunday, shortly before 2:00am, police

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THE GOVERNOR GENERAL HOSTS PRIVATE BOOK SIGNING WITH HRH PRINCESS MICHAEL OF KENT



Governor General, Her Excellency the Most Hon. Dame Marguerite Pindling hosted a Private Book Signing with Her Royal Highness Princess Michael of Kent in Celebrating Women International, at Government House, Saturday afternoon. Also present was Mrs. Patricia Minnis, wife of Prime Minister the Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis. Princess Michael of Kent in her autobiography, "A Cheetah's Tale," tells of growing up in Mozambique, raising a cheetah called Tess, and the incredible bond that can exist between humans and animals. The event was followed by a Reception. (BIS Photos/Derek Smith)

Bishop Fernander Calls Court Cases 'Tit for Tat'

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

The President of the Bahamas Christian Council Bishop Delton Fernander is of the opinion that the arrest and subsequent arraignment

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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING

Government applauded for halting deportations to Haiti

Rights Bahamas, a local human rights organization, has applauded the Bahamas Government for temporarily halting the deportation of individuals to Haiti.

A statement from the organization said, "In light of the unrest and violence happening in that country, the safety of those in our custody must always come first. Closing the Bahamas Embassy and recalling our diplomats and staff was

likewise the right thing to do.

"We hope that the Royal Bahamas Defence Force is on high alert and anticipating that vessels from Haiti carrying irregular migrants will likely be coming to our shores. Desperate people will surely seek to save their lives by escaping. The Bahamas Immigration Department is urged to do its job efficiently, but also humanely and in the spirit of decency, remembering

that these unfortunate people are victims fleeing from terrible circumstances, not violent criminals or enemies of the state. As a form of deterrence, the Department should make it clear that any person who lands here without permission will have 0 chance of obtaining a work permit or residency in the Bahamas," the statement said.

Rights Bahamas said it does not promote or encourage human traffick-

ing." We simply ask that the basic rights of every human, as outlined in The Bahamas constitution, be

respected by the powers that be. Everyone has a right to due process, a fair trial and fair judgement."

The organization thanked the Bahamas Government for putting safety first and above all.

Amnesty International says Authorities must protect protesters' basic rights

In response to reports of several deaths during recent days in the context of anti-corruption protests that began earlier this month in Haiti, Erika Guevara-Rosas, Americas director at Amnesty International, said:

"The situation in Haiti is a recipe for disaster, with a stream of reported fatalities during the ongoing protests, hospitals running out of supplies, and

people unable to access essential services in the poorest country in the Americas."

"The Haitian authorities must not only ensure that people are able to peacefully protest and guarantee the life and physical integrity of those who choose to demonstrate, but also give full consideration to the grievances sparking the protests and meaningfully address the under-

lying causes of the political and economic crisis."

Since 2018, Haiti has seen regular protests demanding transparency in relation to the use of Petrocaribe funds. According to the World Bank, Haiti remains the poorest country in the Americas, with 59% of the population living below the national poverty line, and 24% below the national extreme poverty line.

"GOV'T AGENCIES BREAKING LAWS"

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gation.

While he admitted that officers with high ethical standards do exist; he said that those bad apples often infect the grand scheme of matters.

He said, "one of the big challenges The Bahamas faces is that we have such a dramatic deficiency in financial and human resources to properly manage the laws that have been passed by Parliament to be able to conduct investigations properly."

With growing complaints of law enforcement agencies being answerable or controlled by politicians, Mr. Smith said that the problem with The Bahamas is that politicians have been able to infect many regulatory agencies in which they have no authority to do.

"You have the Bahamas Investment Authority that

doesn't exist in law, you have the B.E.S.T. Commission [Bahamas Environment, Scientific, and Technology Commission] that doesn't exist in law," he said.

"The Bahamas continues to really be run from a political directorate of the Almighty. The Office of the Prime Minister is the Office of the Dictatorship of The Bahamas, whether its FNM or PLP. The amount of political power it wields is grossly inappropriate in a democratic country," he added.

On the topic of immigration, Mr. Smith asked, "how do we continue to accept a society that holds people indefinitely without taking them before a court?"

He added that immigration has become "a law unto itself".

He said, "I've always lamented the fact that if we continue to behave

that way, one day someone like Fred Mitchell is going to use that force to do things that are undemocratic in The Bahamas, as he was doing while he was Minister of Immigration."

He added, "what we need to do is to stop pretending that we have an immigration problem with the people who are born here, and to give them the citizenship that they are entitled to under the Constitution and focus our resources on preventing the influx year after year."

"Stop riding around in your yellow bus picking up people at random and holding them indefinitely at the taxpayer's cost," he said.

He added that if The Bahamas is going to aspire to be a first world country, it must improve the way it treats its citizens.



MINISTRY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD (USCG) ACADEMY 4 YEAR MILITARY DEGREE PROGRAM

The Bahamian Government in collaboration with the United States Embassy (Nassau) invites all qualified persons who are interested in applying for a four-year degree scholarship at the United States Coast Guard Academy in Connecticut, United States, to submit their applications to the Royal Bahamas Defence Force Headquarters, Coral Harbour Base by 31st January, 2019.

To qualify, applicants must:

- Be a Bahamian citizen
- Be between the ages of 17-22 years old
- Be unmarried and with no dependents
- Be willing to serve in the Royal Bahamas Defence Force for a minimum of five years on completion.
- Must be physically fit
- Must be able to swim
- Have SAT scores of 600 in both Math and English (or ACT minimum of 26 in Mathematics and 27 in English).
- Have a high school diploma
- Possess excellent English skills

Bachelor's Degree Programs are offered in:

- Civil Engineering
- Cyber Systems
- Electrical Engineering
- Naval Architecture
- Operations Research
- Marine and Environmental Sciences
- Government
- Mechanical Engineering
- Management

Deadline for submission of application is 31st January, 2019.

Deadline for registration for SAT examination is 8th February, 2019 for the 9th March, 2019 test date (results from March test are only accepted if results from previous test are received by 1st March, 2019).

Students may register at:

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/international>

The USCGA code number for the SAT exam is 5807.

Deadline for ACT registration is 11th January, 2019 for 8th February, 2019 test date.

Students can register at <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act-non-us.html>

The USCGA code number for the ACT exam is 0600.

Applicants can make application to sit the SAT/ACT at local SAT Centers in New Providence as follows: Aquinas College, St. Andrew's School, St. Anne's School, The University of The Bahamas, Government High School and Queen's College.

For further information, please contact the Royal Bahamas Defence Force Human Resource Officer, Lieutenant Commander Michael Hanna at telephone 362-3705 or 362-3711 or via email at michaelhanna@rbdf.gov.bs or visit the website www.rbdf.gov.bs

GOT NEWS?
call The Bahama
TIP LINE at 356-7254

BAMSI Joins the Frontline in the Fight Against Hunger

ALONGSIDE its mission to revamp its business model and build financial strength through best business practices and a streamlined operation, the management and staff of the Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI) remain committed to supporting the Bahamian community and serving those in need. Toward that end, the Institute reached out to the Bahamas Feeding

Network (BFN), located in Moseff House, Fox Hill on Thursday, with a donation of some 10 cases of produce.

“While the Bahamas continues to make exciting strides in the development of a wide cross section of industries and entrepreneurial ventures, we sometimes forget that there are thousands of Bahamians who struggle to meet even the most basic of human needs and

face a persistent level of food insecurity,” said BAMSI’s Acting Director of Human Resources Phillippa Whymns.

On a national level, the Government’s mandate is to reduce food imports and encourage Bahamians to become food resilient, but how does this translate when dealing with those in need? Part of the solution is to stem the tide of wastage (whether through spoilage or otherwise),

Mrs Whymns said, adding that going forward, BAMSI has made the decision to donate quality surplus to agencies and charitable organizations that are on the front lines in the fight against hunger.

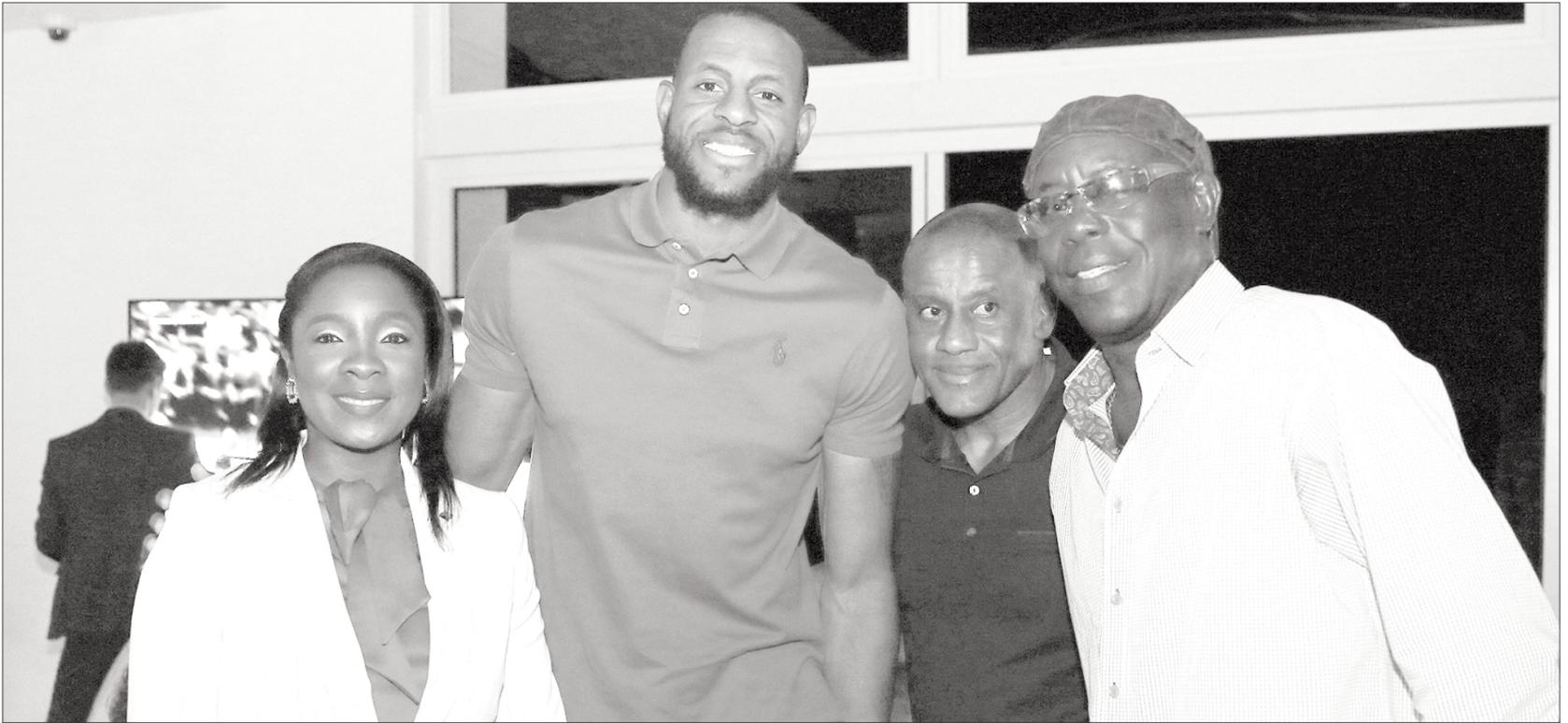
Executive Director of the Network Philip Smith expressed his gratitude to BAMSI for the donation. With an estimated 70,000 persons across the country going hungry, he said

BFN is driven by a desire to reach out to those who struggle to find food on a daily basis. Partnering with feeding networks and volunteer organizations across the Bahamas and internationally, BFN feeds approximately 2,000 people a week. Mr Smith said BFN’s kitchen, run by Recina Ferguson who serves as manager and cook, prepares 4,000 hot meals a week for distribution to

their partners, along with some 500 grocery bags per week also for distribution. The Feeding Network hosts its own open house feeding every Sunday and Thursday.

In total, BAMSI gave some 10 cases of produce (lettuce, tomatoes, butternut squash, zucchini, cucumber and eggplants), a gallon of browning, two gallons of cooking oil and a bag of pigeon peas.

MINISTER LANISHA ROLLE ATTENDS INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS DINNER



► Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, the Hon. Lanisha Rolle had photo op with Golden State Warriors' champ Andre Iguodala, centre, Jeff Rodgers and Winston McDonald at the International (NBA) Players Dinner at Rosewood, Baha Mar on Sunday evening, February 17, 2019. She is also pictured with WNBA All-Star Lisa Leslie, and with Houston Rockets All-Star Chris Paul. (BIS Photos/Patrick Hanna)

Bishop Fernander Calls Court Cases 'Tit for Tat'

Continued from / PAGE 1...

of four Grand Bahamians on fraud and money laundering charges give the appearance of tit for tat.

He said the situation raises serious questions.

“That is becoming more and more clear in the manner in which cases are being held is more for show. Thousands of Bahamians go to court everyday and you don’t get the kind of drama you get around what is taking place today.

“As Christian Council President I would say that we need to be about law and order and let the court case take its full length and its full weight, but we must be careful of using those tools that are available to us to persecute.

“I’m not saying that it hasn’t been done before, but this is a new day and a new Bahamas and the people are really tired of people using their power to persecute people and sometimes to marginalize people and their families,” he said.

Michelle Reckley,

Stephanie Collie, Kylon Vincent and Christopher Symonette - all believed to be PLP supporters - have all since been released on \$9,000 bail.

The arrest and arraignments came just two weeks after former PLP MP and Public Hospital’s Authority Chairman Frank Smith was acquitted by the Chief Magistrate of bribery and extortion charges.

Bishop Fernander believes such cases could have gone through the courts with less of a show.

“We could go through the system of the law without the necessary show. We put behind these cases and at the end of the day, I want to be clear that I would like for the law to be free to have its full flow,” he said

The arraignments last week prompted the opposition to boycott parliamentary proceedings and according to Progressive Liberal Party Chairman, Senator Fred Mitchell, this will remain the case until the party gets the desired results.



Request for Expressions of Interest Individual Consultant: Programme Co-ordinator “SKILLS FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE JOBS IN THE BAHAMAS”



The Inter-American Development Bank and the Government of The Bahamas (GoBH) signed the Loan Contract No. 3787/OC-BH for the execution of the investment programme “Skills for Current and Future Jobs in The Bahamas” (BH-L1037). The general objective of the Programme is to increase the employability and quality of employment of beneficiaries, by improving access to quality jobs in The Bahamas, with particular emphasis on youth, in three strategic sectors: maritime, medical services and IT/telecommunications. The specific objectives are to: (a) increase relevant skills and employability in productive jobs for Programme beneficiaries; (b) improve the effectiveness of the Public Employment Services (PES); and (c) enhance the capacity of the labour market intelligence system.

The GoBH has designated the Ministry of Labour (MOL) as the Programme Executing Agency (PEA). The MOL will establish a Programme Executing Unit (PEU) within its organizational structure and under the Office of the Permanent Secretary (PS). Accordingly, the PEU now invites interested eligible individual consultants to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) indicating qualifications and experience required to provide consulting services of **Programme Co-ordinator**. The contract duration for this consultancy is 12 months, renewable annually. This consultancy shall be based in New Providence.

Main Responsibilities of the Consultancy

The objective of the consultancy is to provide strategic, organizational, financial and technical direction to the PEU, and to serve as the main focal point of the programme within MOL and other public and private institutions (including but not limited to BTVI, NTA, and the Chamber of Commerce). In particular, the programme Coordinator will provide leadership, coordination and guidance in all matters pertaining to the successful administration and implementation of the “Skills for Current and Future Jobs in The Bahamas” programme (BH-L1037), through the efficient management of the PEU, in accordance to the stipulations contained in the Loan Contract and the Programme Operations Manual (POM).

Specific responsibilities and activities are itemised in the Terms of Reference (TOR) for this consultancy, which can be accessed via this link, <http://jobseekers@bahamas.gov.bs>

Required Qualifications

- Graduate degree in Economics, Business Administration (Finance), Public Administration or a related field.
- Minimum of 10 years of relevant work experience in project management of investment initiatives funded by international development institutions, preferably in The Bahamas.
- Previous knowledge and exposure in the Labour/training sector is desired as well as exposure to the IDB’s fiduciary, procurement, financial administration and project management policies and procedures.

Expressions of interest should include a cover letter highlighting Consultant’s interest in the position, relevant experiences and qualifications; along with a recent copy of Consultant’s curriculum vitae (CV). Submissions of Expressions of Interest may be submitted by hand to the address below, or by email to gelizeferguson@bahamas.gov.bs no later than 5:00 p.m. Friday, 22 February, 2019.

Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Labour
Re: EOI, Programme Co-ordinator, Skills for Current and Future Jobs in The Bahamas
Charlotte House
Shirley and Charlotte Streets
Nassau, The Bahamas

BREWERY LAYS OFF 73 EMPLOYEES

Continued from / PAGE 1...

change, it is not unusual in the course of normal business operations.

He said, "I just want to make sure that everyone is clear the we never take decisions like this lightly. We ensured that there were grief counselors on site, we had a pastor on site; we have NIB there to explain everyone's benefits inclusive of our

Human Resources Department.

"So, our staff were well informed and they received the necessary counseling for those that required it," he added.

Mr. Hepburn also said that this is by no means a negative indication of the health of the company, rather, a sign of CBL's commitment to continue and thrive in this dynamic business environment.

The restructuring exercise affected 53 employees in New Providence and 20 from Grand Bahama.

Affected employees received four weeks' pay for every year employed for up to 48 weeks.

They were also paid their accrued vacation, and offered one-month free health insurance; which, Mr. Hepburn added, is unheard of under these circumstances.

FOUR MURDER ACCUSED

Continued from / PAGE 1...

of the February 10th murder of Jamal Kemp.

However, his attorney claimed there is footage proving her client was not at the location the killing occurred and asked that the police look into this as it is crucial when dealing with young men and their freedom.

Meantime, Police believe Mitchell and

McKenzie are behind the February 10th murders of Daniel Sterling and Ferdinand Agenor, as well as the attempted murder of Anwar Smith on February 3rd, 2019.

The pair was also charged with one count each of grievous harm, to which they both pleaded not guilty.

Police are also convinced they have the killer behind the

February 9th Persentus Xavier's killing, the attempted murder of Sydney St Armond on the same date and armed robbery.

The court heard how Medurek allegedly, armed with a hand gun, robbed St Armond of a \$200 Samsung phone and a \$50 brown leather wallet.

The four accused were all remanded until April.



PUBLIC NOTICE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

The public is hereby notified that an application for Site Plan Approval SPA/8/2018 on behalf of A.A.H Development is presently being reviewed by The Department of Physical Planning for presentation to the Town Planning Committee.

A public meeting will be held on March 4, 2019 at 7pm at The Department of Physical Planning's Hearing Room located on JFK Drive and Bethel Avenue.

The applicant is requesting a formal rezoning of lot #3, block #4 of the Vista Marina Subdivision. The property is located on West Bay Street, one lot west of Grove Avenue. The site is approximately 18,000sq.ft (100' x 180'). Six apartment units with accompanying leasing office and laundry facilities existed on the site until its recent demolition. Even though these units have existed for nearly 30 years, the applicant wishes a current and formal rezoning of the property in order to redevelop the site for the same use and density.

Preliminary plans for the proposed development are available for viewing at The Department of Physical Planning, located in the Aventura Plaza on John F. Kennedy Drive, during working hours of 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Interested persons and organizations are invited to review the information on file and provide written comments prior to the meeting. Comments should be directed to the Acting Director of Physical Planning within twenty-one (21) days of the date of this notice. Submissions can be made via P.O Box N-1611, Nassau Bahamas or fax (242) 328-3206. Further inquiries can be made to the Acting Director via Tel. (242) 322-7550/1/1 OR (242) 328- 3202 or CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS

Signed
Charles B. Zonicle
Acting Director of Physical Planning

Three Stabbed

Continued from / PAGE 1...

received reports of an altercation at a night club on Wimpole Street, involving a group of males.

Patrons, who were at the club, attempted to intervene in the altercation and as a result they were stabbed to the body.

EMS personnel were called to the scene and transported the victims to the Rand Memorial Hospital. One of three the victims were later released and the other two remain in hospital in stable condition.

Police continue to

investigate.

Crime News from Bimini: Two males of Bimini are in police custody after they were found in possession of dangerous drugs in two separate incidents.

The first incident of arrest, according to reports, occurred on Saturday, when officers, while on patrol in the Porgy Bay area, shortly before 7:00pm, observed a male asking acting in a suspicious manner.

Officers searched the male and discovered on him and in the vehicle he was driving, a quantity of

suspected cocaine and marijuana.

He was arrested and taken into custody.

The second incident occurred just an hour later, shortly after 8:00pm, when officers acting on information and armed with a search warrant, went to a residence in Bailey Town, where they discovered a quantity of suspected cocaine and marijuana.

The male suspect in the home at the time was arrested and taken into police custody.

Police continue to investigate these matters.

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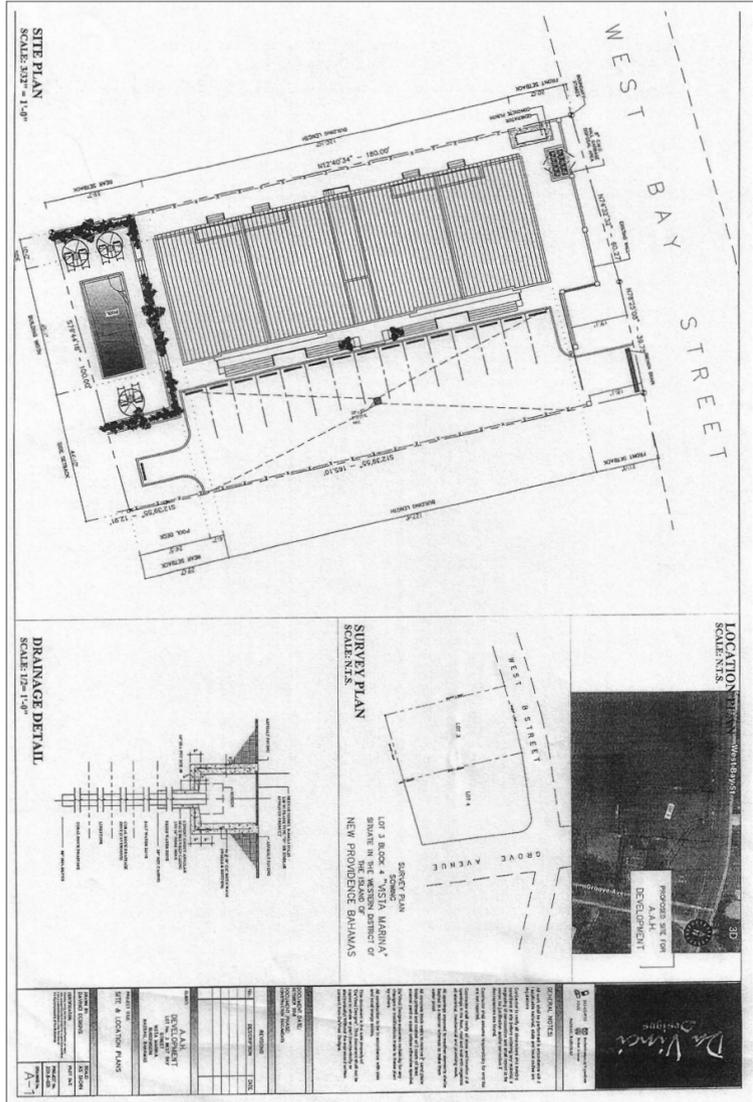
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GOV'T CAUTIONED ON EU RULES

By ALFRED M. SEARS, QC



The Bahamian Government seems to have been caught by surprise by the punitive action taken by the European Commission against The Bahamas on Wednesday February 13, 2019, alleging that The Bahamas has 7 strategic deficiencies in its AML/CFT regime, based on Article 9 of the European Union's Directive 2015/849.

I caution the Prime Minister, the Attorney General, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Financial Services, Trade & Industry against rushing off to Brussels, in a panic, to make any ill-considered appeasements and secret agreements. The Cabinet of The Bahamas should assess the nature of this problem, weigh policy options, geo-strategic factors and lay out to the Bahamian people a rational policy response, informed by empirical data and the best technical advice, detailing how the Government will secure the short, medium and long-term national interests of The Bahamas with respect to the moving goal posts by the European Union relating to The Bahamas' AML/CFT regime and tax policies.

As a former Attorney General, who led the team that succeeded in getting The Bahamas removed from the Monitoring List of the FATF in 2005, I appreciate that this matter is complex. Short-term panic-driven acts of appeasement by the Government will not produce a permanent resolution of this matter. The very foundation of the financial services sector, its organizing assumptions since its construction under Stafford Sands in the 1950s, is being challenged.

In this context, I propose that the Government consider the following recommendations.

Immediate Steps:

The Government should immediately address the seven deficiencies identified by the European Union in order to remove any pretext or basis for any further hostile actions being taken against The Bahamas. The following steps should be taken:

(a) Engage advisory services team of local and international multi-disciplinary group (including Mr. Calvin Wilson, immediate past Executive Director of CFATF, Mr. Wilson has been engaged with the removal of The Bahamas from the various negative listings from 2000).

(b) Form an Advisory Policy Group, comprising former Prime Ministers, Attorney Generals, Ministers of Investments and Financial Services, heads of regulatory agencies and representatives from the Financial Services Advisory/Representative bodies, to review the current threat, assess the likelihood for further punitive measures, share knowledge and contacts and advise appropriate response, based on considerations of proportionality, competitive advantage, niche opportunities and international obligations.

(c) Coordinate Collaboration amongst the various regulatory agencies in the financial services sector to prepare a technical brief for the Cabinet's review and determination.

Medium/Long-term Steps:

Simultaneously, I propose that the following measures, with bipartisan political consensus, be considered and undertaken to avoid future external threats and punitive measures by ad hoc bodies against the Bahamian financial services sector and while The Bahamas repositions its financial services sector to be more competitive in a rapidly changing global environment:

The Bahamas should, with the support of CARICOM, initiate and lead an international lobby for the convening of a global forum calling for the formation of a United Nations treaty to cover issues of money laundering, terrorist financing and unfair tax competition. Have we forgotten the pivotal role The Bahamas played, through the Bahamian diplomat George Stewart under the Pindling Administration, in the lobby for, drafting and implementing of the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea? The Attorney Generals of the Caribbean in CFATF, in 2003 while I served as Chairman of CFATF, passed a resolution calling for the convening of a global forum to put anti-money laundering under a United Nations' treaty (Prime Minister Mia Mottley, who was then Attorney General of Barbados and I worked very closely in getting this resolution passed). The Christie Cabinet in about 2004 authorized Senator Mitchell, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, to promote the convening of a global forum on anti-money laundering during United Nations General Assembly presentations and in bilateral with member countries of the United Nations. In this regard, Barbados joined The Bahamas in these efforts. It may be useful to work closely with Prime Minister Mia Mottley to lead this campaign, with The Bahamas. From my recollection, certain members of the OECD, such as Canada and South Africa, were very helpful to The Bahamas during this period and were sympathetic to the concept of a United Nations' Treaty on anti-money laundering.

The Bahamas, as the leading financial services center, should host an international forum on the topic "A New Paradigm for Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorist Financing

and Global Tax Issues: A Call for a Global Treaty". Invitations should be extended to all IFCs, leading scholars, NGOs, as well as multi-lateral organizations dealing with AML/CTF and global tax issues in order to build global opinion in favour of a global treaty on anti-money laundering and tax regulation under the United Nations.

Examine the feasibility of mounting a legal challenge, in concert with CARICOM, in the International Court of Justice at the Hague against the measures mounted by the European Union against The Bahamas, a non-member of the EU and a competitor in financial services to European and American onshore financial centers. Under customary International Law, it is illegal for a state or group of states to engage in acts of retorsion, retaliations, reprisals, intervention, or coercion to control smaller states, who are member of the United Nations, to force a change their internal or foreign policy. This principle is clearly stated in the Declaration of Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations (adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1970) which provides: "No State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights and to secure from its advantages of any kind." Further, the United Nations Charter itself, at Article 2 (4), declares that: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations." Save and except for secret agreements between The Bahamas and the European Union, the European Commission would lack any legal/judicial basis to take punitive measures against The Bahamas? Sir Lynden Pindling warned us that if we are not prepared to fight for our sovereignty, then we do not deserve to have it.

The Bahamas should make evidence-based policy decision in this area. In the past, under successive government, its decisions relating to the deployment of resources, adjustment of regulatory practices and the enactment of legislative measures have, in every instance, been frantic responses to hostile external threats of negative listing by either the US Treasury Department, FATF, Financial Stability Forum, the OECD, etc. To shift policy decision making to a more rational basis, in the interest of the peace, order and good governance of The Bahamas, I propose that the Government:

(a) Engage the University of The Bahamas to conduct a research project by a multi-disciplinary team of scholars to review the policy measures undertaken by the Government in the area of financial services, the nature of the external environment, the growing protectionism of onshore financial centres in OECD member countries, the niche opportunities for and future role of offshore financial centres in the rapidly changing global economy and to produce findings and recommendations to guide public policy formation in this anti-money laundering and terrorist financing.

(b) Establishes a permanent Financial Services Institute at the University of The Bahamas, as a regional centre of excellence, funded by the Government, private sector and multi-lateral funding agencies, to review, assess, identify niche opportunities, areas of innovation and product development and make policy recommendations to the Government to ensure the sustainability of offshore financial centres, such as The Bahamas.

Streamline the current uneven regulatory performance in the financial services sector, the Government should create one Supra-Regulatory Agency for the financial services sector, inclusive of the Central Bank, Securities Commission, Gaming Board, Compliance Commission, Insurance Commission and Intelligence Unit.

Increase Bahamian Government representation on all multi-lateral bodies dealing with financial services to build influence and assure an advanced warning system of any potential threat to The Bahamas and deploy professional Bahamians on the professional staff of all international and multi-lateral bodies, of which The Bahamas is a member, in order to extend the influence, prestige and reach of The Bahamas in the international community.

Finally, the Government should use this crisis as an opportunity to dismantle the ring-fencing of foreign direct investment in The Bahamas, based on the Stafford Sands Model's assumption that foreign direct investment is the sole basis for national development. Based on that assumption, incentives, Crown Land, exemptions from taxes and subsidies are given almost exclusively to foreign investors, while Bahamian investors and entrepreneurs have restricted access to comparative venture capital, and denied equal consideration for incentives, tax exemptions, Crown Land and state subsidies. There should a level playing field both domestically and internationally.

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The Bahama
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Quo Vadis, Bahamas?

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E D I T O R I A L

A Clear and Present Danger

The political unrests and violence in Haiti represent major problems for the Bahamas. Over the last weekend, the Minnis administration announced that the government will temporarily cease all repatriations to that country. It announced the closure of the Bahamian Embassy in Port-Au-Prince and the suspension of consular services. All of this, while Haitian migrants continue to travel to the Bahamas in sloops not fit for the journey.

Since Haiti is a failed State with ongoing political problems, the decision to temporarily cease repatriation is not a good idea. Haiti will always have problems. It is clear for all to see that Haitians over the last three decades have not been able to properly govern themselves.

We in the Bahamas do not have the luxury of not being pro-active about the crisis. If we fail to act, we will be overwhelmed by the constant influx of economic refugees seeking a better way of life in our country. In the last month, hundreds tried to enter illegally. Unfortunately scores perished two weeks ago when their sloop ran into a reef off Abaco. Some 31 bodies were recovered.

How Haiti got in the economic condition is a matter of history. There are international analysts who believe that France which received some \$21-billion dollars in reparations from Haiti in the last century and the United States, which ensured that France was paid should share the responsibility for the economic collapse of Haiti.

This complaint is tired. What should happen moving forward? We believe that a regional solution to the Haitian issue must be found. This can come about with the Bahamas and Caricom countries coming together and bringing pressure to bear on the developed countries for economic relief for Haiti. Organizations like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Organization of American States can all be useful in bringing relief to the poorest country in the Americas.

Haiti has a rich culture with origins con-

sisting primarily of African roots, with some indigenous Taino and Arawak influences. Additionally, many traditions can be attributed to the French, who colonized the island for two hundred years. French influence continues to be prized by some and contributes to divisions in Haitian society along the lines of colour and class in both urban and rural areas.

Nonetheless, the country remains African in essence. All aspects of Haitian society, including language, education, religion, art, music, and social organizations are heavily influenced by traditional African value systems and their creolized forms.

Haiti's history is marked with both epic achievements and tragic difficulties. After gaining independence from France by slave revolution in 1804, Haiti radically pioneered the first black republic in the world, over a half a century before other major western nations, like the United States, would abolish slavery.

The existing military-dominated context of the time and the constant bouts of governance instability spurred an early precedent of strong-armed rulers, which persisted into the late 1980s. Long-standard patterns of recurring domestic infighting and effects from notable episodes of foreign interventions continue to impact current political aspirations and realities in Haiti.

After years of turmoil following the fall of the Duvalier regime, Bertrand Aristide's clear victory in the 1990 elections was a definitive step forward for Haitian democracy. However, outside interests and internal political strife led to a return of political infighting and eventually resulted in a military coup.

Francois Duvalier ruled Haiti from 1957 to 1971. During that time there were an estimated 30,000 political murders. He was succeeded by his son Jean-Claud Duvalier or "Baby Doc". Since then, the fall of the Duvalier regime gave way to immense instability.

This level of instability in Haiti can only be seen as a clear and present danger to the socio-economic destabilization of the Bahamas if something is not done soon.

THE BAHAMAS
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