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TUESDAY - FEBRUARY 12TH, 2019

75 CENTS

PLP WANTS GRADUAL APPROACH FOR NHI

After a meeting between the National Health Insurance Authority and the Parliamentary Team of The Progressive Liberal Party, the Opposition is proposing that the government consider a more gradual approach for National Health Insurance that would focus heavily on primary healthcare and selective catastrophic care to meet the demands in our public hospitals.

In a statement issued by Doctor Michael Darville, the PLP says, "as micro and macro economic indicators become more favourable, we can then move to implement the full healthcare package." The PLP representatives met with NHIA Chairman Dr. Robin Roberts and the Managing Director,

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Former PLP MP, Dr. Michael Darville (File photo)

Three Murder Accused Arraigned

BY JAMEELHA MISSICK
 Journal Staff Writer

Three young men accused of murder were yesterday arraigned before the

Magistrate's Court.

In the first matter, standing before Chief Magistrate Joyann

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Parents Concerned About Health Issues

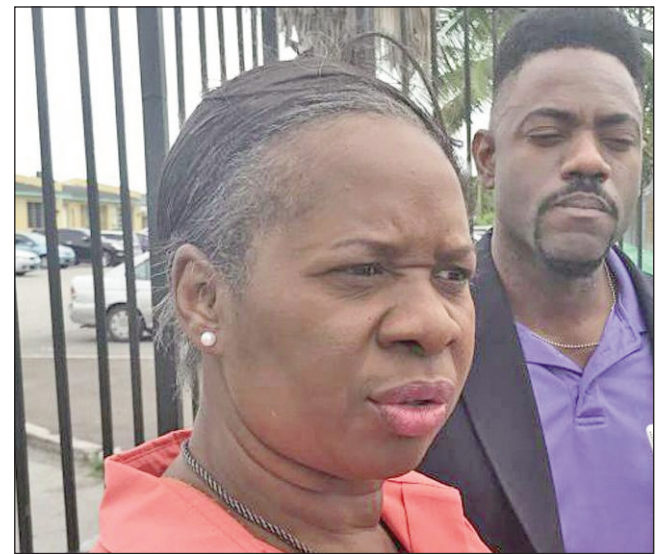
BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT
 Journal Staff Writer

Despite assurances that the schools are safe for classes to resume, parents of students of CW Sawyer and Sybil Strachan Primary have lingering concerns over a number of issues.

There was an early pickup for CW Sawyer students, who returned to classes yesterday following a two-day break over mould, rat and structural concerns.

Adding to that was the complaint among some parents that they were not updated on the situation.

Lisa Sterman, a parent at CW Sawyer said, "well, they said there was mould in the school and the



B.U.T. President, Belinda Wilson updating the media on health concerns at Sybil Strachan and CW Sawyer Primary, after continued reports of mold and other health related issues were only partially addressed by governing authorities. (File photo)

teachers were getting sick and also some of the students were getting sick and the fixtures in the

restroom for the girls and boys were not function-

See page 4...

GG ATTENDS ANGLICAN WOMEN'S 55TH ANNIVERSARY SERVICE AT ST. AGNES



Governor General, Her Excellency the Most Hon. Dame Marguerite Pindling attended St. Agnes Anglican Church Women's combined Annual Installation and 55th Anniversary Service at the church's 7:00 Mass on Sunday, February 10, 2019. Assistant Bishop, the Most Reverend Drexel W. Gomez performed installation of officers and executives. (BIS Photos/Patrick Hanna)

Reveal "Murderous Pirates", Says Bishop Hall

BY LICEC BASTIAN
 Journal Staff Writer

Leading Baptist Bishop Simeon Hall is making a clarion call to the Haitian community to reveal the names of individuals who continually exploit

See page 4...

FNM Says Davis Should Apologize For GB Neglect

The Free National Movement (FNM) has called on Opposition Leader Philip Davis to apologize for the neglect of Grand Bahama under the administration of the

See page 6...




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Three In Custody For GB Shooting

BY LICEC BASTIAN
Journal Staff Writer

Police in Grand Bahama holding three men in custody for a shooting incident in Hanna Hill, Eight Mile Rock which left two men with injuries.

Assistant Superintendent of Police, Terecita Pinder reported that on Sunday, shortly after 4:00pm, police were called to Hanna Hill, where it was reported that an argument erupted with a group of males who were involved in a gambling game.

As a result of the argument, a short time later a lone gunman exited a white vehicle and opened fire on the group injuring two males. Both victims were transported to the Rand Memorial Hospital via private vehicle and were seen by doctors.

One of the males was later discharged, while the other is said to be listed in stable condition.

Three males all of Hanna Hill, Eight Mile Rock were arrested and are assisting police with their investigation into this matter.

In Other Crime News: Police recovered illegal firearms and dangerous drugs from the streets of New Providence in several incidents.

Police, acting on information recovered two illegal firearms on Saturday and two on Sunday.

On Saturday, shortly after 5:00pm, Drug Enforcement Unit Officers, acting on information, conducted a search of a bushy area on Bonaby Alley off Kemp Road, and recovered a black AR 15 rifle which contained 28 rounds of

.223 ammunition.

An hour later, shortly after 6:00pm, Drug Enforcement Officers also acting on information, conducted a search of an abandon building on Turtle Drive off Carmichael Road and recovered a 9 millimeter pistol and six rounds of ammunition.

Following more leads on Sunday, Flying Squad Officers, shortly after 6pm, conducted a search of an abandon building at Rupert Dean Lane and Patton Street and recovered a .45 pistol with four rounds of ammunition, and a .357 revolver and a small quantity of suspected marijuana.

Police are actively investigating these matter with a view of identifying persons who were in possession of these firearms and dangerous drugs.

Three Murder ACCUSED ARRAIGNED

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Ferguson-Pratt, was 25-year-old, Shaquille Culmer of West Street/Fleming Street.

Culmer is accused of the February 2nd murder of Randolph Anderson aka Deon Brice.

He was not required to enter a plea and bail was denied.

He was remanded to the Bahamas Department

of Corrections (BDC) for service of voluntary bill of indictment until April 5th when he returns to court at noon.

In the second matter, charged was 28-year-old, Rashad Paul aka Eyes.

The Whyly Close resident, allegedly caused the death of Kirby Jean Pierre, on Saturday February 2nd, 2019.

He too was not required to enter a plea, denied bail

and remanded to the BDC until April 5th.

The third man arraigned on murder charges was 21-year-old, Joel Bullard of Lincoln Boulevard.

Bullard who is accused of the February 1st murder of Gary Leon, was also not required to enter a plea. Bail was denied and he was subsequently remanded to the BDC until April 5th.



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:

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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

The Bahama Journal

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PLP WANTS GRADUAL

Graham Whitmarsh and his team.

The Opposition spokesman on Health said, "In the NHIA presentation nothing was said about home care and the need to improve this arm of healthcare delivery in the country. If implemented properly home care would, in our view, shift the burden of attending to patients suffering from non-communicable diseases away from the accident and emergency and other wards and free up bed space at our hospitals ensuring that doctors and medical staff provide services for real emergencies.

"We in the PLP believe NHI is a must but once implemented it must be sustainable. It is our view that the proposal presented by the NHIA does not fully consider all facets of costs associated with the launch of the program and in the absence of an economic impact study by the Ministry of

Finance we caution the government to consider a phased approach in order to reduce the potential for economic shocks. Their failure to do so could undermine the success of this very vital program and undermine economic growth into the future," said Dr. Darville.

He said the PLP is convinced that a proper NHI programme will enhance the global growth of GDP ultimately but we must get it right.

"We in the Progressive Liberal Party understand the importance of universal health and the role national health insurance must play in order to deliver on this important mandate. NHI is our baby and we want it to succeed. Quality healthcare must be accessible to all Bahamians and we believe NHI is the way to accomplish this.

"We were pleased to learn that the NHIA accepts our position regarding the importance

of universal primary healthcare. However, it appears that the NHIA is saying one thing and the Minister of Health another on NHI," said the Senator.

"It is obvious that they are operating from different perspectives and that is creating confusion in the public domain. Who does one believe, the NHIA or the Minister of Health who has cabinet responsibility for relations with the Authority?

"For example, the NHIA is saying that there will be no cash exchanged by patients at the point of service. This was recommended by the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization as a means of ensuring equity in the healthcare delivery system. The Minister of Health on the other hand is speaking about increasing the cost for services at the Public Hospitals Authority (PHA), the Department

of Public Health (DPH) and the Ministry of Health. Have these increased costs been factored into the overall budget for delivery of NHI and if not who will bear this increased cost?

"Secondly, we have some difficulty with the NHIA proposal to establish a separate out-patient medical recording system while the PHA and the Ministry of Health are currently working with a reputable global software firm called Allscripts who won a multi-million dollar contract to administer hospital medical records and supplied flow chain in our tertiary institutions and public clinics. While in office we were assured by this group that this software package was capable of allowing doctors and medical staff to access the hospital records in the out-patient clinics. I am not certain if this important step was cancelled as part of the FNM's stop review and

cancel policy

But having two separate software systems for management of medical records would not only create confusion in the system but it will increase inefficiency and the cost of delivering healthcare in the Bahamas," Dr. Darville said.

He said, "In the presentation, little was said about healthcare strengthening and the medical protocols necessary to ensure that services rendered in all our clinics are consistent from Inagua to Grand Cay, nor did they outline how we will sell NHI in the Family Islands whose medical infrastructure is failing because of a persistent lack of medical staff, medical supplies and life saving medication. Also, nothing was said about funding from the government prior to the launch in 2020 to hire trained staff and establish supply chains to ensure equity in the system.

"We are also concerned about the feedback from the business community, the Chamber of Commerce and the labour force. The business community and labour are saying that they will be forced to pay for this healthcare plan in a sluggish economy after the government increased value added tax from 7.5 per cent to 12 per cent in the last budget cycle.

"After reading the Response to the public consultation document from NHIA and listening to the stakeholders, we are of the view that this proposal is very ambitious and if implemented in the current economic environment could result in the contraction of business activity. There is also the added risk to the private sector of having to carry the burden of the shortfalls if the current figure of \$130 million pegged to fund the next stage of NHI is underestimated," said the PLP statement.

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Parents Concerned About Health Issues

ing properly."

According to Bahamas Union of Teachers President Belinda Wilson, mould is no longer an issue at Yellow Elder Gardens campus. "What the teachers would have done at CW Sawyer, is they did a cursory assessment.

"So they know that some cleaning has been done; yes some ceiling tiles have been replaced

however there was some cracking in the tiles and we are concerned about the structural part of the school.

"Then we would have received the mould testing report and we would have sent that on to a private company to analyze it, so that they can give us their views as to what has been tested; if the testing was done deeply enough and if it's safe for

teachers to occupy the schools," she said.

As for Sybil Strachan Primary's scabies outbreak, Mrs. Wilson said as far as she can see, that situation has also been resolved.

However, one concerned uncle told The Journal that he came to pick up his nephew because of something he saw on Facebook about there being a scabies out-

break at that school.

He said besides that, no communication was made between the school's administration and the student's parents.

Meantime the BUT President said that teachers are being tested for the highly contagious infestation. At this point, there have been no such confirmed cases.

"The teachers and the union we are very

pleased at the manner in which the principal has dealt with this health issue, because we were in constant contact not only with the Ministry of Education, but also with the Ministry of Health, their nurses and their team.

"So today the classes are being cleaned by the janitorial staff and the teachers will be tested.

"Some were tested

last week; the remainder of the teachers will be tested today so we hope that the testing will be completed today and that the cleaning will be completed so that tomorrow morning school will be able to run smoothly," she said.

Mrs. Wilson's calling on the ministry to continue talks with the union.



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

Reveal "Murderous Pirates", Says Bishop Hall

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Haitian nationals attempting to flee poverty stricken island nation.

Speaking with this Journal yesterday, following a mass turnout at one of the largest funeral services on Sunday, Bishop Hall called the captain of the vessel and all responsible for the voyage "murderous pirates".

He then made the call for the Haitian community, pastors and church leaders to release the names of those behind the ill-fated voyage from Haiti.

More than 30 Haitian migrants lost their lives when the 40 foot sloop they were on hit a reef just off Fowl Cay Abaco, a little more than a week ago.

Twenty-two of them were funeralized on Sunday at the Enoch Beckford Auditorium, many others still unaccounted for.

"We commiserate with members of the Haitian community on the loss of dozens of persons from Haiti. It was painful see

some [22] caskets Sunday and we continue to stand with the members of the Haitian community.

"The only thing that precedes a persons nationality is that he or she is a human being; those were [22] human beings.

"We also wish to call on all members of the Haitian community, especially pastors and church leaders, that they should release the names of the murderous pirates who engage in a nefarious voyage from Haiti to The Bahamas.

"Haitians living in poverty in Haiti must be told that it is better to be poor than to be eaten by sharks on the open seas. That's how ghastly this thing has become.

"And I think we need to share that this trade has to stop," Bishop Hall said.

President of the League of Haitian Pastors, Dr. Jean Paul Charles, made a similar call last week. He also appealed to Bahamians to invest in Haiti as a means of deterring Haitian nationals from taking the risky sea voyage in search of a bet-

ter way of life.

Bishop Hall, who said he has visited the impoverished island several times, said that Haiti should lead the way in helping itself.

"One of the problems we have with the Haitian challenge is that you have the rich Haitians, some of whom have gotten richer since the earthquake several years ago.

"Haiti needs to lead the way in how it helps itself.

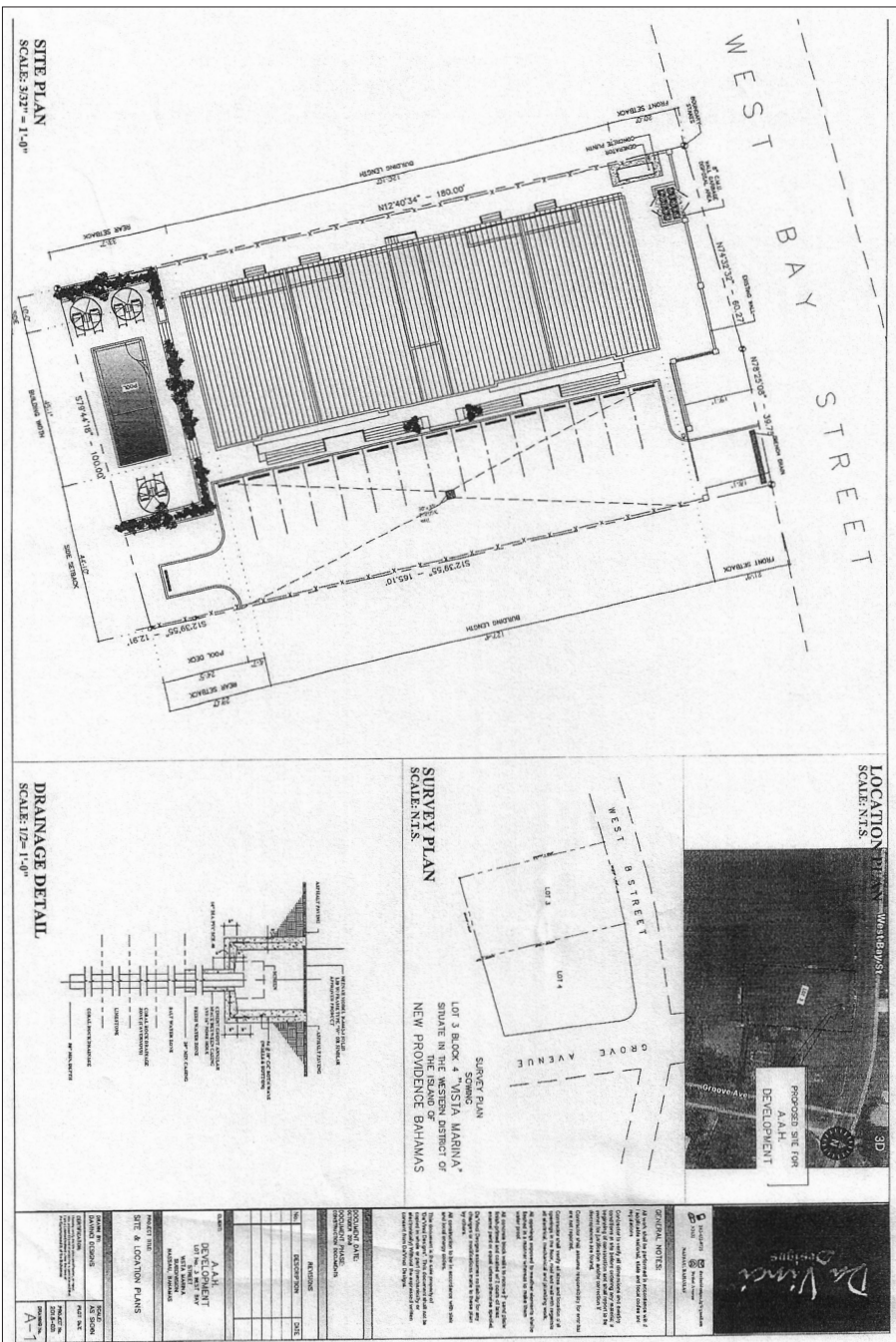
"The Bahamas, the region, CARICOM, and all should try to help.

"Haitians in Haiti must do more to close the gap between the rich and the poor; the rich, rich and the poor, poor, is Haiti's, in my estimate, biggest problem.

"We want The Bahamas to help; we want the Caribbean to help, but Haiti itself must do more.

"It is a travesty that the rich in Haiti seem so obstinate and so callous towards the poor in Haiti, and until they help themselves then, others will be obligated to help them," Bishop Hall said.

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WARNING SHOT



By Jerry Hutchinson

Blacklisted Again: Time To Go To The UN?

By Jerry Hutchinson

“The difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion is the thickness of a prison wall”.

-- **Dennis Healey, Former UK Chancellor of the Exchequer.**

As sure as bills follow excessive Christmas spending, The Bahamas is once more on a blacklist, this time from the Netherlands. No matter how cleverly the government crafts financial and commercial legislation; or, how much national sovereignty is foregone; how much we complain about the inequity of it all; how many formerly highly paid Bahamians are now unemployed, nothing seems to change. Like the proverbial deer in the head lamps, Bahamians are always waiting to be hit from some quarter, usually by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). I know that complaining about the actions of the OECD and organizations who enforce their rules is one of our national pastimes. Many have contributed ideas on how to relieve The Bahamas of the threat of Blacklisting from the OECD. However, I propose to take another route. I want to know what's bugging the OECD and if their irritation with The Bahamas and other Blacklisted nations is justified and its rules fairly applied. Also, how can an intergovernmental economic organization continually attack the very economic existence of a member of the United Nations?

According to the OECD website: “it is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade. It is a forum of countries describing themselves as committed to democracy and the market economy, providing a platform to compare policy experiences, seeking answers to common problems, identify good practices and coordinate domestic and international policies of its members. Most OECD members are high-income economies with a very high Human Development Index (HDI) and are regarded as developed countries.

As of 2017, the OECD member states collectively comprised 62.2% of global nominal GDP (US\$49.6 trillion) and 42.8% of global GDP (Int.\$54.2 trillion) and purchasing power parity. And, like all fully developed countries the OECD countries have large and expensive social benefits programmes which need to be funded. These benefits include but are not limited to: unemployment benefits, family benefits, social assistance benefits, housing benefits, covering old age, survivors, and incapacity-related benefits; health, family, and active labour market programmes; and unemployment, housing benefits; pensions. Funding would normally come from taxes paid by its citizens. However, many of their wealthier citizens and businesses seek to reduce their tax liability through various legal investment schemes some of which reduce tax liability and, in some cases, evade all tax liability”.

The OECD represents in part, many of the richest nations in Europe. Some of whom were colonial powers and had colonies across the globe. These nations plundered the wealth of their colonies in Africa and Latin America; and, repatriated vast amounts of gold and diamonds to their national coffers. This explains why they were able to create these massive economies especially as there are no diamond mines in Europe and very little gold mining. Yet, these countries remain major players in the markets for precious metals and minerals. Having plundered the natural resources of its colonies to build vibrant, affluent and expansive and expensive social security programmes for their citizens, these historical colonialists are now asking their former colonies to collect their taxes for them! To assist them in spreading their false narrative, the OECD cynically conflates tax avoidance which is legal and tax evasion which is illegal. They have a lot at stake. The OECD estimates that there is between 50 Billion and 70 Billion Euros in taxable funds held in offshore jurisdictions pejoratively called “tax havens,” which they seek to collect by any means.

If that means destroying another nation's economy while its own members regularly engage in the same alleged facilitation then, so be it! These actions are nothing less than neo-colonialism and economic warfare which is defined as: “the use of, or the threat to use, economic means against a country in order to weaken its economy and thereby reduce its political and military power. Economic warfare also includes the use of economic means to compel an adversary to change its policies or behaviour or to undermine its ability to conduct normal relations with other countries.

“Some common means of economic warfare are trade embargoes, boycotts, sanctions, tariff discrimination, the freezing of capital assets, the suspension of aid, the prohibition of investment and other capital flows, and expropriation”. Encyclopaedia Britannica.

How unfair and arbitrary OECD actions are especially as regards to alleged money laundering was highlighted in the Guardian (UK) of 20th March 2017 which stated: “According to the newspaper, these documents show that between 2010 and 2014, British registered companies and British-based banks helped move out of Russia at least \$20bn of the proceeds of criminal activities.

This should come as no surprise. In 2016, the Home Affairs Select Committee concluded that the London property market was the primary avenue for the laundering of £100bn of illicit money a year. The investigative journalist Roberto Saviano has said of the international drugs trade: “Mexico is its heart and London is its head”. So, the recent Blacklisting of the Bahamas by the Netherlands was both surprising and troubling. Surprising because the OECD usually hunts in a pack and a country's legislators can partially rely on their findings. Puzzling because as an Oxfam report concluded: “Blacklist or Whitewash? Oxfam applied the criteria the EU is using to draw up the blacklist to 92 countries screened by the union and its 28-member states. The criteria exclude EU member states, but if they did not, Oxfam concluded that four countries should be blacklisted: Ireland; Luxembourg; The Netherlands; Malta.

The Cayman government also weighed in and articulated the lurking suspicion of many blacklisted countries when it was reported: “The Cayman Islands government has accused The Netherlands of including the British territory on its separate blacklist as a way of diverting criticisms of its own tax practices by attacking legitimate tax regimes” Caribbean News Now 29 January 2019. Imagine that: blacklisted by the Netherlands and all we wanted was a slice of the “Dutch Sandwich”! The implications of this are far-reaching and troubling. EU countries, many of whom are members of the OECD, do not appear to apply the criteria it uses to black list The Bahamas on its members. That's my problem. The Bahamas and other Caribbean nations are singled out for blacklisting while notorious money laundering and terrorist financing facilitators are being given a free pass. In The Bahamas especially, unfair and arbitrary demands by the OECD has cost us dearly. As an example, the Central Bank of the Bahamas in a December 2018 industry briefing revealed that: “Combined domestic and “offshore” banking assets declined by 35.2 % falling from \$657.9bn to \$426.2bn between 2012 and last September”; a banking industry shrinkage of \$200bn.

The briefing also examined the job losses in the banking sector which declined by 113 jobs or 2.5% of the financial services industry's work force mainly through a “shift in business strategy and de-risking”. These grim statistics confirm my suspicions that despite the numerous bills and legislation passed by successive administrations, the OECD, s policies are not to seek compliance as they define it but, rather, to subjugate us. We can add to this sad litany the flight of major European banks from our jurisdiction because of the actions of the OECD. Our appeasement of an organization who applies unfair and economically devastating requirements on the Bahamas yet, allows its member countries to go away scot free is not and never has been in the best interests of the Bahamas. My view parallels that of Cayman Government officials who complained that the OECD backlisting policies were: “unjustified” and “wholly lacking in fairness and credibility”.

The discriminatory way the OECD and EU applies its rules especially as it relates to EU overseas territories has not gone unnoticed. Molly Scott Cato, a Green MEP and a member of the European Parliament's Panama Papers committee, said: “Once again, the UK and its offshore territories are at the heart of things. “She said Britain had to “clean up its act” and regulate the “legal limbo” of its overseas territories if it wanted a positive trading relationship with the EU after Brexit” The Financial Times. Indeed, no missive or sanction issued can be fair, balanced, or non-discriminatory if members of the decision-making body of the OECD are themselves not compliant with the rules they seek to enforce. The Bahamas has been made to virtually destroy its financial services through OECD driven legislation with nothing to show but economic pain and job losses. As a member of the United Nations (UN) our country finds itself being relentlessly attacked by economic means by other UN members through its surrogate, the OECD, a non-member but with Observer Status. We are accused of many transgressions and while we may sometimes fall short, we are not criminals! In their rush to destroy, the OECD conveniently ignores the research by imminent scholars on the offshore banking industry.

They also ignore the fact that as regards the “offshore” banking industry, we are approaching a state of diminishing returns. Its just not worth the time and effort to comply when, the OECD continually moves the goalposts. By “we” I mean the Bahamian people. The ones who are suffering daily inconvenience because of oppressive banking requirements driven by OECD policy. Not the “nattering” class who make fortunes from offshore banking.

No matter how this ends, they have amassed fortunes in fees to insulate themselves from the fallout. Fortunes which probably far exceed the corporate taxes collected by the public treasury although we foot the bill and bear the shame of

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Quo Vadis, Bahamas?

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Kimaley P. Jones
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E D I T O R I A L

WHAT JUSTICE?

There are many Bahamians who are being denied justice in the Bahamas for various reasons and have had to plead guilty to offences when they are in fact innocent.

It has come to our attention that many young Bahamians have been victimized in the Criminal Justice System in the Bahamas due to no fault of their own.

Two cases are relevant here. In one case, a young man was taken before a Magistrate and charged with fraud. The Magistrate asked him whether he was guilty or not guilty. Due to the fact that the Magistrate did not have the jurisdiction to grant bail under the Bail Act, the young man who now insists that he was innocent of the charge, pleaded guilty because he did not want to be remanded at the Department of Corrections at Fox Hill.

He told the story that he had to attend the funeral of his father and his incarceration would have prevented that.

In another instance, a young man was taken before the court on the charge of threat of death to his step father. He denied that he had threatened the man and believed that his stepfather wanted to get even with his mother in a domestic quarrel. Since he knew that the Magistrate could not grant bail, he too pleaded guilty because he claimed that he did not want to spend an hour in jail on remand, much less weeks or months.

Then, last week on a JCN Television show another young Bahamian said that he was remanded for two months after it was reported that he threatened the life of his girl friend. He denied this, pleaded not guilty, but was remanded to prison because once again, the Magistrate did not have the power under the law to grant bail. The young man was devastated when he was placed among hardened criminals to await trial.

This is totally wrong in the Bahamas, when people can have their lives ruined by mere allegations and due to the fact that the parliament passed a Bail Act limiting the power of Magistrates to grant bail in certain offences.

Among the offences that Magistrates are

unable to grant bail are murder, attempted murder, armed robbery, fraud and in conspiracy case, among others.

In English law, natural justice is technical terminology for the rule against bias and the right to a fair hearing. Further, in criminal justice, a person is deemed innocent until proven guilty. Based on what is happening in the Bahamas, many persons charged before our courts are denied both natural justice and criminal justice, as many of them are forced to spend time locked up in prison on mere allegations and because the Magistrate cannot grant bail.

There are many lawyers of The Bahamas Bar Association who have protested the Bail Act for sometime, however their pleas have apparently fallen on deaf ears. Successive governments have left a system in place that it patently unfair and unjust. No one should be forced to plead guilty because of the fear that they would be remanded to prison if they are innocent.

There is no public outrage about this, even when hundreds were remanded and their relatives suffered this unfortunate state of affairs in silence.

Years ago on indictable offences, a Magistrate would preside over a Preliminary Inquiry to determine if there was sufficient evidence for a matter to be tried in the Supreme Court. Not today, lawyers are now required to get a Voluntary Bill of Indictment on matters. This came about as a result of the so-called Swift Justice initiative of the Christie administration.

In the interest of justice we call on the government and the judiciary to cause the Bail Act to be amended posthaste to give back to our competent Magistrates the power the once had to grant bail to accused persons in all cases except murder.

This Act of Parliament was introduced during the Ingraham administration. It was wrong then and it is still wrong now. After all justice must not only be done, but must be seen to be done.

Blacklisted Again: Time To Go To The UN?

CONT'D.

reputational damage. They know the futility of trying to resolve our differences with the OECD by legislation but, remain silent. The more legal band aids, the longer it takes for the victims to die; while the victims die the death of a thousand cuts the fees keep rolling in. In the end, OECD actions is all about politics. They select where and upon whom they will inflict torment. The Caribbean Offshore banking industry is an easy target because of our self-doubt.

Sovereign countries have allowed themselves to be convinced that their financial services activity which is fully legal is somehow non-compliant. A study by Findley, Nielson and Sharman stated: “They were never able to set up a shell company in Caymans, Bahamas or the Seychelles. The politicisation of the blacklists has enabled London to become the global centre of money laundering”. It is time for The Bahamas to resist implementing endless financial legislation which appears to be futile. We need to accept that the world view of OECD members is informed by their mistaken belief that the real threat of money laundering and tax evasion lies on the small, palm-fringed islands of their former colonies and not in London or the money markets or banking sectors of its members. And as the saying goes “Once a false idea becomes fixed in a person's mind, he will twist facts or probability to accommodate it rather than question it”.

This is a political fight which requires a fair hearing in the proper forum. OECD actions are biased, discriminatory, wrongheaded and selective in who must comply. The Bahamas and other Caribbean nations must fight this clear

attempt to usurp the sovereignty of our countries through the deliberate and pre-meditated undermining of their financial systems. The Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 3281 (XXIX). Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States December 1974 gives a partial list of members rights and obligations which may assist in this. These are:

Article 10

All States are juridically equal and, as equal members of the international community, have the right to participate fully and effectively in the international decision-making process in the solution of world economic, financial and monetary problems, inter alia, through the appropriate international organizations in accordance with their existing and evolving rules, and to share in the benefits resulting therefrom.

Article 24

All States have the duty to conduct their mutual economic relations in a manner which takes into account the interest of other countries. In particular, all States should avoid prejudicing the interests of developing countries.

Article 32

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.

So, lets get on with it!

FNM Says Davis Should Apologize

Continued from / PAGE 1...

Progressive Liberal Party. In a statement issued yesterday the FNM accused Mr. Davis for undeservedly taking credit for the new port development in Grand Bahama.

The statement said, "the old and tired Brave Davis is once again providing an alternate view of reality,

continuing a track record of lies. This time he claims the woeful PLP is responsible for the new project with Carnival to build a new port in Grand Bahama, announced last week. If the Minority Leader thinks he is fooling anyone, he should give up.

"Perhaps Brave needs to be reminded of what he and his PLP incompetents

are in fact responsible for as it relates to Grand Bahama. Does he recall that more jobs in Grand Bahama were lost during Christie's PLP administration than any other? Does he remember when Treasure Bay Casino and Memories Resort closed, laying-off hundreds of employees? How can Brave forget the backlash

to PLP legislators in Grand Bahama living lavishly while citizens struggled to put food on the table?

"It is also a shame that the opposition leader can make such a claim about helping Grand Bahama after insulting the entire country with their mismanagement of the hurricane recovery. Many might recall the PLP's response

to questions concerning the budget deficit and multiple credit downgrades that transpired during the last administration. They claimed the economy was slowed by hundreds of millions in hurricane relief, primarily in Grand Bahama but resulted in little to no relief for most of the Island," said the FNM.

The

Party

stated: "Regarding Grand Bahama, the only thing coming out of Brave's mouth should be apologies. He should apologize for both the neglect Grand Bahama has suffered under PLP rule and for the empty promises he made for years only to leave Grand Bahama in far worse shape than when the PLP took office in 2012."



PUBLIC NOTICE

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

The public is hereby notified that an application for Site Plan Approval SPA/1/2019 on behalf of Mylor Caribbean Development Ltd. and "The View Love Beach" 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 13, 2019 at 7pm at The Department of Physical Planning's Hearing Room located on JFK Drive and Bethel Avenue.

The applicants propose a resort development on 7.44 acres of property (Lots 11, 11a, 12, 12a, 13, 13a, 14, and 14a) in the Love Beach Subdivision. These properties are for multi-family development.

The proposal is a mix of condominium buildings, time share units, a hotel and restaurant. The buildings on the site comprise the following:

- 4 4-storey buildings along the roadside each containing 16 residential units;
- A 4-storey hotel building consisting of 40 guestrooms;
- A 4-storey restaurant facility with bar/lounge;
- Two 4-storey time share buildings;
- 10 over-water bungalows;
- 3 single-storey service buildings

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



Letter to the Editor

BPL bills and gasoline prices

Dear Editor:

Eureka! Falling gasoline prices and lower BPL electricity bills, explanations for which are being sought, have given rise to a degree of euphoria in recent times. Yet, as I opined in a letter a dozen or so years ago, the answer appears to be quite elementary 'my dear Watson'!

The price of gasoline moves cyclically, as does the price of diesel fuel (automotive diesel oil/#2 oil/heating oil) which BPL burns at its Blue Hills plant. The price of heavy fuel oil (#6 oil/bunker 'C'), which BPL burns at its Clifton Pier plant, also moves cyclically; variations tend not to be as pronounced as with diesel fuel. Importantly, movements in the price of automotive diesel oil (ADO) and bunker 'C' tend to be in tandem but antipodal to gasoline price movements.

Market forces (supply vs demand) drive up gasoline prices in the summer months, due to heavy demand by the North American and European motoring public. Likewise, heavy North American and European demand for heating oil (and heavy fuel oil), in the winter months, drive up prices for these products during colder periods. Product prices, whether gasoline, diesel or heavy fuel oil, are also impacted by changes in crude prices (which sometimes seem to rise or fall without rhyme

or reason). The price of crude has remained and likely will continue to remain relatively stable around \$50-\$60 per barrel (for reasons best left for another communication).

Hence, market forces ought to be the singular factor impacting both power bills and gasoline prices. In the case of gasoline, market forces indeed are the answer.

As regards BPL's lower electricity bills, the answer is not quite that elementary my dear Watson given the tendency for diesel and heavy fuel oil prices to rise in response to increased North American and European demand for heating oil during the winter.

In fact, notwithstanding such tendency, BPL's customers generally experience lower bills during cooler months. This is due to the absence or severe curtailment of cooling, especially A/C operation, during the period. Energy consumption is reduced to such an extent that it more than counterbalances fuel price increases. Reduced demand for energy, moreover, makes it possible for BPL to fully satisfy customer's needs while running only its most energy efficient/lowest production cost generation plant significantly reducing fuel consumption and cost.

Michael R. Moss



NOTICE

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) was established on 1 August 2009, as a corporate body, under the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority Act, 2009.

As the independent regulator, URCA's regulatory remit of the Electronic Communications Sector (ECS) covers radio and television broadcasting, radio spectrum, internet and data, pay-TV and voice telephony; and oversight of Electricity (ES) Sector which includes entities or persons who generate, transmit, distribute or supply electricity throughout The Bahamas.

URCA wishes to advise that a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the provision of Internal Audit Services has been uploaded to our website at www.urcabahamas.bs.

Interested parties should submit responses to the RFP by 4:00 pm on 28 February 2019.

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