

NEWS CLIPS

FARRAKHAN WANTS LOCKERBIE FAMILIES TO KNOW THE 'TRUTH'

Nation of Islam officials welcome the United States Government's constructive interest in Minister Louis Farrakhan's recent visit to Libya. The State Department called on Minister Farrakhan to raise the issue of a downed airliner that was allegedly sabotaged by Libyan agents during his meetings with officials in Tripoli. Following a discussion with Libyan Head of State Muammar Gadhafi, Minister Farrakhan told reporters, "we believe that the Clinton administration should seek the trial of the Libyan nationals who have been accused of the bombing of PanAm 103 in a third or neutral country. The families of the victims deserve justice and closure to this tragedy. And the only way that closure can come to this tragedy is if the truth is made known." Libya has incurred U.N. sanctions because it has not surrendered two men charged with planting a bomb on the PanAm flight for trial in the U.S. or the United Kingdom. London and Washington have repeatedly rejected offers by Libya for the men to be tried in a third country.

DENNY'S ANNOUNCES \$1.5 MILLION DONATION

In recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, on Jan. 15 Flagstar Companies, Inc. parent company of Denny's Restaurants, and counsel for the plaintiff class held a news conference in Washington, D.C. to announce a \$1.5 million contribution to nine civil rights organizations and the United Negro College Fund. The contribution is from remaining settlement funds from two class-action lawsuits settled by Denny's in 1994. The beneficiaries are: NAACP, National Urban League, SCLC, Operation Push/Rainbow Coalition, Southern Poverty Law Center, NAACP Legal Defense & Education Fund, National Fair Housing Alliance, Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. The United Negro College Fund was presented with a \$625,000 award on Jan. 16 in San Francisco.

PAN AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL AT MAGIC'S THEATER

The fifth Annual Pan African Film Festival will take place at the Magic Johnson Theater in Los Angeles, CA. This year the 12-day event will present over 60 films from the African diaspora, including Latin America, Europe, Africa, the South Pacific, the Caribbean and the U.S. Opening the festival will be "Gridlock" by actor/director Vandie Curtis Hall (Chicago Hope). The film stars Tim Roth and the late rap sensation Tupac Shakur. Also to be shown "Follow Me Home" starring Alfre Woodard and directed by Peter Bratt, as well as "Aristotle's Plot" by Cameron Filmmaker Jean Pierre Bekolo, whose first feature "Quarter Mozart" won the Cannes Film Festival. According to festival director Ayuko Babu, the Pan African Film Festival will give the American population a rare chance to see films from the African diaspora, important and exciting films, rarely seen in the U.S. as well as provide an opportunity to participate in a variety of forums, jazz concerts, discussion groups and educational outreach programs. For more information of PAFF's gala activities, concert, forums, group sales and screening schedules, call the office at (213) 896-8221.

UNITED NATIONS CHIEF TO MEET CLINTON

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan recently announced that he will travel to Washington, D.C. on Jan. 23 to meet with President Bill Clinton. Annan told correspondents at the U.N. that he would use the meeting, the first between him and any head of state since he took office Jan. 1, to discuss U.S.-U.N. relations, particularly the settlement of Washington's \$1.3 billion U.S. debt to the world body. "I will also try and explain to them the need to work with other member states of the organization," Annan said. When the U.S. debt is added to those of other nations, the U.N. is owed \$2.3 billion. The U.S. pays a quarter of the U.N. yearly budget. Annan will also meet with the chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Jesse Helms. Outgoing U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher recently met Annan at the U.N. headquarters in New York and promised that President Clinton would make recommendations on the U.S. debt in the next U.S. budget.

NIGERIAN POLITICIANS CONDEMN BOMB BLAST

Four leaders of Nigeria's five authorized political parties, currently visiting the United States, have condemned the latest bomb explosions in Lagos, describing them as terrorist acts. The most recent bomb blast, which occurred near a bus filled with soldiers, killed two servicemen and injured several people. The explosion was the fourth in the city in the past two months. Speaking at a Jan. 7, 1997 press conference in New York, the political leaders vowed that such acts would not stop the efforts to return the country to democratic rule. "We will make sure this does not stop us from achieving our goals," said Gambo Lawan, chairman of the Grassroot Democratic Movement, one of the five political parties registered by Gen. Sani Abacha's military administration as part of a phased political transition program. Isa Mohamed, the chairman of the United Nigeria Congress Party, called on the international community to condemn the explosions. The leaders urged the U.S., to support the transition program and stop "financing" some people claiming to be fighting to bring democracy to Nigeria. The U.S. itinerary includes stops in Atlanta, Miami, Houston, Kansas City, Chicago and Washington, D.C.

Disgruntled African-American farmers go to the capital

By Raynicka Wilder
Special to Sentinel-Voice

According to a 1990 House of Representative Committee Report, African-American farmers are on the verge of extinction. Between 1982 and 1992, the percentage of all farmers decreased by 14 percent, while the number of African-American farms dropped dramatically by 43 percent, from 33,250 to 18,816.

The disproportionate decline of African-American farms, according to the House Committee Report, was due to the tendency of African-Americans to own smaller, less efficient farms, the declining interest of young African-Americans in farming, lack of technical training and problems with programs to ensure fair treatment of minority farmers.

The reason, according to John W. Boyd, the president of the National Black Farmers Association, is outright racial discrimination from local and federal administrators of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

On December 12, 1996, African-American farmers from Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Virginia and North Carolina marched in front of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to protest loss of farms and farmlands and the agency's policy. In the wake of the event, organizer John W. Boyd stated, "This event will bring national attention to rights denied black farmers in this country."

Although these complaints have only recently received widespread publicity, some have been pending for as long as 20

years.

In February 1980, North Carolina Black Farmers filed a discrimination complaint against the Farmer's Home Association. In response to the complaint, the Office of Equal Opportunity Compliance Branch conducted a special investigation to determine the validity of the allegations.

The investigation found discrepancies in the real estate appraisal of farmland owned by

African-Americans. According to the findings, African-Americans did not receive deferred loan payment schedules. They were also required to agree to voluntary liquidation of their property should they default on their loans, as a condition of their loan. Disparities were also found in the number and amount of emergency loans made to African-Americans.

None of these findings were reported to the complainants,

who a year later filed another lawsuit. Today, African-American farmers continue to make the same allegations. They are also filing administrative complaints and lawsuits because of inordinate waiting periods between applications and loan approvals. A study of one county showed that in 1994, a white farmer typically waited 84 days for loan decisions, while the average waiting period for an

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Not all news is bad from Africa

By John William Templeton
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Not all the news from Africa is bad news. As of Dec. 31 Zimbabwe's stock market recorded a 70 percent gain from 5,000 to 8,500. Ghana's equity exchange was up 40 percent by year's end and Mozambique had a 26 percent increase in foreign investment.

On Jan. 25, Angola's long-awaited government of national unity will be sworn in, with South Africa's President Nelson Mandela putting the prods to former rebel leader Jonas Savimbi, in his role as head of the 12-nation Southern African Development Community.

The crisis in the Great Lakes region is real, but it should not obscure some of the most hopeful news from the world's second largest continent in 40 years, nor the sources of the real problems.

Kofi Annan's first speech after his ascension to the post of United Nations secretary-general may not have been the most historic speech by a Ghanaian in New York during December. The address of Sam Jonah, chief executive of the \$2 billion mining conglomerate Ashanti Goldfields of Africa may actually do more to increase the paltry sum of \$4 billion in foreign investment that goes into Africa. Jonah, Zimbabwe's A.M. Chambati, South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa and other business leaders are increasingly becoming the new face of Africa to the outside world.

The kind of oligarchy represented by Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko and Nigeria's military regime with the attendant diversion of national wealth being put into private hands is becoming

increasingly untenable in large part because of the peer pressure of governments that are making progress in meeting the needs of their people while attracting international investment. More than 2,000 enterprises — from airlines and steel mills to glass factories and hotels — are in the process of being sold into private hands by government owners across the continent, fueling the growth of a dozen new stock markets.

The citizens of the affected countries are eager to share in the wealth creation. The initial public offering of Kenya Air attracted 200,000 individual investors. South Africa's exchange has added several new black-owned companies built from acquisitions from the large mining conglomerates brokered by the new black-majority government.

One of the impacts of the torrent of disaster news from Africa is to blind Americans to the potential markets and investment opportunities. The top five nations investing \$450 million into Mozambique last year were Portugal, South Africa, Britain, Hong Kong and the Netherlands.

African-Americans are particularly affected by the notion of Africa as a place to be ashamed of, as witnessed by the performance of some national "leaders." Dr. Leon Sullivan, whose Sullivan Principles helped turn the business screws on South African apartheid, is once again taking the initiative in turning those sentiments around with the Fourth African-American/African Summit June 20-26, 1997 in Johannesburg, South Africa and Harare, Zimbabwe. Prior to this year, the summits were held every two years. Some 47 African heads of state attended The Summit in Dakar, Senegal last May.

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Timothy Williams is a member of the Nevada & Illinois State Bar, practicing primarily in personal injury cases.

COMBINED 27 YEARS OF LEGAL EXPERIENCE

EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL INJURY CASES

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