

**Remarks by Her Excellency
Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
President of the Republic of Liberia
On the Occasion of the Observance of the 231st Independence
Anniversary of the United States of America,
Wednesday, July 4, 2007, Monrovia**

Mr. Ambassador:
Officials of Government;
Mr. Doyen and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am immensely pleased to join you at celebrations marking the 231st Independence Anniversary of the United States of America.

Mr. Ambassador:
As your great country celebrates yet another milestone in its national life, the Government and People of Liberia are delighted to wholeheartedly identify with you, mindful of the historical ties that bind our two countries and peoples.

The United States leadership role as the world's only Super Power and its promotion of democratic ideals, peace and a more stable international environment have earned the respect of many countries, including Liberia.

Liberian/American relations can not be defined only in the context of a strategic partnership but more importantly in the context of historical, religious and family linkages that bind our two countries and peoples. This is why our relations have continued to transcend administrations and individuals.

The Liberian people will never relent in continuing to foster an even closer and harmonious relationship with the American people because of our shared aspirations, values and outlook.

Liberia, like the United States, is committed to the democratic tenets of good governance, respect for fundamental human rights and the rule of law.

Liberia is particularly grateful for the numerous and immense contributions of the United States, which led to the peaceful settlement of our fourteen-year civil conflict and helped to lay the foundation for peace, security and democratic elections that culminated in my inauguration and assumption of office in January last year.

The level of United States partnership and involvement in Liberia since my Administration took office has found expressions in the participation of Mrs. Bush and Secretary of State Rice in my Inauguration and in outstanding friendship and support of President Bush himself, my State visit to the United States last year and the opportunity to hold talks with him and with Mrs. Bush on subsequent visits to the United States.

This friendship has found expression also in the bipartisan support which Liberia presently enjoys in the United States Congress. We are pleased that Mrs. Nancy Pelosi who visited Liberia last year is now the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress.

I am also pleased that;

- I was invited to address a Joint Meeting of the U.S. Congress last year, and several United States bipartisan Congressional delegations have since visited Liberia further enhancing the cooperation between our two Legislatures.

Other areas of support which Liberia enjoys from the United States includes some 340 million in fiscal year 2006/2007 including US\$95 million initiated by the US Congress to support Security Sector Reform, the DDRR Program, Health Education, Agriculture, Electricity, County Development, Port and Technical Assistance. With strong US support we are very near a debt relief package that will enable us to resolve our huge \$4 billion external debt.

-Liberia expects to shortly benefit from the United States Millennium Challenge Corporation for development assistance having met most of the benchmarks;

-our efforts to shortly benefit from forgiveness under the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC), with the strong support of the United States Government;

-the United States decision to construct a new Embassy complex at the Grey Stone premises at Mamba Point, Monrovia. We also enjoy significant support from non official sources in the US – Institutions, Foundations, Universities, Individuals, etc.

All of these, and more, are all vivid expressions and indications of the new mutually beneficial partnership that is beginning to evolve between Liberia and the United States of America. Further demonstrations of United States support for a new, progressive and democratic Liberia that we are striving to build. We welcome this partnership and continued support.

We are very encouraged by the new United States policy towards Africa's security and development as reflected in the proposed establishment of a new Africa Command (AFRICOM). My

Government sees this move not only as a projection of the United States interests and power, but as a new approach to assisting African countries that are committed to democratic governance, sustainable development and improving the quality of life of their people to do so in a secured environment and with the cooperation and support of the United States.

Liberia, the United States historic ally, has stood resolutely with the United States, through good times and bad, welcomes this new American program and offers its territory as it has done in the past, for the establishment of AFRICOM headquarters. Historical and strategic reasons make Liberia an ideal location for this important American initiative that will undoubtedly have a most beneficial effect on the West African sub-region, indeed the entire continent.

Finally, Mr. Ambassador, Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, let me assure you that Liberia will continue to offer its hand of friendship to the United States in order to forge a unique partnership that is beneficial to our two countries and peoples.

TOAST;

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this very happy occasion, please raise your glasses in a toast to President George W. Bush and the Government and People of the United States on this 231st Independence Anniversary. We pray for their continued peace, happiness and prosperity and the further strengthening of the cordial ties subsisting between our two countries and peoples.