

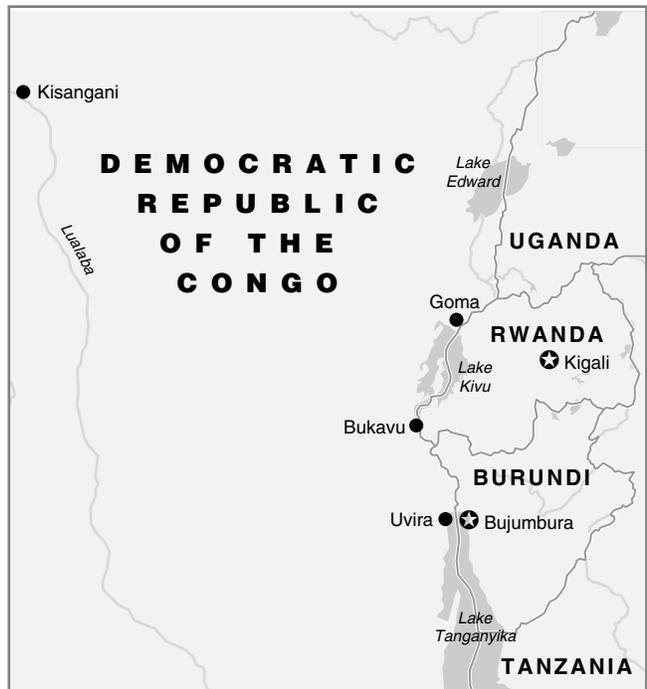
Is President Museveni Losing U.S. Support?

by Lawrence Freeman

For almost 20 years, since President Yoweri Museveni emerged from “the bush” to take dictatorial control of Uganda, he has received unwavering support from the principal Western political and financial institutions centered in the United States and the United Kingdom. At a June 2 forum in Washington, D.C., entitled, “Uganda: An African ‘Success’ Past Its Prime,” two speakers not representing any policy institution, presented detailed criticisms of the Museveni regime, for the first time in a significant public forum outside of those organized by the LaRouche movement. Although it is not yet known for certain, if this portends a major policy reorientation, at the very least it shows signs of a reversal of a decade’s long “love affair” with Museveni.

The surfacing of this “critique” caused quite a stir among

The Great Lakes Region



the overflow audience of several hundred Africa watchers, representatives from leading Washington, D.C.-based think-tanks, and numerous former U.S. ambassadors to Africa. Throughout most of the last decade, Museveni, together with Rwandan President Paul Kagame, were touted by the West as the new “Renaissance Leaders” of Africa. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth, or more of a misuse of the term Renaissance. Both have proven themselves to be dictators in their own nations, and have been complicit in the *economic genocide* of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C.) since 1998, when they began looting and tearing the fragile D.R.C. asunder, with impunity. Museveni, who was treated as the special darling of the West, was to be used as a “Marcher Lord” to divide and destroy other African nations throughout the Eastern and Central regions of Africa. John Garang’s 22-year-long campaign to dismember Sudan in a “religious-ethnic” civil war, would not have been possible without support from Museveni.

The Charges Against Museveni

Most of the charges presented against Museveni have been provided to readers of *EIR* in numerous articles over many years. These include “grand corruption” by Museveni and his family, the failure of the economy in recent years, his failure to deal with the Lord’s Resistance Army in the North, and Uganda’s stealing of gold and diamonds from the D.R.C. The two immediate points of contention given for re-examinations of whether to continue to support Museveni’s rule are: 1) his resistance to a transition to a real multi-party political system, instead of his one-party rule from 1986-2005, and 2) his attempt to overturn key amendments of the Ugandan constitution—which limit the President to only two terms—in order to continue his dictatorial, one-party rule past the March 2006 Presidential elections.

Museveni took power with his National Resistance Army (NRA) in Uganda in 1986, after waging five years of guerrilla war. Later, he transformed the NRA into the National Resistance Movement, which functions today as the only political institution allowed to carry out political activities inside Uganda. Under Museveni’s “movement”/political system, all other political parties are banned. They cannot hold meetings, rallies, or any other activity that challenges his movement.

Special Treatment for Museveni

The first foreigner to visit Museveni after he took power was Britain’s Lynda Chalker, former Minister of Overseas Development (known as the British Colonial Office), who remained his strong ally, and called him one of her favorite African leaders. That is why he was able to brag to the press, “My version of democracy has the full backing of the British and U.S. governments.” While everyone is familiar with the



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

Do the detailed criticisms of Uganda President Yoweri Museveni, which were made in a significant public forum in Washington, D.C., portend a policy shift by the principal western political and financial institutions centered in the United States and the United Kingdom, which have always backed him?

massacres that occurred in Rwanda in 1994, what most people choose to overlook, is that Museveni and Kagame prepared the groundwork for those 800,000 deaths. In October 1990, Kagame, then a member of the Ugandan Army, invaded Rwanda with support from Uganda’s military, instigating a series of events, which led to the killing of 40,000 Rwandan Hutus in February 1993, and 14 months later, the “Rwanda genocide.”

It is commonly known by Africans that Museveni enjoyed the benefits of a double standard concerning the distribution of aid, debt relief, and investment for Uganda, as well as unique public support from world leaders. While other African nations were chastised, and discriminated against for not living up to the democratic ideals set by the West, and for not practicing “good governance,” Museveni was rewarded, even while he maintained iron-clad control of the country through his one-party system. It is hardly a secret that Museveni’s strongman rule has been tacitly supported by Washington, which is why this first public critical review of his action raises interesting questions that have yet to be answered.

The obvious questions to ask are, now that Museveni’s Uganda is no longer being labelled the unique success story in Africa, what will Washington’s policy be? This question was asked at the forum, but no one could answer it. Joel Barkan, one of the speakers, accused the State Department of being in denial. “State won’t face it,” he said. The other obvious question, which was not asked, is, since the information in these revelations has been known for years, why is it brought up now?