

Strait of Hormuz, Sovereignty Bill... here is one for y'all dummies

From the escalating Middle East crisis driving up fuel prices and exposing the fragility of global power politics, to Uganda's own sovereignty battles, the country finds itself caught between external shocks and internal contradictions. As Parliament wrestled with controversial legislation, religious spectacle mingled with elite politics, luxury scandals inflamed public anger, and another presidential swearing-in unfolded. Together, these events paint a portrait of a nation navigating satire-worthy politics – a coping mechanism Ugandans have adopted.

BY ANTHONY NATIF

Strait of Hormuz

Are you facing the pain of paying through your nose to fill up your tank because fuel prices are high? Are you facing the annoyingly long waits at petrol stations that somehow still have some fuel so you can get some rationed gas? Has your boda boda guy jacked up the price per trip? Well, unless you have been living under a rock, you probably already know what the Strait of Hormuz is.

For the uninitiated, that is a waterway in the Persian Gulf that serves as a passage for at least 20 percent of global oil supply. It has been blocked for nearly two months now with no end in sight. Reason? Well, depending on who you ask, it is an imperialist, oil heist misadventure by the US and its side-kick Israel or it is a righteous fight to rid the world of potential nuclear weapons.

The latter is a point the current Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has hammered away repeatedly for the last 35 years or so; reminding all who care to listen that Iran was two weeks away from getting a nuclear weapon; for 35 years! That is so many two-week missed deadlines.

Several deaths and devastation later, there does not seem to be an end on the horizon. The US is currently stuck in a self-created Middle East rut and enduring hilarious LEGO video rap hits

that might put Eminem to shame. Diplomacy on beats? You bet! Welcome to the new era of war. It is not just Shahed Drones against F35s.

So, in this Middle East bloody rendezvous, the US partners, Israel's goals seem markedly different than the Americans'. Their timelines also seem ill-defined. They want total Iranian annihilation and are counting on the US to help them deliver it because their hands seem filled with concurrent bombing campaigns in Gaza and Lebanon. Must be tough being them. Eh!

Anyway, The Whitehouse has gone ahead and initiated peace talks with Iran but like normal courtship misadventures, they were left on read. For a week. News reports indicate that President Trump waited on a response to a peace memorandum sent to Iran for a while but it was not forthcoming. This is basically a proposal to talk about a proposal to end the war.

When the response came, it had more demands; including control of the previously open and free Strait of Hormuz as well as reparations for the damage caused to Iran and complete lifting of sanctions.

The US President went to his own social media site, Truth Social to express his frustration. The name Truth Social itself elicits a chuckle because the platform's owner, is not particularly known for telling the truth.

He posted on Truth Social that he

I will save you the details of the drone show from the night before. But it looks like there is an intellectual property lawsuit coming from some individuals who say that was their idea

that was stolen and monetised by mafias closer to power.

had "just read a response from Iran's so called "representatives". I do not like it".

The double quote on "representatives" being instructive in that the US is not quite clear on who runs the show in Iran; having killed most of their leaders in a joint campaign with Israel that they called decapitation.

Closer to home, you might be best advised to tighten your budgetary seatbelts because the price of fuel is not about to go down.

Or if you are so inclined, you might want to follow our President's advice to stay home if the price of fuel is high. What are you doing moving out of home anyway? It is not like you have to work and earn a living or any such crazy stuff.

The Sovereignty Bill

Given how fast Ugandans have moved on from this chaos, it is very difficult to convince someone that just last week, the country was on tenter-

hooks over who was and who was not a citizen, as informed by the amount and purpose of money sent back home.

See, the country is run by a President who grew his political teeth in the '60s and '70s. He knows a lot more about the western empire's meddling ways than, perhaps, any East African currently breathing. It surprised no one that following what seemed like foreign influence operations aimed at driving up dissent in the politics of Uganda, the son of Amos Kaguta responded with a law meant to cut out some of the very advantages he exploited on his way to the presidential throne in the 80s.

The President wrote in his book, *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, that CIA operatives indeed helped him and his family back when he was mounting an eventually successful fight for the throne. All to say that if anyone recognises the danger of foreign influence in global south affairs, it is certainly him.

His opponents have also read the book and of course the empire's playbook has not changed. The President thinks his detractors are funded by the west to destabilise the country and perhaps even overthrow him through using a variety of underhanded means, including using ubiquitous online tools to rile up the masses. His government responded like cancer doctors who kill the cancer by starving it of blood supply? Except the medicine turned out too strong for the disease.

The President's opponents said this was the political equivalent of getting to the top and then yanking away the ladder. The government pushed a Bill through parliament that sought to essentially limit the amount of money sent to Uganda without the approval of the minister of Internal Affairs to Shs400m.

That was eyebrow raising in and of itself but the punch was in the penalties that came with receiving this foreign funding.

The Bill risked snatching the citizenship of diaspora Ugandans away. It

risked destroying the financial architecture of the economic engine running the country. Unsurprisingly, it was up in arms. Celebrated lawyers like Phillip Karugaba, Kiryowa Kwanuka, the Attorney General etc spoke at the sides of the fight.

Then the Governor Bank of Uganda stepped to the plate and basically painted a doomsday economic scenario. If you followed his speech, you might have seen more chaos predicted than Armageddon.

News cycles went into overdrive day or so later, up stepped the President to decry the overreaching provisions of the Bill. Riding in on his saviour moment the President said the Bill before Parliament was markedly different from what his Cabinet cleared and lambasted whoever inserted provisions that would fly in the face of Uganda as a country whose economy is as free market as it can get.

Shockwaves swept through the Twitterverse. People wondered how the same government he leads could have altered the Bill so significantly as to render it draconian. If his speech was an act – and I have no reason to believe it was – hand the man an Oscar already.

Fast forward, the Bill was reworked, debated with some minor skirmishes, compete with threats of punches and then passed by Parliament as the very last legislative business.

As is this ever schizophrenic news cycle, we barely had time to breathe before we were quickly off to Pr Robert Kayanja and his trip to Florida.

Pr Kayanja's trip to Florida

Pastor Robert Kayanja made a trip to Florida to visit President Trump at his Mar-a-Lago place in Palm Beach.

The man of God or is it "Gad" called it an honour and shared endless selfies and videos with his beautiful wife, Jessica. Except the host himself was not there. It later turned out, at least

