

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of the latest local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office as of:

Thursday, August 12, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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Independent Observer

Thursday August 12, 2004

LETTER

A Case For Gibril Massaquoi

Responding To Independent Observer Of 5th August 2004 Publication On "Gibril Massaquoi To Be Granted Asylum"

I write to respond on two issues under the caption "Gibril Massaquoi To Be Granted Asylum in Canada".

Firstly, Independent Observer must not learn bad journalism. They never spoke with David Crane to know why he was not indicted or to even know from him whether he was a witness or not. They could have again assisted Mr. Crane to bring evidences against him if they wanted him to be charged.

Secondly, the ex-combatant without name and proper address in Kono whom they alleged was with him and revealed how he led troops to attack Kambia and abducted scores of school children and conscripted into rebel army, about 50 civilians killed and Catholic nuns raped, were all misleading. This ex-combatant should have given himself to the Special Court to prosecute him. The truth of the matter is, January 25th 1995 Komba Gbundema, who was the military operations commander of the target where Massaquoi was Intelligent Officer (I.O) led the attack successfully. He was then instructed to hand over the nuns to Massaquoi to be taken to Zogoda where Sankoh was but the nuns were weak after walking for several days. They stayed at the base near River Rokel in Port Loko District till Sankoh negotiated with Bishop Biguzi for their release through him after he persistently complained to Sankoh about the ill health of some of the seven nuns. Massaquoi himself spoke to Bishop Biguzi on the latter days of their release on H F radio. I was present during the attack as an (I.O) personnel and only few civilians were killed due to cross fire between the N.P.R.C troops led by

Major Foday Kamara and R.U.F. and not 50 civilians as alleged. The nuns were never raped as Independent Observer wrote. Bishop Biguzi will prove that the only complains he received from them were that they were searched by rebel vanguard call Krio Mamie and others and then they were brought down to Madina on the Lunsar Makeni highway by one Lt Oldso and handed over to the Bishop after spending more than a month in the camp. These were never done by Massaquoi. Infact he facilitated their speedy release. The attack itself did not fall within the time frame of the Special Court.

Thirdly, the school children abducted from the attack were handed over to Captain Ajamie by them for training and then to Mohamed Tarawally alias Zeno for some months while others were taken to Zogoda by Zeno to Sankoh. Massaquoi had no hands in all of these. He in fact assisted some of them by taking the telephone numbers of some of their parents and communicated to them that they were alive while in Abidjan - La Cote D'Ivoire.

The same thing happened in march 1999 when Sylvester Rogers of the BBC reported that Massquoi led troop to Kambia which was again Gbundema and his men; Massaquoi by then was just freed from Pademba Road Prisons and was undergoing treatment at Lunsar and had no hands in RUF military operations.

Fourthly, he never teamed up with con men to rob Issa of US \$ 120,000 on pretext of the men having vehicle at port waiting to be cleared. The truth of the matter is with all the diamonds and money, Sesay alone had in possession, he involved himself in money doubling as he wanted to be rich more and more. It was not Massaquoi who brought the people but himself sending one Pa Sinneh from Makeni to Freetown to bring them. He gave the people diamonds, his own gold chains from his neck and over US \$ 40,000 to be doubled and in the

process they ran away. Massaquoi was only involved to trace his vehicle (Tracker Jeep) which Sesay took from him and gave them to be using while he went to Kono and returned to Makeni in three days.

The eight boxes the people (Kubasah and Alhaji Pepper and team) alleged were full of US dollars were loaded in Sesay's vehicle from their place to Sesay's house driven by Sesay on the pretext that he must start using the money in the boxes the next morning, the people ran away that very night. The next morning only white papers shaped with equal length of US \$100 bills were loaded in the boxes after they were opened. In fact Sesay told Massaquoi that while he came to Freetown to make the report he should not mention his name nor link him with money doubling. Massaquoi had no pressure as alleged. He came to Freetown and made the report and then returned all by himself. The only time Massaquoi had problems with Sesay was when some combatants in the Tongo field axis held a meeting and invited him, during which they explained to him about the way they continue to mine diamonds and turn it over to Sesay through his mines officers in Tongo but could not even have food to eat and things to wear, let alone medical treatment except they have to beg the U N troops stationed there.

Sesay's body guards reported to him that he was inciting the men against his mining policies. Upon his return to Makeni he was attacked on the issue and he and Sesay argued and resolved it before he left Makeni with U N helicopter to Freetown along with Adeniji a week after. It is better for Independent Observer to get the names, and correct addresses of those giving information and then cross-check or get the other side of the story before publication in order to have balance reports. Finally, even if Massaquoi may be a witness as they claim, who is Independent Observer to determine whether a witness is credible or not? Are you the judge of Special Court? If Independent Observer knows who bears the greatest responsibility than Crane and team, let them apply to U N to replace their team. I stayed with Massaquoi since 1994 on to 2002 when the war finally ended.

Moses Kanneh
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[✉ Email this document](#)**Source:** Pan African News Agency**Date:** 11 Aug 2004

Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission report due 30 August

Freetown, Sierra Leone (PANA) - The final report of Sierra Leone's post-war Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) would be released next 30 August, chairman Bishop Joseph Humper affirmed Tuesday at a briefing with President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

State radio quoted Humper as saying publication of the report was contracted to a Ghanaian firm soon after the TRC officially closed office last 31 March.

He said it was agreed with the Ghanaian printers that the report would be ready by 30 August.

The publication would include 2,000 CD-ROM copies, in addition to a pictorial and 90-minute video version adapted for the appreciation of children.

Humper said the report's recommendations cover every facet of the life of the nation.

He said the commission was confident that the result of its work would promote healing and reconciliation, peace and justice, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, reintegration and socio-economic development in Sierra Leone.

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Awoko

Thursday August 12, 2004

Amputees to demonstrate

By Tamba Borbor

The Acting Vice Chairman of the War-affected Amputees Association- Mr. Sieh

Mansaray has disclosed that they would soon embark on a demonstrating express their displeasure about the manner in which

the Government is treating them. According to him, they have been completely abandoned by the

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From Front Page

Government hence their going without food supplies for over four months now. "The World Food Programme (WFP) through which we were been fed has left this country and up till now the Government has not put in place mechanisms for our feeding." Mr. Mansaray went on to catalogue the areas in which they have not been fairly treated including the urgent intention of the Lands, Town, Country Planning and the Environment Ministry to demolish the camp where they presently reside. "We are not refusing to leave the camp but NaCSA is the body responsible for our repatriation to the different regions in the provinces: a

task which they have not completed hence the reason why some people are still residing in the camp here at Aberdeen," the Acting Chairman said; adding that one Ken Moore from the Lands Ministry visited them recently disclosing that they plan demolishing the camp and was there to discuss the issue with them. "We were so surprised thinking of the fact that NaCSA has not yet told us how and when we are going to be repatriated and how we would be fed," Mr. Sieh Mansaray said. Furthermore, he maintained that their children's education, the Government has neglected health and welfare and as a result

they have to resort to begging amidst all the consequences from that act. He recalled that when the war just ended, the Government showed enormous concern for them as they had lost their arms and limbs, which he emphasized, are very vital for them to fend for themselves. Mr. Mansaray lamented, "we go out begging just to cater for our children's education and feeding and people laugh at us and say we are beggars. We did not instruct those who cut off our hands and limbs to do so nor are we happy about our present condition." He urged that Government do something quick to cushion the bad condition in which they presently live.

Life returning to Liberia, UN special envoy says one year after Taylor exile

Source: Agence France-Presse English Wire Date: August 11, 2004

by Lauren Gelfand

DAKAR, Aug 11 (AFP) - Life as it once was is returning, albeit slowly, to Liberia after 14 years of conflict, the UN special envoy to the west African state Jacques Klein, told AFP in an interview to mark the one-year anniversary of former president Charles Taylor's flight into exile.

But a failure by the international community to make good on pledges to rebuild the shattered state, Africa's oldest independent republic, risks sending Liberia teetering back into oblivion, potentially taking the rest of west Africa with it.

"Looking back on my arrival one year ago, my God, it is a total climate change in terms of security," Klein told AFP by telephone from Monrovia.

"There are nice things truly happening; we know what the real problems are and are facing them and are counting on donors to step up and fulfill their pledges."

One of the greatest successes of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) according to Klein, a US diplomat and former air force general, has been the disarmament and reintegration process for fighters who carried weapons for the three warring factions in the war that raged from 1999 until August last year.

"We have disarmed, basically, some 65,121 combatants, collected five million rounds of ammunition and 19,000 large weapons," he said.

"Who else has disarmed 65,000 people in five months, and collected five million rounds? That is twice as much as was done in Sierra Leone," Liberia's western neighbor which itself emerged from a decade of war in 2001.

But the discrepancy between the number of combatants -- among them women and children who served as cooks or porters and did not carry arms -- and the number of weapons has been jarring to some, especially amid reports that guns are being smuggled over Liberia's borders into hotspots Ivory Coast and Guinea.

"Look, you have to assume that in Liberia there were three weapons per combatant and I have heard the rumors, too, that there are weapons and people going over the borders," he said.

"That does not mean that there are no weapons left, or that we will not find them. But it will take time."

What is taking too much time, according to Klein, is the fulfillment of donor pledges for Liberia's reconstruction.

Some 560 million dollars were promised in February over two years by donors led by the United States, but five months later, the vast majority of UN agencies operating in Liberia are cash-strapped and facing the unpleasant prospect of cutting programs.

"We simply do not have the money," Klein said, pointing to the World Food Program, which feeds 600,000 Liberians per day but may have to reduce calorie counts in October without an injection of funds.

"We are out there beating the drum with donors, realizing that Sudan is out there, competing for time and attention, but we have come so far in such a short time that it would be a shame to not get those funds."

Liberia's government, composed of representatives from the three warring factions is not helping itself any, Klein said, with infighting both in the halls of government and in the streets scaring off potential donors.

"That factional infighting is undermining our credibility abroad, it is saying to donors that Liberia is still unstable, the government is not united," he said.

"The thing is, if Liberia is not stable, the rest of west Africa is unstable. And the other thing is, this is the last chance for Liberia -- it has captured international interest and has been promised international funding. If they lose this chance, it's all over."

Liberia celebrates year without Taylor, though prosperity still elusive

Source: Agence France-Presse English Wire Date: August 11, 2004

by Zoom Dosso

MONROVIA, Aug 11 (AFP) - Annie Barclay sits on a worn straw mat in her tiny kitchen in the Liberian capital Monrovia, preparing the meagre meal she will share with her husband who has arrived home exhausted from his day of work.

"It is true that we are facing difficulties to get food because of the increase of prices in the market, but what is essential is that we are not obliged to run into the bush and sleep under the rain," she says smiling, though her brow is creased with fatigue and worry.

Much has changed in Liberia since last August 11, when Charles Taylor, facing defeat at the hands of rebels besieging Monrovia, yielded to international pressure and took exile in Nigeria, ushering in the first peace in the west African country in over a decade.

Where there were marauding bands of rifle-toting rebels clad in garish masks and outlandish costumes, there are now legions of blue-helmeted peacekeepers from around the globe.

The government in name only under Taylor, a warlord whose reign of terror spared few around the troubled region, has been replaced with a transitional administration led by a businessman that is to lay groundwork for elections in October next year.

"There is a total climate change in terms of security from one year ago," said UN special envoy Jacques Klein, who directs some 15,000 peacekeepers under the UN Mission in Liberia responsible for disarmament and rehabilitation of some 65,000 former combatants, voter registration and the return of Liberia's refugees.

But though there is a nascent peace in Liberia, there have been few signs of prosperity for the country of some three million people, most of whom spend their days idle.

In-fighting within Liberia's power-sharing government has spilled into the streets, compounded by rumors of corruption, nepotism and theft that have worked to scare off donors from fulfilling pledges of badly-needed aid.

"Don't think because the guns are silent, that everything is fine," said civil servant Charles Baryogar.

"The same problems that brought the war, the problems that made us vomit over Taylor, are still existing with this government."

Most of the coastal state's roads are impassable, pitted by potholes born from driving rain or exploding mortars. Only parts of the capital Monrovia have electricity, and hospitals and schools nationwide remain bare of even essential supplies.

Once fertile farmland has turned dry and barren, as Liberia's breadbasket counties of Lofa and Grand Gedeh were among the hardest-hit by the years of conflict that claimed an estimated 200,000 lives and made refugees of nearly one million more, both in Liberia and around the region.

For those who remain, Liberia's staggering unemployment, cresting above 80 percent, has turned Africa's oldest independent republic into a nation of citizens who rely on handouts from the raft of aid organizations who have arrived since last year.

"Look around you; notice that government officials are riding in luxurious cars and are being guarded by UNMIL soldiers, while the police don't have cars to protect the people," said Frankie Cassell, a chemistry professor at the newly-reopened Liberian National University.

"Where are the electricity and the water they promised us?" asked Cassell.
"(Transitional chairman) Gyude Bryant promised us that prices of rice and gasoline were going to drop, but it is the opposite now."

Mounting prices on staples such as rice and petroleum have only compounded the misery in a country that danced with joy when the first Nigerian peacekeepers arrived on August 4 last year to end their plight.

Taylor stepped down on August 11 and a peace deal was signed a week later in the Ghanaian capital Accra.

"Government officials only think of themselves," said taxi driver Francis Kollie.

"Is it not for the same reason they took up guns against Charles Taylor?"



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Liberians Mark First Anniversary of Taylor's Exile

Carrie Giardino

Abidjan

11 Aug 2004, 15:24 UTC



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AP

Liberians are celebrating the first anniversary of former president Charles Taylor's flight into exile, which effectively ended the two-decade civil war in the west African nation.

Liberian citizens gathered Wednesday, to celebrate what is being termed a year of peace on the anniversary of Mr. Taylor's exile to Nigeria.

A former commander of the rebel faction, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, General Joe Wylie says the feeling is mixed because, while Liberians are happy that Mr. Taylor has left, the memories of the civil war linger.

Liberian President Charles Taylor leaves Roberts International Airport August 11, 2003

"I think Liberia, one year after Taylor, is better today than where we were last year by this time," he said. "Last year by this time, people were running helter skelter. People were being killed. People were hungry. Children were crying in

the rain and now, today, people are rebuilding schools. Children are in schools. Of course, we haven't gotten back to our pre-war status of normalcy yet. But at least there is a light at the end of the tunnel that we are seeing and we are going to run and go after that light. We don't want to go back into the past."

More than 1,000 rebels from General Wylie's former faction have refused to disarm and have taken over Liberia's second largest rubber plantation. General Wylie says training the former combatants to be rehabilitated and reintegrated into society is key to maintaining peace in the nation.

Although more than 50,000 fighters have gone through a U.N. disarmament process, less than half have handed over actual weapons.

A former commander with the Movement for Democracy in Liberia, General Boi Blehju Boi says people are beginning to rebuild their lives but the transitional government needs to honor its promises.

"The improvements on electricity and water have not yet commenced. We were told since the sitting of the government that electricity and water would be revitalized but up to now people are still buying their own generators and we are drinking from wells and other mineral water from shops and supermarkets," he said.

Mr. Taylor now lives in the southeastern Nigerian town of Calabar. A U.N.-backed court in Sierra Leone has indicted him for war crimes, but Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has refused to violate his commitment to grant Mr. Taylor asylum. General Boi says Mr. Taylor should go to Sierra Leone and defend himself against the charges levied against him.



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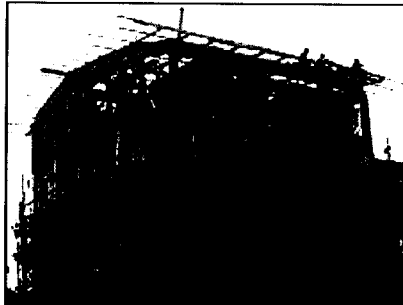
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Liberia a year after Charles Taylor

By Jonathan Paye-Layleh

BBC correspondent in Monrovia

Calm has now returned to the capital, Monrovia, and most of Liberia, one year after Charles Taylor stepped down from the presidency and took exile in Nigeria.



There is building work going on across the city

Mr Taylor's departure has not only silenced the guns and ensured the free movement of people, it has also given confidence to Liberians either to return home or resume enterprises.

"We now see reason to restart our lives and put our money into business activities," said Boima Folley, who sells sports goods at a stall in central Monrovia.

Market stalls now sprawl across Monrovia and in places which until recently were no-go areas.

Mr Folley said his goods were looted and he had to flee for his life during attacks on Monrovia last year.

"Police troops came and raided our businesses, sabotaging our activities. They looted everything," he said.



“ Charles Taylor left with everything but corruption ”

"With the peace we now enjoy, I have hustled to restart, but besides God, there is no support for me," he added.

The building of houses and hotels seems to be happening all over the capital, leaving the single cement-producing company in the country hard pushed to meet demand.

Monrovia resident James Clinton

But whilst peace has returned to most of the war-torn nation after 14 years of bloodletting, the transitional government has still not been able to restore basic social services - like light and water - and the vices that prompted the war are still visible.

"Charles Taylor left with everything but corruption," said James Clinton, a Monrovia resident.

"Those who came to correct the ills are themselves far ahead

in the practice of corruption, this is sad. It makes me to not want to hear about revolution anymore," he said.

Police

Meanwhile, the training by the United Nations of a post-conflict police force, to replace the heavily discredited war-time one, appears to be going well.

In a Monrovia suburb, the first batch of around 150 recruits are in training for 10 months, said UN police trainer Scott Anderson.



Businesses are springing up

"It is an opportunity to bring people together to use the best police practices that we know from many nations - to put together very competent, strong ethical components into the Liberian police service," he said.

The course is tough and the issue of discipline is not taken lightly.

But Liberians, who have suffered police brutalities in the past, are keen to see a new kind of force.

"We want a police force that we can run to and not run from," said James Teah, a schoolteacher.

One female recruit said they were out to be just that.

"Liberians can count on us undergoing the training - especially us ladies - because we are prepared to make the difference."

About 3,500 police troops are expected to be trained to take over Liberia once a new government is inaugurated in January 2006.

Peacekeepers

In the meantime, people are slowly returning to rebuild their lives in rural areas which were once under the control of rebels and are now under the protection of the world's largest UN peacekeeping force.

No Liberian provincial town changed hands between warring parties more often than Tubmanburg - some 60km north-west of Monrovia, and it was used as the base by Lurd rebels for their assaults on the capital last year.



The hospital has treated thousands of patients

one drives through the town; buildings are pock-marked and have lost their roofs.

But one year on, hundreds of residents are returning thanks to the deployment of Pakistani United Nations troops in the town.

"We can only tell God, thank you. We hope Tubmanburg will be like before," said Sia James, a middle-aged woman sitting beside her goods in a roadside makeshift selling stall.

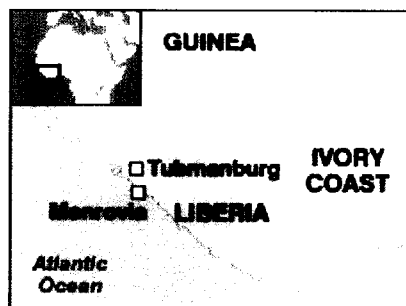
"We want help from the government; we want to get our lives back together."

Former Lurd rebels, who controlled the town up to the start of disarmament in December last year, are still visible, which means frequent confrontations between the ex-combatants and locals, but things are improving.

South-west of the city centre 17 Pakistani doctors work at the Liberia Government Hospital - a 50-bed hospital - and the largest of about five health facilities that the Pakistani contingent run.

Since December last year, the soldiers have treated close to 48,000 locals who, until the troops deployed, were trapped in war affected places in the northwest.

It still treats hundreds of people a day and local residents are amazed at the quality of the treatment and availability of basic drugs.



Lieutenant-Colonel Khalid Asid urges other peacekeeping contingents serving in the country to "join us in helping the people of Liberia" in trying to rebuild their lives and their country's shattered infrastructure.

"We must compete with one another in doing good things," he said.

There is much still to do.

Send us your experiences. What is going well and badly in Liberia since Charles Taylor's departure? A selection of your emails will be published below.

Taylor's acceptance of exile in Nigeria marked a significant departure from the stupid rhetoric of the former Doe regime to fight to the last soldier. Every well meaning Liberian must now rise to the enormous challenge of rebuilding not only the flattened infrastructure, but also the unity of our people and the restoration of the rule of law. Peace and democracy are truly realizable goals in Liberia finally.

Alex Quermorllue, Milford, PA. USA

The rusty AK-47s have been silenced and commerce and industry are gradually picking up. Schools including the University of Liberia, and hospitals are operating. But there are still enormous hurdles to be overcome. Disarmament is yet to be carried out in strategic counties like Lofa, Nimba and Sinoe. While militia elements continue to cause problems for rural dwellers. Central government authority is yet to be felt in most areas outside of Monrovia. The most frustrating issues are the rift within Lurd and the level of corruption in government

Jenkins Vangehn, Monrovia, Liberia

Taylor departure was a good step for lasting peace in the region, and thanks to all foreign governments that made this possible. Since his departure, corruption is still high and that is what we need to work on now!

Joseph Yarsiah, Monrovia, Liberia

The slow pace of the peacekeepers deployment in other parts of the country is worrisome. Most parts of the country are still under rebel administration. The transitional government's presence is only in Monrovia and its environs. Like the Taylor regime, I'm of the view that the organisation of the government at the local level will not be completed before the election.

Kemo George Sheriff, Kamatahun, Liberia

I really do not think that peace is now in Liberia. It may be in Monrovia, but not in Liberia as a whole. Let all of the rebels put down their arms and join the peace process in Liberia, and secondly, let the govt stop the corruption, cos the poor masses are still suffering. Only when this is done can we be assured of peace.

Gabriel Samson, Lagos, Nigeria

I personally would encourage Liberians abroad to work hard in order to accumulate substantial initial capital to invest in Liberia. There are a lot of business opportunities in Liberia. We should not depend on Lebanese and foreigners to be our only proprietors in our beloved country. Let us take the lead in investing in Liberia that shall result in creating tremendous jobs and opportunities for our people.

Abe Sasser, Jr., New York, USA

BBC Monitoring International Reports August 11, 2004

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BBC Monitoring International Reports

August 11, 2004

LENGTH: 1927 words

HEADLINE: BBC MONITORING QUOTES FROM THE AFRICAN PRESS 11 AUGUST

BODY:

The following is a selection of quotes from editorials and other material published in the 11 August editions of the African press. As indicated, some material from 10 August is also included. Unless otherwise stated, the newspapers are published in English.

Demise of South Africa's apartheid-era party "extraordinary"

South Africa's Star (independent daily): "The demise of the New National Party (NNP, apartheid-era ruling party) may not be lamented by many, but it is an extraordinary event in the political evolution of this country. We should not underestimate its significance." (Editorial - "From ruling party to zilch")

South Africa's Business Day (independent): "What chance do the ragtag remnants of the NNP have? Frankly, none. They should be grateful that the NNP will never again be in a position to betray them." (Editorial on 10 August - "Decline and fall")

End of SAfrica's NNP party marks "victory of good over evil"

Botswana's Mmegi (independent daily): "The (New) National Party's major brainchild, apartheid, stands alongside the slave trade, the Nazi concentration camps, and Rwanda (genocide) as some of the worst crimes imaginable that the human race ever committed against its own. It is poignant that the death of a party that caused so much misery and pain comes about - not because the new government outlawed it, but because the voters condemned it for its sins." (Editorial on 10 August - "The triumph of good over evil")

2. "The demise of the National Party is a fitting moment to pay tribute, once again, to those who stood up to the might of the apartheid regime..." (From above editorial)

3. "The end of the National Party represents the final victory of good over evil. It is very ironic that the party's members now seek a new political home in the same organization that they sought to obliterate by outlawing it for 30 years, and hunting and killing its leaders and activists. The beauty of it all is that the persecuted bear rancour against the persecutor." (From above editorial)

South African government policies "based on race"

South Africa's Business Day (independent): "What can hardly be gainsaid is that, 10 years into the post-apartheid era, government requirements based on race have become pervasive. Race...explains aspects of foreign policy, among them government's backing of President Robert Mugabe and its sympathy for the former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand

Aristide." (Commentary on 10 August by Kane Berman - "Ten years on, race is the pervasive criterion in South Africa")

South African minister rapped over terror views

South Africa's Business Day (independent): "When (South Africa's) Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Aziz Pahad says 'anybody who has any sense would know that South Africa has taken consistently correct positions on issues like the Middle East and the war on Iraq', he demonstrates the depth of his naivety... With this idiotic statement he gives credence to a view that if you are 'good' like South Africa you should not be attacked, but if you are 'bad' and support the US, a Western way of life or, heaven forbid, Israel, not only could you be a target but that the terrorists have a good reason to make you one." (Commentary on 10 August by Sydney Kaye - "Pahad's world")

Pakistan "has a central role" in anti-terror war

South Africa's Business Day (independent): "...It (Pakistan) sits at an extraordinarily important juncture in geopolitical and economic terms... Not many would disagree Pakistan has a central role in the war on terrorism, as recent warnings from Pakistan about Al-Qa'idah's US intentions illustrate." (Commentary on 10 August by Greg Mills - "A link to the east worth forging")

Al-Jazeera is "an independent and credible voice"

South Africa's Star (independent daily): "We agree that the media have to exercise caution when reporting on volatile and politically sensitive conflict areas. However, banning Al-Jazeera is akin to controlling information coming from Iraq. Al-Jazeera is known as a fierce and critical voice regarding an international event that is dominated by the 'same' views." (Editorial - "Al-Jazeera needed")

2. "...The world cannot afford to depend solely on networks that find themselves embedded with the victors. To offer some counterbalance, there must be another source offering its interpretation of what is happening. To the Arab world, Al-Jazeera is an alternative, independent and credible voice." (From above editorial)

3. "(Iraq's interim Premier Iyad) Allawi is surely cementing perceptions that he is an American voice speaking Arabic." (From above editorial)

Al-Jazeera not to blame for Iraqi violence

Zambia's Post (opposition): "The closure of Al-Jazeera's Baghdad bureau is a clear demonstration of the US hypocrisy on issues of liberties and human rights. Accusing Al-Jazeera, along with other Arabic language satellite channels, of 'incitement' and hiding behind media freedoms doesn't make sense in the light of what is happening on the ground." (Editorial on 10 August - "Champions of freedom curtail press freedom")

2. "The violence in Iraq is not being caused by Al-Jazeera's coverage. It is a consequence of the endless war that the US initiated in Iraq against the advice even some of its allies. Al-Jazeera is merely reporting what the US and its agents in Iraq would not want the Iraqi people and the world to know." (From above editorial)

3. "The closure of Al-Jazeera is totally unjustified and is contrary to pledges made by the interim Iraqi government to start a new era of free speech and openness. The shutdown is unwise and it should be denounced by all who cherish press freedom because it restrains freedom of the press. It's regrettable and we believe it's not justifiable. This latest decision runs contrary to all the promises made by Iraqi authorities concerning freedom of expression

and freedom of the press." (From above editorial)

Africans blamed for continent's problems

Nigeria's This Day (Lagos-based independent with significant readership in the north): "The rampant corruption, policy inconsistency, poor economic management, and political instability that are at the root of the continent's economic problems, including capital flight, are not the sort of problems that a Blair can solve for Africans, even if he is well-meaning." (Editorial on 10 August - Africa's capital flight)

Industrialized North lauded over trade concessions

Nigeria's Daily Independent: "To the industrialized North that has yielded unconditionally to the demands for trade reforms, commendation is due, essentially for demonstrating the virtue of principled compromise and for its inclination to extend material prosperity to less developed countries." Editorial - "WTO: New dawn for world trade")

Kenyan government censured over Iraq hostages

Kenya's Times (published by former ruling KANU party): "...The government, determined to bask in all glory in the event that something positive happens (over Kenyans kidnapped in Iraq), is not acting in very good faith. She is alleged to be trying to dissuade Supkem (Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims from visiting Iraq) and placing all sorts of obstacles in the paths of all those trying to solve the problem. This is abhorrent and unbecoming conduct for a government that has lied and lied, first by claiming she had sent an envoy to negotiate when it began last month." (Editorial - "Hostages: Who will believe Mwakwere?")

2. "Let the president come out and talk on this matter and ensure that all those trying to help are facilitated, not distracted or subverted." (From above editorial)

Kenyan president rapped over leadership style

Kenya's Times (published by former ruling KANU party): "... (President) Kibaki...has not failed to disappoint, given the manner in which he has handled the transition. It appears that all he ever wanted was to become president of this country, never to change the things he shouted loudly against while in the opposition." (Editorial - "Over to you returning exiles")

2. "Matter of fact, the liberties we enjoy today have been with us for over a decade. Kibaki has not added much to it." (From above editorial)

Special courts urged to try Nigeria's voodoo priests

Nigeria's Guardian (Lagos-based, widely-read independent, aimed at upmarket readership): "...The federal government through the attorney-general should consider the establishment of a **special court** to try these priests (arrested over voodoo killings in southeastern Nigeria). Trials in a normal court will be delayed and acquittals shall result." (Commentary by Banjo Odutola - "Voodoo Anambra, voodoo Nigeria")

Nigerian voodoo shrines "reeking of barbarism"

Nigeria's Guardian (Lagos-based, widely-read independent, aimed at upmarket readership): "There is no sense in which the doctrine of cultural relativism will excuse the gory spectacle that was exposed at the Okija shrines. The scene was simply abhorrent, reeking of barbarism, if not cannibalism." (Commentary by Kingsley Osadolor - "Okija shrines as Otokoto Chapter 2")

2. "It would be an error to assume that the shame of the Okija shrines is an embarrassment only to the indigenes of Anambra State, or for that matter Igbos (dominant tribe in southeastern Nigeria) in general. The horror of the Okija shrines compounds our national image crisis, because Okija reveals yet another paradox, in addition to those of our being such a rich country yet with poverty everywhere; of our being the happiest people in the world, yet we are ever so angry." (From above commentary)

Zimbabwean army warned against "dangerous imperialist efforts"

Zimbabwe's Herald (govt daily): "...The defence forces must take heed of yesterday's warning by President Mugabe, who is the commander-in-chief of the ZDF (Zimbabwe Defence Forces), that as the country enjoys the prevailing peace 'we should remain vigilant and wary of increasingly desperate and dangerous imperialist efforts to destabilize our nation'. Indeed, the important job of safeguarding our sovereignty and territorial integrity largely rests on the shoulders of the defence forces that must always maintain a high level of preparedness." (Editorial - "Defence forces doing commendable job")

UN envoy in Cote d'Ivoire accused of "stupidity"

Cote d'Ivoire's Ivoirealites.net (French-language pro-government online paper): "One thing is sure, this man (Albert Tevoedjre, UN special envoy to Cote d'Ivoire) bothers Ivorians tremendously, because they have not understood his true intentions since he arrived in Cote d'Ivoire. With the Accra III accords, he reached new heights of stupidity." (Commentary on 10 August by Bernard Richelieu - "Propensity to splash himself all over the press: Albert Tevoedjre scolded by his peers on the follow-up committee")

IMF blamed for Zambia's economic woes

Zambia's Post (opposition): "It is public knowledge that the IMF and the World Bank make the economic policy decisions and lets the Zambian government and our politicians bear the political costs of these decisions. This is certainly not the path to economic independence." (Editorial on 10 August - "We are headed for calvary")

Peacekeeping "becoming a growth industry" in west Africa

Sierra Leone's Concord Times (independent daily): "Peacekeeping in west Africa, in other words, is becoming a growth industry. This should not be allowed to happen." (Commentary on 10 August by Lansana Gberie - "Liberia: Peace at last?")

Sources: As listed

) BBC Monitoring

JOURNAL-CODE: WBMS

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Disease outbreak at Darfur camp

UN medical experts in the western Sudanese region of Darfur have expressed concern over an outbreak of Hepatitis E which has killed 22 people.



The UN fears a lack of security will prevent refugees returning home

A doctor working for the UN Population Fund, Henia Dakkak, told the BBC the disease was spreading quickly because of poor sanitation in the camps.

Ms Dakkak said pregnant women were most at risk of infection.

About a million black Africans have been driven from their homes in Darfur, mostly by pro-government Arab militias.

The Sudanese government denies any involvement in atrocities, saying it is trying to improve security in the region.

But on Wednesday UN special envoy to Sudan Jan Pronk urged the government to do more to end the 18-month conflict.

"I don't see a voluntary return of more than one million displaced people to their villages to start in the next three weeks because of lack of security," he said.

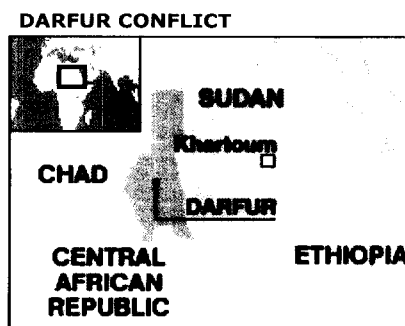
The UN Security Council last month approved a resolution urging Sudan to put a stop to the violence by the end of August.

Disease 'will spread'

Ms Dakkak said the Hepatitis E outbreak was being exacerbated by the fact that sanitary conditions in the refugee camps were sub-standard, with people receiving less than two litres of water per day each.

She described the situation as "alarming", and said the disease was likely to spread very quickly.

More money was needed from international donors to get supplies to the camps and carry out water chlorination, she said, adding that the situation was no better across



the border in Chad, where many of the refugees have fled.

A senior UNHCR official, Jean-Marie Fakhouri, is due to visit camps in eastern Chad on Thursday.

1m displaced
Up to 50,000 killed
More at risk from disease and starvation
Arab militias accused of ethnic cleansing
Sudan blames rebels for starting conflict

Text: UN Darfur agreement

Many refugees there are without adequate shelter and roads have been closed as a result of recent heavy rains.

Humanitarian relief supplies are unable to reach the biggest camp, Breidjing.

UN plan

The government says it has sent thousands of extra troops to Darfur in an effort to rein in militiamen and protect civilians.

But the report by the US-based Human Rights Watch says the militias are still attacking civilians.

The document give details of incidents said to have taken place in July.

It also accuses the government of incorporating militia fighters into the police and other state security forces.

Last week, Sudan and the UN agreed on a plan to tackle the crisis, which included setting up safe areas around certain towns and villages.

A UNHCR spokesman in Geneva said many people had been shot by Janjaweed raiders after returning to their villages.



William Hughes is a Baltimore attorney and the author of "Andrew Jackson vs. New World Order" (Authors Choice Press) and "Saying 'No' to the War Party". He contributed this article to Media Monitors Network (MMN) from Maryland, USA.

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Pity the Iraqis: Tim "Rambo" Spicer is Coming!

by William Hughes
(Wednesday 11 August 2004)

"On 09/04/1992, Peter McBride was shot to death, in Belfast, N. Ireland, by two Brits from the elite Scots Guard. They were convicted of his murder, but released after a few years and are back in the Army. Their then-commanding officer, Tim "Rambo" Spicer, thinks they got a raw deal. Spicer's company, Aegis Defense Services, has just won a \$293 million security contract in Iraq. The two thugs that killed McBride are also serving in Iraq!"

Haven't the Iraqi people suffered enough? This is the kind of question Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, should be asking himself while reviewing a highly disputed \$293 million contract from the Pentagon for coordinating security in Iraq. The British firm that recently won the lucrative cost-plus deal, Aegis Defense Services, is headed by an ex-commando, who had seen service in the British occupied six counties of northeastern Ireland. His name is Tim Spicer.

Spicer is the CEO of Aegis. According to the Boston Globe, (06/22/04), he has in the past "been linked to an arms sale to Sierra Leone that violated a 1998 United Nations embargo, and he served as commanding officer over two British soldiers convicted of murdering an unarmed Catholic teenager in North Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1992." (See, also, for more details on Spicer, "Controversial Commando Wins Iraq Contract," by Pratap Chatterjee, Special to CorpWatch, 06/09/04, www.corpwatch.org).

The contested contract has caused an outrage in the UK, Ireland, and in America, too. Father Sean McManus of the Irish National Caucus (INC), a Washington DC-based lobbying group, wrote President George W. Bush, Jr., to complain, saying, "Just when you need to reach out to Irish Catholics, your Department of Defense does something to insult and offend them." McManus also told the Washington Post, "This is a deeply offensive and insensitive move and represents a real kick in the teeth for Irish Americans. President Bush should tear up this contract immediately out of decency and respect." McManus had previously raised this issue with Mitchell B. Reiss, the Administration's envoy to Northern Ireland ("U.S. Contract to British Firm Sparks Irish American Protest," Mary Fitzgerald, 08/09/04).

Some background facts are in order. On September 4, 1992, an 18- year-old Peter McBride, father of

two young daughters, was shot dead by two British guardsmen belonging to the elite Scots Guards. Their Lt. Col. at the time was...you guessed it...Tim Spicer! McBride was a resident of the New Lodge area of Belfast, Northern Ireland. He was shot twice at close range in the back. He was carrying a plastic bag with a T-shirt in it. He was checked first by the two guardsmen, questioned and given a full body search. The guardsmen claimed at their trial that McBride was "running away." Even though they knew he was unarmed, they shot him dead. His body was found less than 70 meters away, lying between two cars. The guardsmen were convicted of murder, but served "only three years" of a life sentence (Eamon McCann, Belfast Telegraph, 04/22/04). They were released from prison and, shockingly, reinstated to the Scots Guard in 1998. One of them has even been promoted since the criminal offense. Rep. James T. Walsh (R-NY) called the decision by the British's officials to reinstate the men to the armed services, "an insult to the family and friends of Peter McBride and to all the people of Northern Ireland" (<http://www.serve.com/pfc/>).

McBride's mother, Jean McBride said, "We are asking our supporters in the U.S. to raise this (the awarding of the contract to Aegis) directly with John Kerry and call for a congressional hearing into Tim Spicer's track record... As commanding officer of the Scots Guards he (Spicer) told a pack of lies about Peter's murder and dragged his name through the dirt. God knows what his own private army will do in Iraq." (Ann Cadwallader, Irish Echo, "Dead Man's Mother Protests U.S. Defense Contract" 06/16-22/04).

Paul O'Connor of the Pat Finucane Center, a human rights group, located in Derry, said, "Spicer is a highly controversial figure. Despite numerous court rulings that held the soldiers under his command murdered an unarmed 18-year-old boy and concocted lies to cover up their action, Spicer has continue to claim that his soldiers should not have been prosecuted. By his own admission he wanted to send them, Guardsmen Wright and Fisher, back on patrol immediately after the murder. In his biography, 'Give War a Chance: the Life and Times of Tim Spicer,' he wrote, 'It's the same principle as getting straight back on a horse when you have been thrown off'" (<http://www.serve.com/pfc/>). O'Connor repeated the gist of the above remarks when interviewed by John McDonagh and Sandy Boyer, on the popular "Radio Free Eireann" program, on WBAI in NYC on 08/07/04.

O'Connor also told the Washington Post's Fitzgerald, "As commander in Belfast, Tim Spicer believed his soldiers were above the law and he disputed their convictions for murder. We need to know his background was taken into consideration when this contract was awarded." Rep. Peter Session (R-TX) has also raised concerns about Spicer's firm getting the contract. He argued, "It is inconceivable that the firm charged with the responsibility for coordinating all security of firms and individuals performing reconstruction is one which has never even been in the country" (TWP, 08/09/04).

"This contract is a case study in what not to do," said Peter Singer, a national security analyst for the Brookings Institution, who has researched the Aegis deal. "The Army never even bothered to Google this guy (Tim Spicer) to find out that he was involved in political scandal, that he was the source of parliamentary investigations and the owner of failed businesses. And this systemic failure was one of the core issues surrounding the privately contracted interrogators linked to the abuses of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib," added Singer (Boston Globe, Charles M. Sennott, 06/22/04). Singer is also the author of the compelling and extremely relevant "Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry."

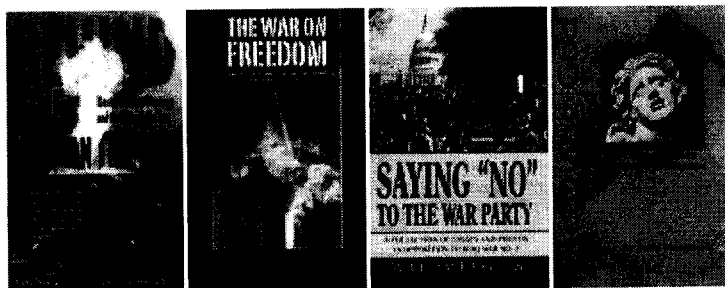
The \$293 million security contract was granted by the Pentagon to Aegis in May, 2004. It is the largest yet awarded for security in Iraq. At press time, the Department of Defense has refused to revoke the deal and Rumsfeld, its top boss, remains uncharacteristically silent. It has been reported that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) is taking under consideration a protest lodged by DynCorp, a Texas based security firm, that had also bid on the contract. The GAO's decision is due out by Sept. 30th, according to the TWP. Sen. John Kerry (D-MA), too, has also not responded to requests by activists to intervene in the dispute, nor has British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, who has ignored countless pleas from the McBride family to see that justice is finally done in the murder case of teenager Peter McBride.

Oh, by the way, the two British soldiers convicted of wasting Peter McBride, James Fisher and Mark Wright, are believed to be presently serving with the British Army in Occupied Iraq (<http://www.serve.com/pfc/>). Pity the Iraqis - Tim "Rambo" Spicer is coming, too!

Source:

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Libya's diplomatic transformation



By Jonathan Marcus
BBC diplomatic correspondent

Libya's agreement to pay compensation to the victims of a bomb attack against a West Berlin nightclub will help to normalise ties between Tripoli and the European Union.

The diplomatic thaw has been under way for some time but it gained critical momentum in December 2003 with the surprise announcement that, after secret negotiations, Britain, the US and Libya had reached a deal under which Muammar Gaddafi's regime would abandon its programmes to build weapons of mass destruction.

International inspectors quickly went to Tripoli.

Libya gave a full account of its activities. Its nuclear programme was dismantled and what stocks it had of chemical weapons were rapidly destroyed.



EU leaders still have some concerns about Gaddafi's Libya

But weapons of mass destruction were not the only issue. The US has long viewed Libya as a country which sponsored terrorism.

Here too, Libya has seemingly turned the page.

Progress has been slow and inevitably there have been bumps on the way.

Concerns

The deal now agreed in relation to the bombing of a West Berlin night-club joins two other compensation agreements relating to attacks on US and French airliners - the destruction of a Pan Am flight over Lockerbie in 1988 and the bombing of a UTA DC-10 airliner over Niger in September 1989.

Earlier this year, in return for this dramatic shift, the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair visited Tripoli.

And, in a highly theatrical visit involving a tent especially flown in for the occasion, the Libyan leader pitched up, literally, at the EU in Brussels.

CONCILIATION STEPS

April 1999: Libya hands over suspects in bombing of Pan Am flight over Lockerbie

January 2002: The US and Libya reveal they are in talks to

EU economic sanctions against Libya were removed and US-imposed sanctions significantly eased.

The EU and the Americans still have some concerns about Libya. Both stress human rights issues.

The EU, in particular, is alarmed at the fate of six foreign medical workers - five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor - who have been sentenced to death for allegedly infecting hundreds of Libyan children with HIV.

improve relations

August 2003: Relatives of Lockerbie victims agree \$2.7bn payout from Libya; Tripoli takes responsibility for the bombing

September 2003: UN Security Council votes to lift sanctions

December 2003: Libya announces it will halt programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction

December 2003: UN nuclear inspectors begin checks

January 2004: Relatives of 170 victims of the bombing of a French airliner in 1989 sign a \$170m payout deal with Libya

The Bush administration, too, has its reservations about the Libyan regime.

But there is no doubt that Libya is now seen as a country with which the wider international community can do business.

Multilateral action

Of course, there is great debate about what prompted the Libyan government's change of heart.

The Bush administration likes to point to the invasion of Iraq as providing Colonel Gaddafi with a salutary warning.

But the Anglo-US negotiations with Libya pre-dated the war.

Some analysts believe that Colonel Gaddafi's essentially secular regime feared a challenge from Islamist unrest unless economic conditions improved.

Pressure on Libya seems to be a classic example of multilateral action working.

It seems that it was Libya's economic isolation and ageing oil infrastructure that finally brought Colonel Gaddafi in from the cold.