

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



Neil Gibson shows off the newest member of Court Management, Jack George Gibson, who was born on Friday, 26th May 2006.

PRESS CLIPPINGS

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

Monday, 29 May 2006

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Local Press

Funding is Top Priority for New Special Court President / *Awoko* Pages 3-5

Captured Live ! The Beginning of the End of A Rebel War Lord ... / *The Exclusive* Pages 6-7

International Press

Verdict Awaited in Liberian “Blood Timber” Trial / *Agence France Presse* Pages 8-10

Sierra Leonean Takes Over Special Court, Pleads for Extra Fund / *The Analyst* Pages 11-12

The Ruins of Nations, Part 1 / *World Press.org* Pages 13-17

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / *UNMIL* Pages 18-20

Awoko

Monday, 29 May 2006

Funding is top priority for new Special Court President

By Kelvin Lewis

The United Nations backed war crimes tribunal for Sierra Leone has elected its first indigenous President, Sierra Leonean born Justice George Gelaga King.

Accepting that his new appointment is "quite a big challenge, because it's a tremendous responsibility" with great humility Justice King said

"I as a Sierra Leonean consider it quite an honour and I am proud because I am a Sierra Leonean."

The ...year old Judge disclosed that as he takes up duty on the 27th of May his main challenge will be funding.

This he said is because "unlike the other tribunals ... the ICTR tribunal for Rwanda and the ICTY tribunal for Yugoslavia they have assessed contributions under

Chapter seven of the United Nations Charter."

The Special Court for Sierra Leone he said "is an experiment, its called popularly a hybrid court of Sierra Leoneans and internationals, but the interesting thing is that the funding is done voluntarily by certain states and we depend on such voluntary funding very heavily".

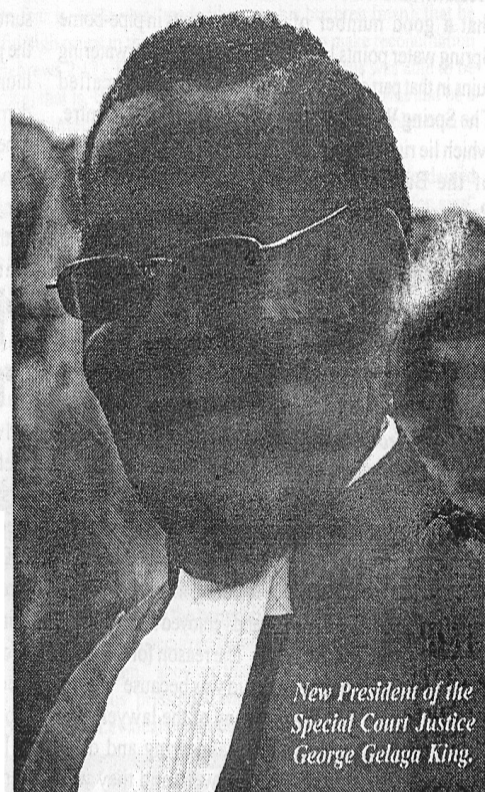
Moreover he noted, "the voluntary funding is also attached to the completion

strategy which has been changing"

Initially, he disclosed "it was three years but now they realize its impossible for the court to end in three years and we have to go on because the appeals chamber has not in fact come into residence," adding "it will only do that after the first trial is completed."

According to Justice King "it is envisaged that the first

Contd. Page 2



New President of the Special Court Justice George Gelaga King.

Funding is top priority for new Special Court President

From Front Page

trial will not be completed before the end of 2006, so any thought of the court ending this year or even 2007 is unrealistic in my estimation," he said.

The first Sierra Leonean war crimes court President revealed that the "court has been referred to as working under a leaner and meaner budget which really means what it says."

"I do not know whether that helps in the dispensation of justice, to say it's proceeding under a leaner and meaner budget, but if you want justice to be done you must provide the necessary funds" he argued.

He noted further that "even having regard to the proposed completion strategy it would be necessary to raise sufficient funds not only for the court itself to run, (but) for outreach programs, for defense counsel and even when the appeals chamber comes into residence for the special court to be able to go on and do its duty properly and perform its functions reasonably well."

Looking back at a career spanning some four decades, Justice King revealed "one of the aspects of my career that I like very much was the fact that I delivered the very first lecture in our own indigenous Sierra Leone

law school in 1990."

He went on "I treasure that very much indeed and for 15 years until I gave up the job in 2005 I was lecturing in that law school and I enjoyed it very much."

The reason for his joy he said was because "I see so many of the lawyers who are appearing and doing very well, and they were students of mine in the Sierra Leone law school and this is a great satisfaction I have for this and then I look again I see one or two lawyers coming from the Gambia where again I went in 1997 and I became President of the Gambia court of appeal I see them coming to the special court here to help out in dispensing justice I feel very satisfied and perhaps elated."

Not wanting to comment directly on the issue of Charles Taylor the former President of Liberia, Justice King disclosed that he does not feel particularly challenged by the fact that he was taking part in a trial which will make the history books because it will be the first to try a Head of State in the sub-region.

The learned Judge disclosed that he has been a Judge for nearly three decades now and he has been involved in Treason trials from as early as 1969 when along with the Chief Prosecutor Desmond De

Silva they appeared as Defence counsels for the first treason trial in Sierra Leone in which the first CDF accused in the present Special Court trials Chief Sam Hinga Norman was one of the accused persons in the dock.

He disclosed that already the Special Court for Sierra Leone has made two landmark rulings.

The first he said was a motion in the appeals chamber where lawyers for Charles Taylor "were objecting that an incumbent head of state cannot be indicted and the appeals chamber ruled ... that an incumbent head of state does not necessarily have immunity from trial with regards to alleged offences against international humanitarian law."

The second landmark decision by the appeals chamber he disclosed was that with regards to child soldiers - "recruiting children for the purposes of being soldiers and the appeals chamber ruled that that has crystallized into customary international law and is impermissible and an indictable offence."

The President designate of the Special Court affirmed that neither the rules, nor the procedures

Contd. Page 4

Funding is top priority for new Special Court President

From Page 2

already adopted will be changed for the trial of Charles Taylor.

Revealing the religious side of his character, Justice King said on the issue of security for the Special Court "my first security is in the almighty but in practical terms for Sierra Leone I think we are doing a good job ... I don't think we have any cause for alarm at this instant."

Commenting on the issue

of how much of the practices in the Special Court have filtered down to the national courts, Justice George Gelaga King who before being appointed to the Special Court was a Supreme Court judge in the national courts said "I have no doubt about that in fact the rules of procedure in the domestic tribunals have been amended to adopt some of the practices of the Special Court for instance pre-trial issues; now they are going to

have them in the domestic tribunals and I think they have in fact learned from what's been happening here for speedy process, because you see they complain about the court delays and when you have pre-trial hearings you decide on the procedure you are going to adopt at the trial; that helps to speed things up and I think the national jurisdiction has amended its rules of procedure to that effect and that will help them considerably."

The Exclusive
Monday, 29 May 2006

Captured Live!

The beginning of The End of A Rebel War Lord Called Foday Saybana Sankoh

The scenario surrounding the disappearance and appearance of former rebel leader Foday Saybana Sankoh is still shrouded in mystery except for the fact that Sankoh is dead and gone.

Just after the May 8th, 2002 civilian demonstration, which led to the disappearance of the rebel warlord, some government ministers kept calling *For di People (FDP)* offices confirming Sankoh's death: "Sankoh is dead! Serious!" "Sankoh is dead! He's bitten by a snake." "The rebel lunatic is finally over."

And the ministers sounded damn right serious owing to their excitement and relief while relaying the information to FDP. The next day FDP was to run a screaming headline: "SANKOH IS DEAD!" And that was recorded as one of the biggest mistakes FDP ever made.

Few days later other versions began to pour in, doing the rounds among the population. One version said Sankoh had been carted away by a UN armoured tank that materialized at his Spur Road residence during the heat of the demonstration. Another version said Sankoh had been handed over to the British and was being kept in one of their vessels at sea. Others strongly believed Sankoh had been harbored in one of the houses at Dorty Road - a mix community of pan-bodies and modern dwelling houses stretching behind Sankoh's residence.

But the fact that no official statement was issued by government all that while confirmed that neither government nor Unamsil or the British, knew the whereabouts of the rebel war lord.

Except for some of us at Dorty Road community who witnessed it all happened:

When we woke up that morning (May 8th 2002) we saw several armed SSD guards deployed at the carcass of what was once former Chief Justice Desmond Luke's house overlooking Dorty Road community, while others were deployed at the foot of the hill.

Suddenly there was this ascending sound of sporadic gunfire coming from afar. Later, we learnt that it was a lone rebel-gunman running from Mallama, escaping the wrath of some soldiers and angry civilians who wanted to disarm him. The man kept on firing randomly and endlessly in the air until he reached Sankoh's residence, where he joined his colleagues, all strategically deployed in the unfinished building opposite Sankoh's residence. All armed.

In the afternoon hours we were at Ronsab, Spur Road, watching the procession of demonstrators to Sankoh's residence. The crowd swelled by the seconds. Suddenly, a gun shot; followed by another. Chaos! Screams! A stampede! The crowd had been dispersed wildly. Everybody was running for his/her life.

We retreated into our homes at Dorty Road under the cover of tall concrete fences. We could hear different sounds of gunfire now as the whole community went indoors. And there was silence, like there was never any firing.

Outside, peeping through our closed transparent glass windows, we could see no moving creature; not even the common fowls, dogs or lizards. Then we heard voices: "Eeeeeee! Look Sankoh!", a boy who had sought refuge in our house shouted. Saved only by pressing my palm to his mouth the men could have identified the direction of the shout and pursue it with some bullets.

Indeed it was Sankoh. We could see him now, some 50 yards away, being led by his men. He wore a black gown. His white beard was lightly shaved. Just behind him was a man carrying a briefcase. His men, armed with AK 47 rifles and RPGs, scattered around him, in a disorganized circle. Among them were two soldiers with blue berets. They were traversing the



Foday Saybana Sankoh

Spur Loop hill now. No gun fire!

They reached an unfinished building and Sankoh stopped for a while, sat on a big rock and looked back where they had come from. He was saying something to his men. They helped him up and continued, slowly but steadfastly.

I crept swiftly to another window where I could get a view of the road ahead of them. The SSDs who had been deployed there in the morning were not there anymore. Those at the foot of the hill were also not there. And it was at those routes Sankoh and his men appeared. I crept back and told the others.

Something interesting happened. In front of the house opposite ours, a Unamsil soldier was creeping under the shrubs with his stomach. He drew his rifle by his side and laid there, camouflaged by the shrubs. Sankoh and his men were not in sight anymore. They had climbed the hill and headed towards Mallamah.

About half-an-hour later a group of SLAs arrived in front of our house looking up the hills where Sankoh and his men had traveled. They saw the Unamsil soldier under the shrubs and ordered him

Indeed it was Sankoh. some 50 yards away, he wore a black gown. His white beard was lightly shaved. Just behind him was a man carrying a briefcase. His men, armed with AK 47 rifles and RPGs, scattered around him, in a disorganized circle. Among them were two soldiers with blue berets. They were traversing the Spur Loop hill now.

up. They took his rifle from him, asked him some questions and led him down the road.

It was safe to come out now, and suddenly everybody was out. And it was talking point. Everybody eager to share what he/she saw: "It was Sankoh, I saw him!" "He wore black gown!" "He passed right in



Mustapha Kamara alias Scorpion (RSLAF 1816-6252)

front of my bathroom window; I almost lost my breath!"

"I made a phone call to Cockerill; I told them Sankoh was escaping!"

Some of my neighbours narrated to me about the shootout at Sankoh's residence between the SLAs and his men; how they escaped with Sankoh from compound to compound until they reached the hills where we saw them.

Suddenly some of our neighbours began to pack to leave the area in fear that at night, the rebels might decide to descend on the community.

Another batch of SLA soldiers arrived and we narrated to them what we saw. They seemed not impressed. They followed the trail some several metres and retreated.

It was not until after about a week that a large group of heavily armed soldiers scattered all over our community one morning with a team going house to house searching. The searching was fruitless.

Several days later they came back searching. Fruitless again! In all their searches they never followed the route Sankoh and his men used to escape.

Interestingly, on the night of May 17th 2002, when

h. We could see him now, being led by his men. He has white beard was lightly on his face. He was a man carrying a rifle around him, in a disorganized manner. They were two soldiers were traversing the Spur road. No gun fire!

Sankoh decided to come out of his hiding, he used the same route he had used to escape. He was captured by a local soldier called Mustapha Kamara (alias Scorpion).

Note: (Read The Exclusive tomorrow for a drama presentation of the capture of the rebel war lord).

Agence France Presse

Monday, 29 May 2006

Verdict awaited in Liberian “blood timber” trial

Dutch trial of a man accused of arming former Liberian leader Charles Taylor helps reinforce The Hague’s status as war crimes centre.

Stephanie van den Berg

The trial of Guus Kouwenhoven, a Dutch businessman accused of trading weapons for lucrative timber concessions in war-torn Liberia, officially closed in The Hague this week, pending a verdict from judges.

In a high-ceilinged courtroom overlooked by a large portrait of Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, the three judges have spent the last five weeks hearing detailed evidence about the 14-year civil war that wracked Liberia, leaving some 250,000 people dead.

Kouwenhoven is accused under Dutch law of war committing war crimes and violating the United Nations arms embargo that was in place against Liberia in 2001-03.

His so-called “blood timber” trade is said to have provided weapons for militias loyal to former Liberian president Charles Taylor, who fought his way to power and presided over years of conflict. In return, Kouwenhoven allegedly received logging concessions.

Taylor, who is himself facing charges of crimes against humanity, war crimes and violations of international human rights at the Special Court for Sierra Leone, this week refused to give evidence in the Kouwenhoven trial, despite requests from both prosecution and defence.

The former president, who is currently being held in the Sierra Leonean capital Freetown after he was arrested in Nigeria last month, may yet appear in The Netherlands. The United Nations-backed Sierra Leone war crimes court has asked for his trial to be held in The Hague for security reasons.

There has been strong opposition to Taylor’s transfer from his defence counsel in Freetown, and – for different reasons - from local human rights groups who fear that the local population would not be able to follow the proceedings in detail if the trial was held in Europe.

The Dutch authorities have added the condition that a third country would have to provide a jail cell for Taylor in the event that he was convicted. So far, there have been no takers.

Hosting Taylor’s trial would bolster The Hague’s claims to be the world’s “legal capital”. The city already houses the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, ICTY; the newly created permanent International Criminal Court, ICC, and the United Nations’ International Court of Justice, ICJ, as well as a number of other arbitration and settlement tribunals.

Dutch domestic courts are not left out of the picture, either. Under a new law passed in 2003 – to coincide with the setting up of the ICC – genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and torture committed abroad can be prosecuted in Dutch national courts, as long as the suspect is arrested in the Netherlands.

In Kouwenhoven's case, his alleged crimes date from before 2003, but he has been brought to trial under an earlier version of the law which allows Dutch citizens to face prosecution for war crimes committed abroad.

Since the national prosecutor's office set up a special team to investigate war crimes three years ago, there has been a steady stream of such cases.

"Tracking down and prosecuting international crimes such as war crimes have an understandably high priority," the Dutch prosecutor John Lucas told the court hearing Kouwenhoven's case.

Last year, the same national court in The Hague convicted two former high-ranking officers in the Soviet-era Afghan intelligence service of war crimes and torture. They each received prison terms of up to 12 years in prison.

In December, Frans van Anraat, an ex-chemicals trader, became the first Dutch national to be convicted of war crimes abroad, after he was found guilty of selling chemicals to the Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq; the substances were used in poison gas attacks on Kurdish villages. Van Anraat got a 15-year sentence.

During the Kouwenhoven trial, the prosecution painted him as a money-grubbing wheeler-dealer who cosied up to Charles Taylor to advance his business interests.

In exchange for privileges for his companies – the Royal Timber Company and Oriental Timber Corporation - prosecutors say he smuggled weapons into Liberia for Taylor's militias.

He used his contacts "to provide infamous war criminals with weapons, clothing, food, finances and transportation and medical care when they were injured", prosecutor John Lucas said in his closing arguments. "He personally instructed merciless Taylor supporters – many young and under the influence of drugs – [and] gave them encouragement and promises of cash rewards."

Lucas concluded, "This makes him as guilty of war crimes as if he had pulled the trigger personally, and therefore he should be convicted of participation in the commission of war crimes."

Kouwenhoven, known in Liberia as "Mr Gus", was present when arms were unloaded in the Liberian port of Buchanan, said the prosecution, and he discussed military strategy with Taylor, the warlord turned president.

There were many testimonies from people who said that, while employed by Kouwenhoven's timber companies, they went to the front lines to fight as members of militias. They told horrific tales of crimes they had committed such as rape, decapitation, and burning people alive in their huts.

Witness George Moore, who worked for the Oriental Timber Corporation from 1999 onwards, testified that he was sent to fight in 2001 in Gueckedou close to the border with Guinea. There he

saw people cut open and their hearts taken out and eaten. He spoke of babies whose skulls were bashed against walls until they died, and other infants thrown down wells.

Prosecutors swept aside Kouwenhoven's arguments that he was just in the wrong place at the wrong time, and that he did not want to abandon his businesses in Liberia because of the fighting.

To support their claim that he was a war profiteer, they pointed to the fact that he moved his business activities to Brazzaville after the fall of Taylor in 2003.

"He is not a businessman who was in the wrong place at the wrong time but a man whose affairs flourished in an environment of corruption, failing government and armed conflict," they said.

Throughout his trial, Kouwenhoven insisted he was innocent. He told the judges he did not hear much about the bloody civil war while it was going on around him in the Nineties, and was only aware in a general sense that atrocities were sometimes committed.

Defence lawyer Inez Weski tried to cast her client as someone who had been "crushed between the different forces working to remove the regime of Charles Taylor".

She suggested that various reports on the Liberian timber trade produced by the United Nations and non-government organisations, suggesting that Kouwenhoven's companies had exchanged guns for timber, were an attempt by opponents of Taylor to deprive him of logging concession revenues, his biggest income source.

The lawyer also pounced on the biggest apparent weakness in the prosecution case - the numerous contradictory statements by witnesses. Even the judges referred to the binder with the written transcripts of testimonies as "the big book of fairy tales" during the trial.

Kouwenhoven used his last words to profess his innocence once again.

"I never saw weapons on a ship in the port of Buchanan. I was never present when arms were handed out. I was never present at military meetings with Taylor. I never encouraged OTC [Oriental Timber Corporation] personnel to go to the front lines," he said.

Weski also alleged that the Dutch prosecutors were desperate to show the world that they could pursue war crimes cases. They were, she said, blinded by the limelight which comes with such high-profile war crimes trials, and had created a "self-fulfilling prophesy" in setting out the indictment.

The prosecution has asked for a 20-year prison sentence and a fine of 450,000 euros.

A verdict is expected on June 7.

The Analyst (Monrovia)

Friday, 26 May 2006

Sierra Leonean Takes Over Special Court, Pleads for Extra Funds

Sierra Leone's UN-backed War Crimes Tribunal has been going through crises since its founding back in 2002.

The problem has mainly been financial. Then came the yet-to-be-settled saga of Taylor's transfer to the International Criminal Court in The Netherlands based on arguments that his trial in Sierra Leone would spark violence in the region. Now another problem has cropped up: this time a Sierra Leonean has swapped place with a Briton as president of the court, casting new shadows for fair trial for Taylor. The Analyst Staff Writer has been looking at an IRIN dispatch.

A 73-year-old judge, Justice George Gelaga King, has taken over the UN-backed Special Court of Sierra Leone from outgoing Briton, Chief Prosecutor Desmond de Silva, as president, an IRIN dispatch said yesterday.

Justice King will, for the first time by a Sierra-Leonean since its founding, preside over the court this week and will be making sure it receives extra funding to survive, according to the dispatch.

The new court president described his appointment as "quite a big challenge, because it's a tremendous responsibility." He said as a Sierra Leonean, he considered the appointment quite an honor of which he is proud.

According to him the court which was set up in 2002 initially for three years was far from accomplishing its mandate and needed more time and more funding.

He said unlike the ICTR tribunal for Rwanda and the ICTY tribunal for Yugoslavia, financed by set contributions from the UN's 187 members, the Special Court was dependent on voluntary funds.

The Special Court for Sierra Leone "is an experiment, and is called popularly a hybrid court because it includes Sierra Leoneans and internationals, but the interesting thing is that the funding is done voluntarily by certain states and we depend on such voluntary funding very heavily".

Justice King, who takes up duty on 27 May, said, "it is envisaged that the first trial will not be completed before the end of 2006, so any thought of the court ending this year or even 2007 is unrealistic in my estimation." "If you want justice to be done you must provide the necessary funds," he added, saying funds were needed not only to run the court but for out-reach programmes, for defense counsel and for an appeals chamber to come into being once the first trial has been completed.

The court has been at work on three trials, concerning the three parties to the 1991-2002 conflict - the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), a militia fighting alongside the Sierra Leone army; the

Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels; and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) rebels.

But the tribunal grabbed international attention earlier this year with the arrest of its most prominent indictee - former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who in his first court appearance on 3 April pleaded not guilty to 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

He will be the first former African leader to face trial before an international tribunal for crimes allegedly perpetrated while in office.

Justice King declined direct comment on the Taylor case, but said he did not feel particularly challenged by the fact that it would make the history books.

During his almost three decades as a judge, he and outgoing Chief Prosecutor Desmond de Silva notably had appeared as defence counsels in the first treason trial held in Sierra Leone, with one of the accused being current Special Court indictee Chief Sam Hinga Norman.

King, who lectured in law for 15 years and described one of the highlights of his career as the day "I delivered the very first lecture in our own indigenous Sierra Leone law school in 1990," said that the Special Court for Sierra Leone has already delivered two landmark rulings.

The first was a motion in the appeals chamber in which Taylor's lawyers "were objecting that an incumbent head of state cannot be indicted and the appeals chamber ruled ... that an incumbent head of state does not necessarily have immunity from trial with regards to alleged offences against international humanitarian law." The second was that an appeals chamber ruling that recruiting children for the purposes of being soldiers "is impermissible and an indictable offence." "I think we are doing a good job," he said, referring to the work of the Special Court, he said "I think we are doing a good job I don't think we have any cause for alarm at this instant." Some say the appointment of Justice King truly reflects the hybrid nature of the special court, but observers have already begun to form conjectures that it may cast new shadows for confidence within the Taylor camp.

"Taylor has never trusted the special court since its first Chief Prosecutor, David Crane, described him as 'fugitive'. Even under the administration of de Silva, Taylor refused to submit to the jurisdiction of the court. There is no question he will reject the court with Justice King presiding," said one observer.

He said the King factor is more likely to step up the need for UN to search for a third country for Taylor after the ICC hears his case.

Worldpress.org

The Ruin of Nations, Part I

Sunday, 28 May 2006

Karamoh Kabba,



A rebel loyal to the warlord Charles Taylor poses next to the painted skull of a Krahn ethnic soldier of President Samuel Doe in Monrovia, May 15, 1990. (Photo: Pascal Guyot / AFP-Getty Images)

The Destabilization of West Africa

It all began in 1787 when Britain set up the Province of Freedom in Sierra Leone, on the peninsula, which became a haven for freed slaves from Britain, Jamaica, the United States, and Canada. Britain was a knowledgeable empire builder with considerable experience in walking on thin threads. And Sierra Leone would escape from becoming the origin of the brutal rebel war that began in Liberia in 1989, which could have happened if the educated freedmen were allowed to form a monarchy to rule the hinterland people in Sierra Leone.

That was exactly what happened in neighboring Liberia when the American Colonization Society (A.C.S.) founded that nation in 1822. According to Alan Huffman, in "Tumult and Transition in "Little America" (Smithsonian Magazine, 2000), the idea was first proposed in 1800, "following a thwarted Virginia slave uprising that resulted in the hanging of some 35 slaves."

"Virginia delegates called upon President Thomas Jefferson to purchase lands 'where persons obnoxious to the laws or dangerous to the peace of society may be removed'. The A.C.S. thought the Province of Freedom in Sierra Leone was a novel idea. "Jefferson initially proposed a joint effort with Great Britain, which had

already started a colony for former slaves in Freetown, Sierra Leone, but rising tensions that would eventually culminate with the War of 1812 stalled Jefferson's proposal," said Huffman.

This would be the plan that Francis Scott Key, Daniel Webster, and Henry Clay awakened four years later under the A.C.S., which was strongly supported by James Monroe. (Monroe would later become president of the United States from 1817 to 1825. Between these years, the first shipment of freed slaves landed in Liberia to form a city that would be named after him, Monrovia.) But the A.C.S. either was shortsighted or had plotted an attempted genocide against the Africans.

For "when an outsider comes into a new ecological system, even if he is more skilled he does not necessarily function as effectively as those who have familiarized themselves with the environment over centuries; and the newcomer is likely to look more ridiculous if he is too arrogant to realize that he has something to learn from the 'natives'," said Walter Rodney, in "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa."

In Sierra Leone, the British oversaw the Province of Freedom through the Sierra Leone Company. But unlike the British, the United States brokered a very bad deal with the aborigines in Liberia. The United States was not concerned with the safety of the freedmen the A.C.S. dumped on this small piece of land wedged between English and French colonial territories, — present day Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Ivory Coast.

It seems that for the A.C.S. the specter of freed slaves revolting in America was the main reason behind the resettlement plan. Referring to Sen. John Tyler, Adam Hochschild writes, "Like most Southern politicians of the era, he was frightened by the specter of millions of freed slaves and their descendants harboring threatening dreams of equality."

Indeed, the strong survival instinct and high fertility rate of the African was increasing the black population at an alarming rate, which spurred the need to get rid of them. Thus, this piece of land, which the United States named Liberia, became a hot bed for trouble from the outset when the A.C.S. quickly dumped the content of its vessels and left the freedmen to fend for themselves. Could it be that they chose that area because of its known unfriendliness to Westerners? More or less, it seems they did not expect the repatriated freed slaves to survive.

Indeed, almost all the freedmen from the first vessel died, including the three agents that went with them. The survivors were evacuated to Freetown. But the A.C.S. brought more, assured that their presumption was correct. Why would they keep bringing more freedmen if the first barely survived? Once again, the innate survival instinct of the African would prove itself on the land the Europeans and other Westerners had labeled "the white man's grave" when he thrived.

But the settlers, some of whom were highly educated before coming to Liberia, turned on their own kind and, for one and half centuries, subjugated the aborigines who had kindheartedly accepted them. The settlers carried out the subjugation of the aborigines with heavy-handed support from the United States. To make matters

worse, an American company by the name of Firestone returned to Liberia and compounded subjugation with slave labor on what became the world's biggest rubber plantation. These cruel treatments victimized the aborigines for over a century. This is best articulated by Howard W. French in "A Continent for the Taking":

"As they settled the land, the Americo-Liberians fondly strove to reproduce the only model they knew, the plantation society of the American South. Affecting top hats and morning coats, the freedmen ruled Africa's first republic in a clannish and conservative manner, established their own curiously paternalistic brand of apartheid, systematically excluding so-called aborigines from positions of privilege and power."

There is a parallel between the A.C.S. and the International Society of the Congo. The former is the origin of the destabilization of West Africa and the latter, the destabilization of the Congo, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, and Angola. Both organizations were deceptive; capitalists' interest cloaked in humanitarian reason. Both used forced labor on rubber plantations. The United States probably did not colonize Liberia because of the possible international criticism the action could have mustered — it would have been quite a story for a nation that had just won its independence. But it sure accomplished the same goal in Liberia as any other colonial power in Africa.

In 1930, a League of Nations report exposed the forced labor practices in Liberia by Firestone. The United States' relation with Liberia was consistent with every other colonial power in post independence Africa: capitalist imperialism.

Any society that is pushed around too long and too heavy-handedly by its leaders will become a time bomb.

Inhuman treatment of the aborigines in Liberia by Americo-Liberian settlers created the destabilization force for the Economic Community of the West African States (E.C.O.W.A.S.) region. The rice price hike of 1979 is a secondary reason to the most potent political one that had set Liberia on a springboard for war. Even though the rebel war affected Liberia and Sierra Leone the most, their neighbors shared some of the burden. The media reported little skirmishes in Guinea here and there, Sierra Leone pointed fingers at Burkina Faso for staging beachheads for rebel forces, and the diplomatic corps implicated the Ivory Coast for sponsoring rebels against Samuel Doe. Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a long time dictator in the Ivory Coast loathed Samuel Doe for killing William Tolbert, his daughter's father-in-law. Nigeria and Ghana carried on their shoulders heavy financial and military burdens. Refugee crises plagued almost every country in the E.C.O.W.A.S. region. Tarty Teh, in "Still Stupid After All These Years," explains:

"Dr. Patrick Seyon was the water boy for the band of Americas who first coalesced as A.C.D.L. (Association for Constitutional Democracy in Liberia) which, according to Mr. Greaves, "operated on two tracks and at two levels" from Washington, D.C. Apparently Dr. Seyon was aware of only the track that led to the U.S. Capitol Hill where he was led to deliver a testimony against an elected government of President Samuel Doe. As I remember his testimony in early 1990, it was Dr. Seyon's belief —

echoed later by Mr. Francis Afonso Dennis, former Liberian ambassador to Washington in the lost dispensation — which democracy was on the horizon in Liberia in 1980 when the People's Redemption Council (P.R.C.) overthrew the 130-year-old Americo Liberian Empire. It was that apparently slow-rising democracy that was aborted by the coup that removed the last Americo president (before Charles Taylor) from office."

The United States had also used Liberia for military purposes. Liberia had been a beachhead for the Pentagon for many years. It also had become very important to the United States because U.S. currency was the medium of exchange there. Evidently, this small country thousands of miles away from mainland United States had become a destabilizing ground for U.S. dollars. But it seems that the military importance of Liberia was so compelling then, that the United States could afford to have its currency thrown around in Liberia by what Washington referred to as shady business people and terrorists. And rumor has it that Washington failed to persuade Liberia's president to surrender the use of U.S. dollars through diplomatic means. And that the C.I.A. was behind Doe's bloody coup to overthrow Tolbert.

That could not be true in my opinion, though it is worth looking into. Liberia had gone wrong when the first A.C.S. ship, the *Elizabeth*, left the shores of the United States in 1820. There is no doubt that the United States was later also concerned with Soviet influence on an inexperienced Doe 161 years later. The United States provided \$500 million in aid to the Doe government between 1981 and 1985.

As quoted in Huffman's article, Chester Crocker, assistance secretary of state for African affairs under then President Ronald Regan argued, "The United States had an obligation to Liberia. It had vested intelligence and commercial interests and an infrastructure there, and cutting off aid could lead to regional destabilization and increasing Soviet and Libyan involvement."

No wonder that President Reagan's secretary of state, George P. Shultz went to Liberia in 1985 to endorse the first presidential election following the coupe and expressed the following regret after meeting Doe, as quoted by French:

"Perhaps I made a wrong career choice, if it was people like that I was going to meet. Doe was unintelligible."

Doe had outright stolen the election in 1985. And the United States' support of Doe regardless of that fact was one example of realpolitik by a Western nation in Africa.

This pattern of supporting dictators and despots for strategic or other interests is not a new phenomenon. Realpolitik has been the policy of Western nations for Africa in the global spheres of political, ideological, and economical influence. Thus, the insidious manner in which Washington settled its currency crisis in Liberia made the currency rumor compelling even without empirical evidence. Especially since Doe changed the currency to Doe dollars, which by the end of the year was as worthless as a roll of toilet paper. Even seasoned researchers will be to find an explanation for this unprecedented change of currency following the coup.

Like many other despots in Africa, Doe protected his power base by cleansing the political atmosphere. He killed not only his supercilious political rivals but also his comrades in the struggle to overthrow Tolbert. A man such as Gen. Thomas Quiwonkpa (a young soldier, who with Doe staged the 1980 coup that overthrew Tolbert), with his known valor, all he needed was a desire to take power from Doe and nothing could have stopped him from trying. A fair threat as far as Doe was concerned. Eliminating his friends, now political enemies, created peace of mind for Doe. He needed to cling to power.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 26 May 2006

[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL.]

International Clips on Liberia

Associated Press 05/26/2006 08:12:53

Rights group says U.S. should investigate Taylor's son for war crimes

By HEIDI VOGT

Associated Press Writer

DAKAR, Senegal _ A human rights group called Friday for the United States to investigate the son of former Liberian President Charles Taylor for torture and war crimes during his father's administration. Charles McArthur Emmanuel _ a U.S. citizen who was born in Boston to a girlfriend of Taylor's - is being held in Miami on charges that he lied about his father's name on a passport application. Charles Taylor is awaiting trial at a U.N.-backed war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone for allegedly funding rebels that hacked off peoples limbs and burned villages during that country's brutal civil war.

International Clips on West Africa

05/26/2006 08:11:31

Disarmament in Ivory Coast off to good start: UN

ABIDJAN, May 26, 2006 (AFP) - The task of disarming opposing forces in the divided West African state of Ivory Coast has got off to a good start, the special envoy of the UN secretary general said here on Friday. Pierre Schori, head of UN operations in Ivory Coast, said the first stage of disarmament had made an effective start and was an "encouraging development."

New War Crimes Court President Pleads for Extra Funds

Freetown, May 25, 2006 (UN Integrated Regional Information Networks/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Sierra Leone's UN-backed war crimes tribunal this week will be presided for the first time by a Sierra-Leonean, Justice George Gelaga King. And making sure the Special Court receives extra funding to survive will be a top priority, he told IRIN in an interview.

Local Media - Newspapers

President Threatens Stern Measures Against Corrupt Officials

(Daily Observer, The Inquirer and New Democrat)

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has threatened harsh measures against Cabinet Ministers engaging in corruption, Information Minister Johnny McClain told journalists at the Executive Mansion yesterday following a cabinet meeting. She said that officials who expropriate public funds and flee the country would be extradited and prosecuted.

Liberia Plans Donors' Conference

(The Inquirer and The Informer)

- Finance Minister Antoinette Sayeh told journalists yesterday that the government was planning a donor conference for Liberia scheduled to take place in Monrovia from 12 to 13 July this year. The conference is to bring together donors, bilateral and multi-lateral institutions. Ms. Sayeh said that the government was preparing strategic plan to clear some of its arrears to enable it to attract funding for the country.

Political Party Criticizes Government

(The Inquirer)

- Addressing a news conference in Monrovia yesterday Liberty Party Chairman Israel Akinsayah criticized the Johnson-Sirleaf administration for failing to conduct municipal and chieftaincy elections in keeping with constitutional provisions.
- He said that the Liberty Party considered as an insensitive and evil the President's stance on the 37.5 percent deduction from the Firestone Rubber Plantations workers' wages and the downsizing of the government workforce.

Former Presidential Guards Threaten to Strike

(New Democrat)

- Meeting with the House Defense Committee yesterday, members of the former presidential guards, Anti Terrorist Unit, said they were entitled to benefits and would resort to strike actions if they are paid.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored yesterday at 18:45 pm)*

President Makes New Appointments in Government

- President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf yesterday nominated Jervis Whitherspoon as National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR) Executive Director and Ruth Caesar as the Commission's Deputy Executive Director as well as Bayogar Anthony McCritty as Liberia Telecommunications Authority Commissioner, an Executive Mansion statement said.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

President Visits U.S. Today

- An Executive Mansion press statement said that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf will today pay a private visit to the United States and later travel to the United Kingdom on an official visit.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

President Says Corrupt Cabinet Ministers Will Face Prosecution

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Former Warlord Says War Crimes Court Will Open Pandora Box

- Former Foreign Minister and former spokesman of rebel Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) Thomas Yahya Nimely warned that establishing a war crimes court for Liberia would open a Pandora box. Addressing journalists in Monrovia yesterday, Mr. Nimely urged Liberians to concentrate on how to sustain the peace.

(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)

Telecommunications Corporation Board Redundant Employees

- Liberia Telecommunications Corporation (LTC) Board of Directors Chairman Cllr. Oswald Tweh announced that the government has declared redundant all employees of the LTC because the entity has collapsed. Cllr. Tweh told journalists at a news conference yesterday that the government is prepared to pay the employees their redundancy benefits. *(Also reported on ELBS Radio and Star Radio)*

STAR RADIO *(News culled from website today at 19:00 pm)*

Security Institute Measures Against Cross-Border Insecurity

- A Star Radio correspondent yesterday said that the Government of Liberia and UNMIL security forces have instituted measures to prevent cross-border insecurity, including mandating the Bangladeshi troops in Nimba County to establish checkpoints at the Liberia-Guinea borders.

Complete versions of the UNMIL International Press Clips, UNMIL Daily Liberian Radio Summary and UNMIL Liberian Newspapers Summary are posted each day on the UNMIL Bulletin Board. If you are unable to access the UNMIL Bulletin Board or would like further information on the content of the summaries, please contact Mr. Jeddi Armah at armahj@un.org.