

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:

Monday, August 30, 2004

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
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The Special Court: A Long Term Benefit To Sierra Leone (Part 1)

By J. MARRA KONE

Let us for a moment try to imagine what our lives would have been like without the coercive powers of the law to control, regulate and modify our conducts and behaviours into peaceful, sociable ways of living...

Laws, like taxes, are two realities we cannot live without. The former actively promotes rationality, moderation, self-control and the freedom of each and every member of society, while the latter is necessary in order to promote our collective economic well-being. Laws did not just come about by chance. They evolved through time out of our collective desire to live peaceably, agreeably and harmoniously with one another in society.

The practice of the law is the ultimate machinery for giving effective force and reality to the legal rights, duties and interests of the members of society. Now who can tell us that the inhuman ten-years civil war this country was forced to suffer was not a gross violation of all the laws of survival, decency and civilization? Laws, we should all be aware, are established to, in the main, protect our basic rights to life, liberty and happiness.

Let us Sierra Leoneans not forget that the creation of the Special Court for Sierra Leone to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for gross human rights violations came about through the demand of the people and Government of Sierra Leone.

It should be remembered how grotesque and calculatedly wicked and punitive those who fought the war targeted civilians.

It was in this light that many Sierra Leoneans felt that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) alone was not enough. So as not to encourage a culture of impunity, and to protect future generations from the scorching of another civil war, it was thought prudent and expeditious to establish a special court here like that established in Nuremberg in Germany after the end of the Second World War, like that in Rwanda which brings to justice those most responsible for the genocidal slaughter of 1,000,000 (one million) innocent Rwandans, and like that brings to justice the stubborn, arrogant and schizophrenic Mikosevic.

Many thought Sierra Leone's Special Court would be targeting only members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). But the court's mandate clearly spells out its mission: to bring to book those responsible for the gross excesses of the war.

Opponents of the setting up of the Special Court argue that a blanket amnesty had been granted to the leaders and fighters of all sides in the war in the Lome Peace Agreement signed on 7th July, 1999. Signatory to this Accord they say are both the UN and the Government of Sierra Leone. So how could the Parliament of Sierra Leone go on to ratify the setting up of a Special Court, and why did not the UN which was a signatory to the Accord also go on to give its blessing to the court?

Kamajor supporters and sympathisers believe the court is vindictive. Their submission is that in ratifying the protocols establishing the court, the Parliament of Sierra Leone had woven into its specific clauses that gave immunity to Civil Defence Forces (CDF) which had fought on the side of government and friendly forces under the ECOMOG. So why should the court drag into its net the commander of the CDFs, Chief Sam Hinga Norman?

RUF supporters also ask, why should former General Issa Sesay be prosecuted when all efforts to broker a lasting peace with the RUF through late General Sam "Mosquito" Bockarie and maverick Corporal Foday Sankoh had failed? Was it not General Issa Sesay who gave his full blessing to peace and the disarmament of the fighting forces of the RUF?

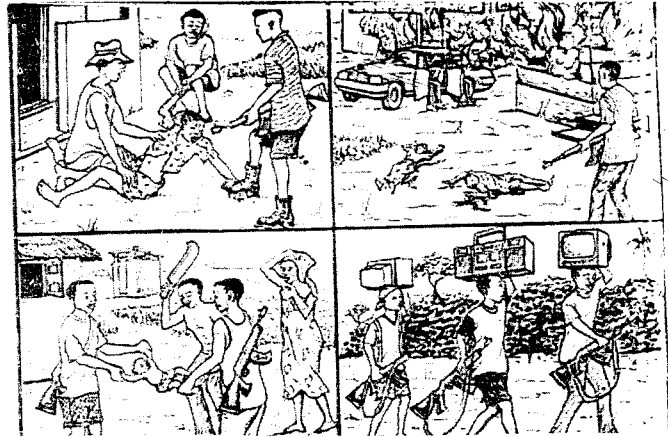
As a commentator, I hold no brief as to how the Special Court goes about defining those who bear the greatest responsibility for the excesses of the war. But this much I know; the free world, led by the USA and the UN is all out to combat all forms of terrorism anywhere in the world. Terrorism as we all know, uses innocent people as pawns in the fight against perceived injustice by powerful political systems. Decent, civilized peoples say, no!

Another school of thought argues that there is no justice in the using of 100 million dollars to set up a special court when they think that amount of money could have been better spent to rehabilitate victims of the war, especially the amputees.

For the ordinary man on the streets, they see no need for keeping eleven men who they don't care if they live or die being housed in spacious, luxurious dwellings, enjoying three square meals a day, free medical facilities, twenty-four hours electricity, communication facilities and all the comforts the average Sierra Leonean can only fancy about. What is the justice in that? they ask.

Competence Of The Court

Having been officially established by an agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone pursuant to Security Council resolution 1315 (2000) of 14th



The Prosecution presents evidence to show the accused is guilty

August 2000, the Special Court functions in accordance with the provisions of the present statute.

From an international justice point of view, the Special Court under the Geneva Conventions and of Additional Protocol II has the power to prosecute persons who committed or ordered the commission of serious violations of Article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions of 12th August 1949 for the Protection of War Victims and of Additional Protocol II thereto of 8th June 1977. These violations include:

- a. Violence to life, health and physical or mental well-being of persons, in particular murder as well as cruel treatment, such as torture, mutilation or any form of corporal punishment;
- b. Collective punishments;
- c. Taking of hostages;
- d. Acts of terrorism;
- e. Outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault;
- f. Pillage;
- g. The passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgement pronounced by a regularly constituted court, affording all the judicial guarantees which are recognized as indispensable by civilized peoples;
- h. Threats to commit any of the foregoing acts.

Additionally under "Other serious violations of humanitarian law", the Special Court has the power to prosecute persons who committed the following serious violations of international humanitarian law:

- a. Intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities;
- b. Intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, materials, units or vehicles involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as long as they are entitled to the protection given to civilians or civilian objects under the international law of armed conflict;
- c. Conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 15 years into armed forces or groups or using them to participate actively in hostilities.

Still on the competence of the Special Court, except as provided in subparagraph (2), the court has the power to prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30th November, 1996, including those leaders who, in committing such crimes had threatened the establishment of and implementation of the peace process in Sierra Leone. However, service men and women from the armed forces of other countries who fought on government's side if they committed any violations of humanitarian laws are subject to the laws of the countries that sent them. The Special Court, however, if so authorised by the UN Security Council can exercise jurisdiction over such as person.

Under Article 5 of its mandate, the Special Court has the powers to investigate and prosecute all war matters relating to child abuse or molestation, arson and offences relating to the wanton destruction of property under the Malicious Damage Act, 1861 and under the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 126 (Cap 31).

Article 6 of the court's prerogative relates to Individual Criminal Responsibility.

1. A person who planned, instigated, ordered, committed or otherwise aided and abetted in the planning, preparation or execution of a crime referred to in Articles 2 to 4 of the present statute is individually responsible for the crime.

2. The official position of any accused persons, whether as Head of State or Government or as a responsible government official, shall not relieve such person of criminal responsibility nor mitigate punishment.

3. The fact that any of the acts referred to in Articles 2 to 4 of the present statute was committed by a subordinate does not relieve his or her superior of criminal responsibility if he or she knew or had reason to know that the subordinate was about to commit such acts or had done so and the superior failed to take the necessary and reasonable measures to prevent such acts or to punish the perpetrators thereof.

4. The fact that an accused person acted pursuant to an order of a Government or of a superior shall not relieve him or her of criminal responsibility, but may be considered in mitigation of punishment if the Special Court determines that justice so requires.

Contd:



The people of Sierra Leone asked the international community to intervene



Doubts of Taylor's Al-Qaeda Links

The Analyst (Monrovia)

NEWS

August 27, 2004

Posted to the web August 27, 2004

Sierra Leone Court Suffers Setback

Exiled former president Charles MacArthur Ghankay Taylor is wanted to face trial in neighboring Sierra Leone on a 17-count indictment for his alleged role in the decade-long civil conflict that left most of that country devastated. But for a little over a year now, his extradition from Nigeria has been a subject of intense diplomatic shuttling, foot-dragging, heart-searching, and some say, controlled arms-twisting.

The Sierra Leonean Special Court itself has been digging up "evidences" to arouse within some western powers, mainly the United States of America, the need to compel Nigeria to let Taylor face his nemesis. But as The Analyst Staff Writer reports, the special court seems to have hit a dead end as even a U.S. commission investigating terrorist connections has expressed doubts about Al-Qaeda's African links with conflict diamonds.

The question many are asking now is, "How would the doubt affect the court's extradition quest and the magnitude of the trial?" The United States Commission investigating the September 11 terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the twin towers has reportedly expressed doubt about Al-Qaeda's African blood diamonds links.

The AFP quoting court sources said Thursday that despite evidences adduced by the office of the Chief Prosecutor of the Sierra Leonean War Crime Tribunal, David Crane, to boost pressure on the U.S. government to force Nigeria to hand Taylor over for trial, the commission has been treating the evidences presented thus far with a grain of salt.

" [T]he commission did not heed the report, going so far as to deny that there was 'no persuasive evidence that al-Qaeda funded itself by trading in African conflict diamonds,'" said the AFP report.

Expressing similar doubt about the role of West Africa's al-Qaeda conflict diamonds revenue in the terrorist bombings, former U.S. Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Joseph Melrose, told the AFP in an interview from his home in Pennsylvania: "You can't say it

hasn't happened, but you can't prove evidence in court because it is circumstantial evidence. But there is a long tradition in the diamond sector (not shady dealings) and they have to acknowledge that some of these blood diamonds could be terror diamonds." Further highlighting the proof of foot-dragging amongst U.S investigators concerning Al-Qaeda's African connections and the September 11 terrorist bombings, the AFP quoted a U.S diplomat as saying, "Try as they might, they just can't get Taylor. They even throw out the al-Qaeda connection and they still can't get him."

Washington Post's reporter Douglas Farah, commenting on the reported inkling amongst U.S. intelligence and diplomatic officials noted: "The United States has not perceived itself to have a strategic interest in sub-Saharan Africa on the terrorism front until very recently."

Unfortunately, the new realization is yet to feature in intelligence circles, observers said, taking cue from comments allegedly made by western officials lately.

There is therefore growing hunch that the reported inkling on the part of some key U.S. security and diplomatic officials in Washington may strengthen Nigeria's resolve not to let Taylor go and thereby reverse efforts for his trial.

When that happens, they contend, many who view Taylor's trials as a pace-setter to discourage military adventurism in the West African subregion would be left without hope. And they are convinced that that is likely, with the U.S. that has been in the vanguard of efforts to extradite Taylor now slowly bringing up the rear.

But analysts, relying on evidences accruing against Mr. Taylor and the accompanying pressure for his extradition, are adamant that the exiled former Liberian leader is most likely than not to remain on the hooks.

They pointed to a confidential report from the UN-backed war crimes court detailing how Mr. Taylor sold "conflict diamonds" to al-Qaeda that may have been used to finance the September 11 attacks as the most recent indication of the international community's readiness to press the case to its logical end.

"It is clear that al-Qaeda had been in West Africa since September 1998 and maintained a continuous presence in the area though 2002," said the document produced by the office of the prosecutor David Crane.

Besides Global Witness report which claims that the Taylor government facilitated access for al-Qaeda operatives into Sierra Leone and Liberia in exchange for diamonds and weapons, according to AFP, a report in the August 4, 2004 edition of the Boston Globe noted that Taylor was also paid protection money by al-Qaeda operatives, among them Ahmed Kahalfan Ghailani, a Tanzanian national who was arrested July 25 in Pakistan after a blazing gun battle.

The AFP then quoted the dossier of the special court as saying that one Ibrahim Bah, said to be a top RUF commander and go-between for Taylor and the RUF leadership, arranged for top al-Qaeda player, Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, to buy millions of dollars' worth of diamonds from Taylor that had been mined in Sierra Leone.

"Those diamonds were smuggled out through channels arranged by Taylor or Samih Ossaily and Aziz Nassour, both of whom are in custody in Belgium awaiting trial for their shady dealings in Sierra Leone," said the AFP report.

While no one in Freetown, Monrovia, or Abuja knows for certain what the reported foot-dragging in Washington may mean for the trial given that many relied on the U.S to force Nigeria's compliance, pressure in the subregion for Taylor's extradition has yet to subside.

They based their observations on the August 23 reports of the Vanguard newspaper based in Lagos, Nigeria which quotes the President of the nearly inaugurated West Africa Bar Association (WABA), Mr.

Femi Falana, as vowing to keep the torch of Taylor's extradition campaign alive.

According to Falana, who took over the organization's rein as pioneer over the weekend, WABA will shortly take a definite position on the legal push for the extradition of Mr. Taylor who is currently in exile in the Nigerian city of Calabar.

The newly established WABA is amongst several organizations, institutions, individuals including supposed victims of Taylor atrocities, and governments that are pushing for the extradition to face his nemesis.

Incidentally, an official of the Liberian National Bar Association (LNBA), Cllr. Marcus Jones, is the treasure of WABA.

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A Editorial

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[ANN] Norms of international justice

"The moral arm of the universe is long," Martin Luther King said in one of his memorable speeches. "It bends towards justice." But it is doubtful if the people of Cambodia, the site of the original "Killing Fields," feel this is likely.

Yet, their understandable cynicism may about to be confounded. Cambodia's National Assembly is poised to approve a government decision to ratify a treaty, over a decade in the making, to empower a special court to try surviving leaders of the Khmer Rouge, the Communist movement that refashioned the social and economic structure of their country by the sword and the bullet.

Cambodia incarnates the worst horrors of being caught in the crossfires of war. It was heavily bombed in secret by the Nixon administration. When the Vietnamese invaded it in 1979, Washington had the audacity to line up world opinion behind recognition of the defeated Khmer Rouge regime. The incongruous sight of the Khmer Rouge flag flying outside U.N. headquarters in New York was the most revolting testament to mass murder imaginable.

Finally, through the work of exiles and the United Nations, a kind of incipient democracy was created in Cambodia. Gradually, the government has come round to some sort of public trial of a small cadre of the Khmer Rouge's top leaders. Most of the judges will be Cambodian, but there will be one U.N.-appointed judge and one U.N.-appointed prosecutor. No conviction or acquittal is possible without their acquiescence.

This is the least intrusive of all international setups in an era that has seen in quick succession the creation of U.N. war crimes tribunals, for example in Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, plus the establishment of a permanent International Criminal Court to deal with future war crimes.

It would seem, despite the hostility of the Bush

administration (and also the governments of Russia, China and India) to the ICC, that the overall tide is flowing in the direction Martin Luther King said was inevitable.

But an influential number of people see it otherwise. In a recent issue of Harvard University's quarterly, International Security, Jack Snyder and Leslie Vinjamuri argue that "justice does not lead, it follows."

In other words, the human rights activists who have fought for these courts have it backwards. First, the authors say, you need a peaceful political order and then start to worry about justice. Only with a government that is at peace with its electorate and can govern without challenge can it be the right time to introduce norms and laws that will prevent future atrocities.

Thus for them, the Yugoslavian and Rwandan courts have been counterproductive, keeping chauvinistic feelings among the Serbs and Hutus inflamed. Although they do not spell it out, presumably they think the slow, tortoise-like approach of the Cambodian government has been the right one.

There is some truth on the authors' side. The Milosevic trial has been allowed to continue too long for it to produce quick therapy for a country still seized by the sanctity of its cause. The boil has not been lanced.

Indeed, one can go further and say it is difficult at the moment to argue that these courts have had a measurable deterrent effect on would-be war criminals. They still seem to thrive, as events in the Congo, Sudan, Afghanistan, Guatemala and, on a smaller scale, in Assam suggest. Don't the leaders of these ongoing atrocities read the writing on the international wall? Obviously not.

But the argument misses two important points. We do not in civilized countries have criminal justice systems that are capable of deterring all criminals. Deterrence only works at the margins. We seek justice in the courts partly to punish, partly to uphold a standard and partly in the hope that those punished will reflect on their crimes and resolve to put their past behind them.

It is the same in the international arena. We can hope some villains and governments may be deterred but should not count on it. Politicians like Pol Pot and Milosevic who decide on ethnic cleansing have all calculated the odds and decided, albeit mistakenly, that they will win through.

Nevertheless, a standard is defined. In contemporary

history it reaches back to the Nuremberg trials. Now it is being reinvigorated by the international courts. Over time, over generations, new standards of justice do develop. That is why black people are no longer lynched in the United States and South Africa, why democracy has spread so rapidly in the last 20 years and why, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the number of violent conflicts in the world has fallen steadily each year of the last decade. Martin Luther King was right.

By Jonathan Power The Statesman (India) / Asia News Network

2004.08.30

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UN fears child fighters are hired in Liberia

Monrovia - Child soldiers who fought during Liberia's 14-year civil war may be being recruited to fight again as mercenaries in neighbouring Guinea, a senior UN official said.

The UN has been investigating reports that guns, and former fighters unemployed since the end of the war a year ago, are crossing into Guinea where the failing health of veteran President Lansana Conte has raised fears of instability.

The UN deputy special representative to Liberia, Souren Seraydarian, said he knew of two former child soldiers now in care centres who had been offered money to go and fight in a neighbouring country but had turned it down.

"We were told that they were offered \$75 to participate in training and to go into one of the neighbouring countries," Seraydarian said late on Friday.

"Since Liberia has ratified the convention on the protection of child labour, there is an obligation on the part of the judiciary to prosecute those behind this type of activity."

The head of Liberia's national human rights commission said last month that 500 youths under the age of 17 had been recruited to go to Guinea. UN officials say in private there is little they can do to stop the traffic of guns and men.

An assistant defence minister in Liberia's transitional government, Johnson Leamen, was accused by one of his former aides earlier this month of recruiting young boys to launch an attack on Guinea, a charge he has strongly denied.

"I was contacted by my boss to recruit some boys. He promised to give me \$25 000 for the operation," aide Junior Payzine, who is now in hiding, told Reuters.

Liberia, a nation of about 3,2-million people founded by freed US slaves, has been torn apart by 14 years of on-and-off civil war which ended last August when former president Charles Taylor went into exile in Nigeria.

Some former combatants say the people trying to enrol new fighters to go to Guinea are Taylor loyalists. - Reuters

- This article was originally published on page 7 of The Cape Times on August 30, 2004

CAPE TIMES

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UNAMSIL withdraw from Masiaka this month

The Kenyan battalion in UNAMSIL (KENBATT 12) based in Masiaka are expected to withdraw from that township later this month and already, a four-man team of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces

(RSLAF), led by Lieutenant Mohamed Tarawalie of the Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) Unit, has in a joint exercise with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)'s KENBATT 12, disposed of

some ordinances at the northern town, a release from UNAMSIL states. The aim of this exercise was to showcase RSLAF's capability of disposing unwanted or damaged ordinances as UNAMSIL is in the process of drawing

down gradually on its military components to pave the way for the Government of Sierra Leone to resume total security responsibilities.

The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces EOD

unit actually carried out the task of demolishing the ordinances while UNAMSIL provided the Ammunition Technical Officer and the necessary demolition accessories to carry out the task.

Major Issack Noor Aden of

KENBATT, who supervised the operation, said in preparation for the withdrawal of KENBATT 12 from Masiaka later this month, the disposal of unserviceable ordinance was required.

Monday August 29th 2014



U.N. probes reports of Liberian child mercenaries

At least 500 youths recruited to fight in Guinea, report says

MONROVIA, Liberia (Reuters) -- Child soldiers who fought during Liberia's 14-year civil war may be being recruited to fight again as mercenaries in neighboring Guinea, a senior U.N. official said.

The United Nations has been investigating reports that guns and former fighters, unemployed since the end of the war a year ago, are crossing into Guinea, where the failing health of President Lansana Conte has raised fears of instability.

The U.N. deputy special representative to Liberia, Souren Seraydarian, said he knew of two former child soldiers now in care centers who had been offered money to go and fight in a neighboring country but had turned it down.

"We were told that they were offered \$75 to participate in training and to go into one of the neighboring countries," Seraydarian said late Friday.

"Since Liberia has ratified the convention on the protection of child labor, there is an obligation on the part of the judiciary to prosecute those behind this type of activity."

The head of Liberia's national human rights commission said last month that 500 youths under 17 had been recruited to go to Guinea. U.N. officials say in private there is little they can do to stop the traffic of guns and soldiers.

An assistant defense minister in Liberia's transitional government, Johnson Leamen, was accused by one of his former aides earlier this month of recruiting young boys to launch an attack on Guinea, a charge he has denied.

"I was contacted by my boss to recruit some boys. He promised to give me \$25,000 for the operation," former aide Junior Payzine, who is in hiding, told Reuters.

Liberia, a nation of 3.2 million founded by freed American slaves, has been torn apart by 14 years of on-and-off civil war that ended last August when President Charles Taylor went into exile in Nigeria.

His departure cleared the way for a peace deal with the rebels, the installation of a new interim government and a U.N.-led disarmament program.

Some former combatants say the people trying to enlist fighters for Guinea are Taylor loyalists.

Taylor, believed to be behind a web of interrelated conflicts in West Africa and wanted by Sierra Leone's war crimes tribunal, has long blamed Guinea for supporting the rebels who eventually forced him to flee.

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This story was printed from channelnewsasia.com

Title : Zimbabwe court finds Mann guilty over coup arms deal, absolves others

By :

Date : 27 August 2004 2349 hrs (SST)

URL : http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_world/view/103546/1/.html

HARARE : A court in Zimbabwe found the alleged British coup mastermind Simon Mann guilty of attempting to illegally buy arms to stage a putsch in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea but acquitted 66 other co-accused.

Mann, wearing a khaki prison shirt and shorts, showed no emotion as he stood before Magistrate Mishrod Guvamombe who read out the verdict at a makeshift court in the maximum security Chikurubi prison.

"The action by the accused (Mann) amounts at the most to attempting to purchase firearms. The accused is found guilty," said Guvamombe. He said sentences would be handed down on September 10.

Mann, a bespectacled former member of Britain's crack Special Air Service military unit was alleged to have been the mastermind behind the suspected plot to overthrow President Teodoro Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea.

He was arrested along with 69 other alleged mercenaries on March 7 when a plane stopped off in Harare to pick up weapons that the men claim were to be used to guard a diamond mine in Democratic Republic of Congo.

The state has asked for a jail sentence of up to 10 years in prison for Mann, who is also linked to accused coup financier Mark Thatcher, the son of former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher.

Guvamombe acquitted 66 other suspected soldiers of fortune Friday, although most of them -- 64 -- and three crew members are still facing sentencing on minor charges of breaching the country's immigration and aviation laws.

Two other men described as weapons inspectors who were arrested along with Mann at the airport where they awaited the plane's arrival -- South Africans Harry Carlse and Jacobus Horne -- faced no charges and were to be released later in the day.

As the judge declared the acquittal of the 66 men, applause broke out from the small group of family members who attended the hearing.

There were tears and a flurry of excited calls on mobile phones outside the prison as relatives broke the news to family members back home in South Africa.

"I think it was a fantastic day," said Harry's brother Johnny Carlse. "This has been the best news in six months. I can't believe it."

Namibian Alexandra Ngombe said she was overcome with relief when she heard the verdict after having traveled to Zimbabwe ten times to visit her detained husband Kauhitwa Ngombe.

"It's been very stressful," said Ngombe, a mother of three. "I was worried, but now he's coming back home."

Guvamombe said the testimony by some of the men on how they were recruited in South Africa was "suspicious", but said the state had failed to link the men to the purchase of firearms.

Some of the men -- who included Angolan, Namibian and Congolese nationals travelling on South African passports -- said during the trial that they were recruited via telephone in South Africa to work as security guards.

"The manner in which they were recruited arouses some suspicion, however the suspicion alone is

not enough," Guvamombe said.

"The state failed to discharge its onus by proving the accused persons guilty beyond reasonable doubt."

The prosecution has asked for jail terms of between one year to 18 months for violations of immigration offenses which 67 of the men, including the three-members crew, are facing.

Mann and Nick du Toit, a South African on trial in Equatorial Guinea in connection with the same coup plot, set up Executive Outcomes, which operated from Pretoria in South Africa and was active in Angola, Sierra Leone and Papua New Guinea.

The trial in Malabo opened on Monday with Du Toit admitting to a limited role in the plot, overseeing logistics.

The prosecution in Equatorial Guinea said it is seeking the death penalty for him.

The case took a new twist this week with the arrest in Cape Town of Mark Thatcher, who has been charged with bankrolling the alleged plot to topple the regime in Equatorial Guinea.

Thatcher has denied the charges but admitted that he is friends with Mann, who is his neighbour in the upscale Cape Town suburb of Constantia.

- AFP

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A Boy's Own story gone very wrong

By Elizabeth Day and Katharine Houreld in Malabo
(Filed: 29/08/2004)

In a cramped, dark prison cell, the floor slippery with sewage, rats and rainwater, a filthy figure crouches in the corner. This is Black Beach jail in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea and, although barely recognisable after five months in solitary confinement, the prisoner is Nick Du Toit, a former South African mercenary and arms dealer arrested in March with 17 other men on suspicion of plotting a coup to overthrow the tiny West African country's government.

If the Equatorial Guinean authorities get their way, Mr Du Toit, 48 - who faces the death penalty if convicted - could soon be joined by a celebrated cell mate: Sir Mark Thatcher. Last week, amid the neat lawns and smart, white mansions of the luxurious Cape Town suburb of Constantia, Sir Mark, 51, was arrested by a crack team of South African police dubbed "The Scorpions" after being accused of involvement in the same alleged coup. The South Africans believe that he may have broken laws banning residents from taking part in foreign military action.

The authorities in Malabo, meanwhile, are keen to question him. Yesterday Equatorial Guinea's deputy prime minister, Ricardo Mangué Obama Nfube, said that the country had requested international arrest warrants for Sir Mark and other British financiers accused in the alleged coup plot.



Sir Mark is arrested by police from the investigative Scorpions branch

The Equatorial Guinean government has not ruled out requesting his extradition - or his incarceration at Black Beach. "We are investigating charges relating to financing terrorism and mercenary operations," a lawyer for the government said last night. "We are not at the extradition stage yet but if he comes, he will be in detention - the law here will put him in detention in a safe place. And that could be Black Beach."

It is believed that the South African government would be reluctant to send Sir Mark to Malabo because there is no formal extradition treaty, and Equatorial Guinea operates the death penalty. The government lawyer, however, claimed that President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, "as a Catholic", was personally against the death penalty.

Belinda Du Toit, who has been attending her husband's trial in Malabo, said that he had been tortured while in prison. "My husband is a strong man but he has been beaten," she said, speaking exclusively to the Telegraph. "He has lost about 35 kilos and looks like a little old man of 70."

"For the first four weeks they were hit with sjamboks [whips made from leather hides], kicked and hit. One of the guards stamped on Nick's foot so hard the toenail came off, and they forced handcuffs around his ankles even though they were too small and bit through the flesh. He still has the scars six months later."

Nearly 3,000 miles away, behind the nine-foot high security fence at the Thatcher mansion in Constantia, the spectre of Black Beach is casting a grim shadow. Sir Mark was still in his pyjamas when the Scorpions filed into his hallway at 7.20am on Wednesday, but their visit would not have been entirely unexpected. After his neighbour, Simon Mann, 51, was arrested in March it was only a matter of time before they came knocking at his door.

During his trial, Mr Du Toit identified Mann as the prime organiser of the alleged plot. Last week, he told the court that Mann had arranged a meeting with him and Mr Thatcher in which Mr Thatcher expressed interest in buying military helicopters for a mining operation in Sudan.

Mann, an Old Etonian former SAS officer and scion of the Watney brewing empire, was convicted by a Zimbabwean court last week of attempting to buy arms after being arrested at the airport in Harare along with 64 mercenaries on board a Boeing 727. The magistrate, Mishrod Guvamombe, said that the prosecution had proved only that "the action by the accused amounts at the most to attempting to buy firearms". Mr Du Toit, 48, was reportedly his co-conspirator.

The group was allegedly en route to overthrow the government of President Obiang. Their aim, according to prosecutors, was to tap into the country's rich oil reserves for a small group of wealthy backers including, it is alleged, Sir Mark.

In a statement issued after his release on bail, Sir Mark categorically denied any involvement. "I am innocent of all charges made against me," he said. "I have been and am co-operating fully with the authorities in order to resolve the matter. I have no involvement in an alleged coup in Equatorial Guinea and I reject all suggestions to the contrary."

The complex web of intrigue in which Sir Mark's name would eventually - fairly or unfairly - be drawn had reportedly been spun several months before his arrest. At Villa Musica, the palatial mansion rented by Mann and his auburn-haired wife,

Amanda, in Constantia, the couple would host lavish drinks parties for their friends and neighbours by one of the two swimming pools. Guests would be served champagne by a butler, hired for £50 a day, and, in between sips, admire evidence of the Mannses' impressive, but largely unexplained, fortune - the tennis court, the paddocks and the garaging for five cars. When the guests were at their most relaxed, Mann would make his move.

"It was a casual conversation at a drinks party around a swimming pool in January this year about 'a security project' at an African mine," one businessman, who claimed he was approached, has recalled. "Looking back it was all very casual and vague, but the hook was the quick profit. If you showed interest then you were invited to another meeting and given more details. Once Equatorial Guinea was mentioned, I declined and heard no more about it."

Those who did not decline were allegedly asked for contributions of around £100,000 each with the promise of a 10-fold return within weeks - up to a £1 million share of a £15 million kitty. They would also get first refusal on future oil concessions in Equatorial Guinea.

While all the prime suspects have denied involvement in the botched coup, the names of the financial backers were reportedly noted on a so-called "Wonga List" by James Kershaw - a precocious 24-year-old who is believed to have acted as Mann's accountant. Mr Kershaw could not be traced by South African police following Sir Mark's arrest. The Telegraph can reveal, however, that he has now entered a witness protection scheme after voluntarily surrendering to police on the advice of his lawyers. He is being guarded around the clock by police officers because of fears that he may be the target of an assassination attempt.

"He is young, and he got caught up in something he could not really control," said one official close to the investigation. His data became known as "the Wonga List" after Mann wrote a letter - intercepted by South African investigators - to his wife from prison saying that what he needed to get out was "a large splodge of wonga", or cash.

Prosecutors are believed to be relying on Mr Kershaw's evidence, as "keeper of the secrets", to convict senior figures in the coup's alleged hierarchy. The list is said to include the names of Sir Mark and J H Archer, believed by prosecutors to refer to Lord Archer, the disgraced Conservative peer. Mann's Guernsey-based bank account shows a £74,000 deposit made by J H Archer just four days before Mann was arrested.

Lord Archer, whose first names are Jeffrey Howard, has denied any involvement and swiftly issued a statement through his lawyers stating that he had "no prior knowledge" of the alleged coup and that he had not spoken to Sir Mark for "approximately 10 years".

Investigators believe that involvement was limited to just 15 backers: those behind the plot allegedly nicknamed it the "time-share coup" because there was room only for the 15 investors. According to Manns' statement, the group allied itself with Severo Moto, the exiled leader of the Party for Progress of Equatorial Guinea, whom Mann is said to have met in Madrid some months earlier.

Mr Moto, once a cabinet minister, stood as an opposition candidate in the 1996 Presidential elections against President Obiang but his name was left off the voters' roll and hundreds of opposition supporters were detained and tortured. He sought exile in Spain a year later.

Mann was allegedly to be in charge of the logistics along with Mr Du Toit, a former member of the South African army's elite Special Task Forces Unit. The pair had plenty of experience in the torrid world of African politics. In South Africa, Mann had set up the security consultancy Executive Outcomes in 1993 and, two years later, co-founded Sandline International, a private military outfit. Neither organisation has been linked with the alleged coup.

Executive Outcomes reputedly earned millions from the Angolan government by guarding oil installations against rebel attacks during the civil war in the early 1990s. Sandline was linked to the civil war in Sierra Leone and the firm is believed to have delivered "logistical support" - including guns - to the country while it was under a UN arms embargo.

Mann and Mr Du Toit are said to have recruited the 64 veterans of South Africa's bush wars during apartheid, many of them black mercenaries from Angola and Namibia. The alleged plan was to collect a consignment of AK-47 rifles, mortar bombs and 75,000 rounds of ammunition in Harare and then fly on to Equatorial Guinea.

According to Mann's statement to the Zimbabwean authorities, the meeting with Mr Moto was engineered by Ely Calil, a wealthy businessman of Lebanese extraction with an inherited £20 million oil fortune who is based in London. It is a claim that Mr Calil strenuously denies, making the point that allegations made against him have come from people who have been tortured.

Mr Moto is said to have asked for Mann's assistance to escort him back to power in Equatorial Guinea "while simultaneously there would be an uprising of both military and civilians against Obiang," said Mann, in his statement. "I agreed to try and

help the cause."

Mr Moto refused to be drawn when the Telegraph questioned him last week about his alleged involvement. "There's nothing I can say about Mark Thatcher," he said. "I don't even know him. I think you have mistaken me for someone else when you ask me about Jeffrey Archer as well."

Of course, for Mann there was a substantial sweetener: the discovery of vast gas and oil deposits off the coast of Equatorial Guinea in the mid-90s had turned the country into the world's fastest growing economy. The population of 500,000 has seen little benefit, however, with President Obiang retaining sole access to payments from American oil companies.

Coup or no coup, according to Mann's friends, the lure of carrying out "one last job" may have been irresistible. He was, they said, desperate to ensure that he and his eight-month pregnant wife, whom he called "The Duchess", could continue to live in the style to which they had become accustomed.

"[Their life] is like something out of a magazine," said a friend, "but that sort of lifestyle is expensive to maintain and I don't think Simon could resist the thought of lucrative deals coming his way or, I have to say, the Boys' Own Adventure side of it as well."

Last night, according to his lawyer, the irrepressible Mann was already hatching plans for a money-spinning film of his arrest and detention when he eventually returns to Britain. Jonathan Samukange, Mann's lawyer, said he "wanted to put his side of the story".

"He is in a very positive state of mind because we expect he will be given a short prison term or even a small fine when sentencing is handed down on September 10," Mr Samkunge said.

He said that Mann was "very surprised" to hear of Sir Mark's arrest, and was "naturally concerned, as any friend would be". He insisted that Mann had nothing to do with the coup plot. "What has happened to Thatcher has nothing to do with what Simon was doing in Zimbabwe," he said.

Sir Mark's lawyers insist that their client was simply involved in the supply of a helicopter for an air ambulance service in west Africa. They dismiss his arrest as "a showboating exercise to make a political point" - namely, that any illicit enterprises conducted by wealthy white men will not be tolerated and that a very public example needs to be made to deter others.

"As Mark is involved in the helicopter brokering business, it would not be surprising if his name comes up in a helicopter deal in Africa," said a friend.

Sir Mark's mother, Lady Thatcher, the former British prime minister, has told close friends that she staunchly believes "that when he comes to court his innocence will be proved". Lord Bell, the Tory peer and advertising guru who is advising her, said that Lady Thatcher's son was "extremely confident" about being vindicated.

- Additional reporting by Jane Flanagan in Cape Town, Philip Sherwell, Chris Logan and Carmen Bond

- » **28 August 2004: Guineans want to question Thatcher**
- » **26 August 2004: Thatcher's son held over Africa coup plot**
- » **23 August 2004: Captured mercenaries escape mass execution**

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How new Africa made fools of the white mischief-makers

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The days when white mercenaries could walk into small African countries and take them over appear to be gone. The coup plot against Equatorial Guinea, with its cast of old Etonians, adventurers and shady money men, failed because of its leaders' incompetence - and because of a new spirit of co-operation among Africans.

"Things have changed in Africa over the past few years," said a friend of Simon Mann, the old Etonian now awaiting sentence in Zimbabwe for attempting to buy arms illegally. "The days are gone when you could recruit a bunch of moustaches, load up some ammunition and take over a country - especially if you are a white man." Mr Mann says the weapons were for a mine security operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo; the Zimbabweans and others say they were for a coup in the oil-rich state of Equatorial Guinea. But the truth of his friend's words are evident as the 51-year-old former SAS officer sits in Chikurubi prison near Harare, facing a heavy sentence at his next hearing on 10 September. In Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea, Nick du Toit, Mr Mann's associate, is on trial for his life. And under house arrest behind heavy iron gates in Constantia, one of Cape Town's smartest suburbs, Sir Mark Thatcher is contemplating his future.

The indulged son of Baroness Thatcher got out of several scrapes when his mother was Prime Minister, but there is nothing she can do to extricate him from his most serious trouble yet. The businessman, also 51, has been charged under South Africa's Foreign Military Assistance Act with involvement in financing the coup plot, and faces up to 15 years in jail if convicted. Although he is unlikely to be extradited to Equatorial Guinea - no extradition treaty exists between the two countries, and South Africa, like Britain, refuses to send suspects to states that retain the death penalty - legal officers from there may be allowed to question him in Cape Town. According to legal statements by Mr Mann and Mr du Toit, a force of mercenaries recruited in South Africa were to fly to Zimbabwe, pick up arms and ammunition and fly on to Equatorial Guinea. In return for \$1.8m (£1m) and lucrative contracts, they would help to depose President Teodoro Obiang Nguema and replace him with Severo Moto, an exiled opposition politician based in Madrid. If he was not killed in the operation, President Obiang was to have been flown to Spain.

But how could the politics of a small, sweaty African microstate have entangled such a varied cast of characters? These include not only Lady Thatcher's son but some of her closest former aides, such as Lord Archer, whose friend, the Lebanese-born, British-based oil trader Ely Calil, is named by Mr Mann as the chief sponsor of the coup. (Both Lord Archer and Mr Calil have denied any prior knowledge or involvement.) Add in ex-special forces operatives from Britain and South Africa, not to mention two African dictators - President Obiang and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe - and the story begins to resemble a Frederick Forsyth thriller, a post-modernist Dogs of War in which the "natives" actually win. And

that, an Independent on Sunday investigation shows, is the point. Not only does the affair resurrect the era when white mercenaries attempted to overturn regimes across Africa, it brings back half-forgotten figures from the 1980s in Britain, when a class of deal-makers and influence-peddlers operated in the shadow of the seemingly unconquerable Iron Lady, seeking to turn her grip on the British electorate to profit.

When his mother took power Mark Thatcher was 26, with an undistinguished career at school and in business. There was little reason to expect that 25 years later he would be worth an estimated £60m, with mansions in Cape Town and Texas and a network of business contacts around the world. Like others, Sir Mark (who inherited a baronetcy when his father, Sir Denis, died last year) did well out of his connection to one of the most internationally admired British Prime Ministers of recent times. But the questions and controversies arising from his use of the Thatcher name drove him first to the United States and then to South Africa. There he made friends with Simon Mann - who owns a luxury homestead in Hout Bay, another up-market Cape Town enclave - Nick du Toit and other former military men using their expertise to make money out of Africa's chronic instability. Mr Mann appears to be the only person who really knows where all the pieces of this jigsaw fit, who was really behind the coup plot and who is on the mythical "wonga list" of investors. But the whole affair would never have acquired such international notoriety if it were not for the letter he smuggled out of prison.

"Please!" read the intercepted note to his advisers. "It is essential that we get properly organised." It urges them to make maximum efforts to contact "Smelly" - taken to refer to Mr Calil - and "Scratcher", a nickname for Sir Mark. It also names David Hart, presumed to be the same businessman who helped Lady Thatcher break the 1984-85 miners' strike. Mann writes: "What will get us out is MAJOR CLOUT ... once we get into a real trial scenario we are f****d." On a page torn from a magazine, Mr Mann tells his team to chase up expected "project funds" from investors including "Scratcher" who has the figure "200" in brackets. This has been interpreted as meaning that Sir Mark had promised a sum of \$200,000, but gives no indication that it was intended for any illegal activity, and indeed implies that no money was ever actually handed over. Among the four people to whom the note was addressed are Nigel Morgan, like Mr Mann a former Guards officer, and James Kershaw, a 24-year-old who has worked for both men. Mr Kershaw, who is said to have handled money transfers for Mr Mann's company, Logo, is expected to testify against Sir Mark, according to the Scorpions, the elite anti-corruption unit that arrested him on Wednesday. His evidence may be crucial: despite voluminous paperwork connected with the coup attempt, there have been no reports of any document that carries Sir Mark's name.

But whatever their past friendship, "Scratcher" must be rueing the day he ever met Simon Mann. The former secret soldier is a throwback to the days of empire, a British public schoolboy adventurer prepared to interfere in the Byzantine politics of third world countries. "He is very English, a romantic, tremendously good company," said the film director Paul Greengrass. In his first and only role as a professional actor, Mr Mann played the part of Colonel Derek Wilford, commander of the paratroopers in Londonderry in Greengrass's gritty television reconstruction of Bloody Sunday. After Eton and Sandhurst, the 19-year-old Mr Mann joined the Scots Guards in 1972, but his daredevil instincts soon drew him to the SAS. A troop commander in 22 SAS, specialising in intelligence and counter-terrorism, he served in

Cyprus, Germany, Norway, Canada, central America and Northern Ireland before leaving the Army in 1985. Although he began by selling supposedly hack-proof computer software, like many SAS veterans he also operated in the security business, reportedly providing bodyguards to wealthy Arabs to protect their Scottish estates from poachers. He remained part of 23 SAS, the Territorial Army section, and briefly returned to the colours on the staff of General Sir Peter de la Billiere during the first Gulf War in 1991.

Security consulting in the Gulf area followed, but his connection with Africa predominated. He was hired by Eben Barlow, a South African, to help run Executive Outcomes, the first of the many private military companies now operating around the globe. Both men rapidly became rich, most notably from a series of security deals in Angola, where Executive Outcomes not only protected oil and diamond fields, but trained Angolan troops and fought Unita rebels. The company also helped the Sierra Leone government fight off rebels in the mid-1990s. All this gained Mr Mann not only a mansion in Cape Town but Inchmery, a 20-acre riverside estate in Hampshire that once belonged to the Rothschilds. Until recently it was rented out to Dame Marjorie Scardino, chief executive of the Pearson group, owners of the Financial Times. Mr Mann, now a dual citizen of Britain and South Africa, bought the estate through a company registered in the offshore tax haven of Guernsey. But why should a man past 50, who had earned enough to live in style without ever working again, have become involved in such a hair-raising caper as the Equatorial Guinea plot appears to have been? According to his friends, it was the drug of adventure. One said he had been warned by the British as well as the South African authorities that he should "hang up his boots", but the ex-SAS man seems to have ignored the advice.

What is perhaps most surprising about the attempted coup is its incompetence. A planeload of obvious mercenaries leaves South Africa, no longer a country which encourages such activity, then lands in Zimbabwe. If the receiving officials were supposed to have been bribed, it had not been done effectively, but in any case the Zimbabweans appeared to have been warned in advance. It took little time after that to arrest the alleged advance guard in Equatorial Guinea, where Mr du Toit is on trial with seven other South Africans, six Armenians and four local citizens. But the greatest folly was the lack of security. Mr Mann's 66 fellow defendants in Zimbabwe, including the 64 men who were travelling on South African passports when their plane was seized, were acquitted on the arms charge, with the magistrate accepting their plea that they did not know where they were going. It would seem, however, that half of South Africa did. Rumours of the impending coup attempt were circulating in Cape Town, Johannesburg and London well in advance. The paper trail linked to the plot was so extensive that some observers at first believed that they had been faked to make a case. But Mr Mann, it seems, wanted contracts signed for every part of this dubious scheme. Mr du Toit was even required to sign a company-to-company contract to perform his part of the coup. Why the former SAS officer might have wanted such a document is a mystery: it could hardly have been produced in court in the event of a dispute.

That the plot fell apart so damagingly is hardly surprising, given how wide knowledge of it went in Britain as well as South Africa. "What Simon Mann appears not to have realised is that there is much greater co-ordination among African countries, including intelligence co-operation, to put a stop to coups," said one source. "Nigeria, the regional power, stepped in recently to reverse a coup in Sao Tomé, and was ready to do the same in Equatorial Guinea. The fact that the operation was penetrated by South African

intelligence prevented a lot of bloodshed." Britain, as well as South Africa, has changed, but Mr Mann and his friends seemed equally oblivious to that. Gone are the days when operators such as Sir James Goldsmith and John Aspinall, both now dead, sought to convince a Conservative government that Britain's interests as well as their own would be served by backing such Africans as Angola's Jonas Savimbi, also deceased, and South Africa's Mangosuthu Buthelezi. The two African leaders were promoted as the Christian, anti-Communist alternative to the likes of Nelson Mandela, whom Lady Thatcher once described as a terrorist. But the Conservatives are no longer in power, and Mr Mandela has been welcomed here on a state visit as president of a free, democratic South Africa - facts which appear to have been overlooked by the heedless coup plotters.

The hapless Nick du Toit, a former South African special officer and member of Executive Outcomes, stands to come off worst. He confessed to his role within a day of arrest in Malabo, and has continued to help identify other plotters since. Despite President Obiang's claim that he is not seeking the death penalty, the prosecutor in the Malabo court has called for the execution of those found guilty. The verdicts are expected by the end of this week. Unless Zimbabwe goes back on its decision not to extradite him to Equatorial Guinea, Mr Mann will fare better, even if he receives the maximum sentence of 10 years. He could well be extradited back to South Africa to face further charges, but some believe that with his rich and influential friends, he could receive a discreet pardon in a year or two, once the dust has settled. He could even be in line for a healthy cheque from Hollywood. As for Mark Thatcher, he is fighting back. His circle is claiming that much disinformation has been spread to implicate him and distract attention from the real culprits. But his past is troubled, and the proceedings against him are likely to be protracted and messy. Clearing his name could require every ounce of his much-touted influence.

The making of Mark

Sir Mark Thatcher never seemed to have anything going for him but his name and his mother's uncritical love. He is famously charmless and not noted for his academic prowess. He left Harrow School with three O-levels, and left his first job, at the City firm Touche Ross, after failing his accountancy exams three times. But when it comes to exploiting the opportunities afforded by the Thatcher surname, he has graduated cum laude. Mark and his twin sister, Carol, with whom relations are frosty, were 26 when Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister in 1979. Various failed ventures lay behind him, including an attempt to break into motor racing, but it was not until he went missing on a rally in the Sahara in 1982, causing his mother much public anguish, that his activities came to public attention. Two years later, it was reported that he had gained a commission on a £300m deal won by the Cementation construction company after Lady Thatcher had recommended it to the Sultan of Oman. It was a factor in his departure for the US, and he has not lived in Britain since.

In Dallas, Mark met his wife Diane, from a super-rich Texas family, but controversy continued to dog him. He was accused of exploiting his mother's name to gain a £12m commission on the giant al-Yamamah arms deal with Saudi Arabia, and hit legal troubles in the US, including a charge, later dropped, of alleged underpayment of taxes. In 1995, Sir Mark moved to Cape Town with his family, although Diane and the two children are reported to spend lengthy periods in Texas, where they are now to attend school. Apart from a money-lending scheme to local policemen which collapsed amid rancour, his business activities in South

Africa have attracted little attention - until now. But he will always have the Thatcher name, with its lustre enhanced on the death of his father last year by an inherited title. Once again, the family has helped.

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HEADLINE: AP ENTERPRISE: **War** gets headlines, but peace is breaking out in more corners of **world**

BYLINE: CHARLES J. HANLEY; AP Special Correspondent

DATELINE: NEW YORK

BODY:

The chilling sights and sounds of **war** fill newspapers and television screens worldwide, but **war** itself is in decline, peace researchers **report**.

In fact, the number killed in battle has fallen to its lowest point in the post-**World War** II period, dipping below 20,000 a year by one measure. Peacemaking missions, meantime, are growing in number.

"International engagement is blossoming," said American scholar Monty G. Marshall. "There's been an enormous amount of activity to try to end these **conflicts**."

For months the battle **reports** and casualty tolls from Iraq and Afghanistan have put **war** in the headlines, but Swedish and Canadian nongovernmental groups tracking armed **conflict** globally find a general decline in numbers from peaks in the 1990s.

The authoritative Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in a 2004 Yearbook **report** obtained by The Associated Press in advance of publication, says **19** major armed **conflicts** were under way worldwide in 2003, a sharp drop from 33 **wars** counted in 1991. The Canadian organization Project Ploughshares, using broader criteria to define armed **conflict**, says in its new annual **report** that the number of **conflicts** declined to 36 in 2003, from a peak of 44 in 1995.

The Stockholm institute counts continuing **wars** that have produced 1,000 or more battle-related deaths in any single year. Project Ploughshares counts any armed **conflict** that produces 1,000 such deaths cumulatively.

The Stockholm **report**, to be released next month, notes three **wars** were ended as of 2003 - in Angola, Rwanda and Somalia - and a fourth, the separatist **war** in India's Assam state, was dropped from the "major" category after casualties were recalculated.

It lists three new **wars** in 2003 - in Liberia and in Sudan's western region of Darfur, along with the U.S.-

British invasion of Iraq. These joined such long-running **conflicts** as the Kashmiri insurgency in India, the leftist guerrilla **war** in Colombia, and the separatist **war** in Russia's Chechnya region.

Other major armed **conflicts** listed by the Stockholm researchers were in Algeria, Burundi, Peru, Indonesia's Aceh province, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Israel, and Turkey. Their list also includes the U.S.-al-Qaida **war**, mainly in Afghanistan; the unresolved India-Pakistan **conflict**, and two insurgencies in the Philippines.

"Not only are the numbers declining, but the intensity" - the bloodshed in each **conflict** - "is declining," said Marshall, founder of a University of Maryland program studying political violence.

The continuing **wars** in Algeria, Chechnya and Turkey are among those that have subsided into low-intensity **conflicts**. At Canada's University of British Columbia, scholars at the Human Security Center are quantifying this by tackling the difficult task of calculating **war** casualties worldwide for their Human Security **Report**, to be released late in 2004.

A collaboration with Sweden's Uppsala University, that **report** will conservatively estimate battle-related deaths worldwide at 15,000 in 2002 and, because of the Iraq **war**, rising to 20,000 in 2003. Those estimates are sharply down from annual tolls ranging from 40,000 to 100,000 in the 1990s, a time of major costly **conflicts** in such places as the former Zaire and southern Sudan, and from a post-**World War II** peak of 700,000 in 1951.

The Canadian center's director, Andrew Mack, said the figures don't include deaths from **war**-induced starvation and disease, deaths from ethnic **conflicts** not involving states, or unopposed massacres, such as in Rwanda in 1994.

Why the declines? Peace scholars point to crosscurrents of global events.

For one thing, the Cold **War's** end and breakup of the Soviet Union in 1989-91 ignited civil and separatist **wars** in the old East bloc and elsewhere, as the superpowers' hands were lifted in places where they'd long held allies in check. Those **wars** surged in the early 1990s.

"The decline over the past decade measures the move away from that unusual period," said Ernie Regehr, director of Project Ploughshares.

At the same time, however, the U.S.-Russian thaw worked against **war** as well, scholars said, by removing superpower support in "proxy **wars**," as in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Cambodia. With dwindling money and arms, warmakers had to seek peace.

The United Nations and regional bodies, meanwhile, were mobilizing for more effective peacemaking worldwide.

"The end of the Cold **War** liberated the U.N." - historically paralyzed by U.S.-Soviet antagonism - "to do what its founders had originally intended and more," Mack said.

In 2003 alone, from Ivory Coast to the Solomon Islands, 14 multilateral missions were launched to protect or reinforce peace settlements, the highest number of new peace missions begun in a single year since the Cold **War**, the Stockholm institute will **report**.

The recent record shows "**conflicts** don't end without some form of intervention from outside," said Renata Dwan, who heads the institute's program on armed **conflict and conflict** management.

Most new missions, half of which were in Africa, were undertaken by regional organizations or coalitions of states, often with U.N. sanction.

The idea of U.N. primacy in **world** peace and security took a "bruising" at U.S. hands in 2003, when

Washington circumvented the U.N. Security Council to invade Iraq, Dwan noted. But meanwhile, elsewhere, the **world** body was deploying a monthly average of 38,500 military peacekeepers in 2003 - triple the level of 1999.

By year's end, the institute yearbook will conclude, "the U.N. was arguably in a stronger position than at any time in recent years."

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Mercenary faces 10-year term in arms deal

THE GUARDIAN , CAPE TOWN

Sunday, Aug 29, 2004, Page 6

Simon Mann, the leader of the failed Equatorial Guinea coup attempt that led to the arrest of Mark Thatcher, son of former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, faces up to 10 years in jail after being found guilty of attempting to possess dangerous weapons by a court in Zimbabwe.

Mann, a UK Special Air Service veteran who was arrested at Harare airport in March along with a plane full of mercenaries while waiting for a weapons delivery, will be sentenced next month.

A magistrate at a makeshift courthouse in a Harare maximum-security prison found 66 of the mercenaries, all travelling on South African passports, not guilty of the weapons offenses.

Most of the men held in Zimbabwe had already pleaded guilty last month to lesser charges of violating Zimbabwe's immigration and civil aviation laws, carrying a maximum penalty of two years in jail and a fine.

Prosecutors said Equatorial Guinea's Spanish-based opposition leader offered the group \$1.8 million and oil rights to overthrow President Teodoro Obiang Nguema.

Mann admitted trying to order assault rifles, grenades, anti-tank rocket launchers and other weapons from Zimbabwe Defence Industries, but magistrate Mishrod Guvamombe said prosecutors failed to prove their case against the 64 other men arrested when their ageing Boeing 727 landed at Harare International Airport on March 7, and two already in Zimbabwe with Mann at the time.

He also acquitted Mann of an additional charge of taking possession of the weapons. The men, including Mann, maintain they were en route to jobs protecting a mining operation in eastern Congo.



Alleged UK mercenary Simon Mann, center, walks at a prison near Harare, Zimbabwe on Friday. Mann was found guilty of attempting to buy arms; 66 others were acquitted. Photo: AP

Fifteen other suspected mercenaries, including South African businessman Nick du Toit, who has admitted to supporting the coup attempt, remained under house arrest at his Cape Town home.

Mark Thatcher was charged with helping to fund the coup attempt after a dawn raid by the Scorpions, an elite police squad which has been investigating links between Mann and several high-profile businessmen.

The South African government said yesterday it was considering a request from Equatorial Guinea for investigators to be allowed to travel to Cape Town to interview Mark Thatcher over the coup attempt. However there has been no request for extradition, something that is thought highly unlikely because the countries have no extradition treaty.

Mann, is a scion of the Watney's brewing empire and went to Eton and Sandhurst before becoming an officer in the Special Air Service. Part thrill-seeker, part businessman, he left the army in the early 1980s, moving into the security and mercenary business. He set up Executive Outcomes, making a fortune protecting oil installations from rebels in Angola's civil war.

In 1995 he became involved in an offshoot, Sandline International, with ex-Scots Guard Tim Spicer, and shipped arms to Sierra Leone in contravention of a UN embargo.

Mann has been in solitary confinement since his arrest in March. His lawyers claim he has been tortured and assaulted by prison officers, and has suffered lice, inedible food and general deprivation.

"Our situation is not good and it is very URGENT," Mann wrote to his wife and lawyers in a letter smuggled out of the jail but intercepted by South African intelligence. "It may be that getting us out comes down to a large splodge of wonga! Of course investors did not think this would happen." The letter then went on to refer to "Scratcher" -- a nickname given to Mark Thatcher at Harrow because he had acne.

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