

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



School Outing at Kent Beach on the Peninsula.

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:

Wednesday, 31 October 2007

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Local NewsCharles Taylor's Verdict 2010 / *Concord Times*

Page 3

International NewsLiberia to get US abuses report / *BBC*

Page 4

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary / *UNMIL*

Pages 5-7

Report: Myanmar Recruiting Child Soldiers / *Associated Press*

Pages 8-9

Applying Conviction Politics to Iraq / *TPM Cafe*

Pages 12-13

Special Court Supplement

Outreach at the National Stadium, in Pictures

Page 14

Concord Times
Wednesday, 31 October 2007

Charles Taylor's verdict 2010

By
Mariana
Kandeh

Special Court Registrar Tuesday announced that the court would pass verdict on war crime indictee, former Liberian president, Charles Taylor in 2010.

Herman Von Hebel stated

at a one-day seminar organized by the Court's Outreach Section for women and children serving agencies, and institutions that Taylor's defence and prosecution need ample time to put their documents together in order to support their arguments.

Von Hebel said the trial, which would last for 18 months will be closed in 2009.

"The Court has no firm information on the whereabouts of indicted former junta leader, Johnny Paul Koroma.

Contd. page 6



Special Court Registrar -Herman Von Hebel

Charles Taylor's verdict 2010

From page 1

civil society groups, the judiciary and senior experts from the United Nations in the first half of 2008," he stated.

The Registrar noted that the work of the Court would end in 2009 when a final report will be presented to the people of Sierra Leone.

He stated that during the life of the Court a number of laws were adopted to protect and

strengthen the position of women and children and urged the new government to continue from where the previous government stopped.

He said the Appeal Court judgement for the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) will be out by December or January while Appeal Court judgement in the Civil Defence Force (CDF) case will be out in April

next year.

"The Special Court will remain as an icon of justice. The new government has told the Court that they do not have the financial capacity to maintain the facilities of the Court," he said.

The Court's Prosecutor, Stephen Rapp said the Court is tracing information leading to Taylor's bank account in order to hand it over to his victims.

BBC

Wednesday, 31 October 2007

Liberia to get US abuses report

A US document on atrocities committed in Liberia over the last three decades is due to be presented to the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Commissioners say the 4,000-page report, compiled by the US government and intelligence agencies, will help substantiate allegations of brutality.



Liberia was torn apart by decades of unrest and civil war. Liberia has suffered decades of unrest

It was brought to an end in 2003 when former President Charles Taylor resigned as part of a peace agreement.

The commission was launched in 2006, after Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf came to power in presidential elections, so Liberians could speak up on crimes and suggest solutions on how to progress with them.

The BBC's Ledgerhood Rennie in the capital, Monrovia, says prominent Liberian human rights group Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) will hand over the document to the TRC after they obtained it with the help of US authorities and human rights groups.

"The TRC has a mandate to investigate human rights in this country. With this document the TRC will be able to go forth with its work and give the Liberian people the true nature of our history," JPC head Augustine Toe told the BBC's Network Africa programme.

The TRC is now collating public statements to begin public hearings before the end of the year.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 30 October 2007

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

International Clips on Liberia

White House Announces Presidential Medal of Freedom for President Sirleaf

Source: All Africa Global Media Date: October 30, 2007

Oct 30, 2007 (Liberia Government/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- The White House has announced that Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf will receive America's highest government honor awarded to civilians, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The announcement, according to a dispatch from the Office of President Sirleaf's Press Secretary, was made on Monday, by United States President George Bush. President Bush said he was bestowing the honor on the Liberian President in recognition of her efforts to help heal a country torn apart by conflict through perseverance, personal courage and an unwavering commitment to building a more hopeful future for her homeland.

Liberia's debt threat to fragile peace: government

MONROVIA, Oct 29, 2007 (AFP) - Liberia's peace will remain threatened unless its four-billion-dollar debt is cancelled to enable it to rebuild its war-ravaged infrastructure, a senior government official warned Monday. Augustine Ngafuan, the government chief accountant, said the war-scarred West African country will have great difficulties pulling together funding to rehabilitate structures destroyed during the 14-year war.

International Clips on West Africa

UN Security Council renews sanctions on Cote d'Ivoire

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 29, 2007 (Xinhua via COMTEX) -- The UN Security Council decided on Monday to renew until Oct. 31, 2008 the arms and rough diamond bans it had imposed on the Cote d'Ivoire, as well as targeted measures, such as travel restrictions and the freezing of funds, against certain individuals.

Ivorian cocoa still smuggled despite peace deal

By Ange Aboa

DUEKOUÉ, Ivory Coast, Oct 30 (Reuters) - Cocoa smuggling from the rebel-held north of world top cocoa grower Ivory Coast continues despite a peace deal intended to reunite the West African country, merchants say. The rebel New Forces who seized the northern half of the country in a 2002-2003 civil war have long acknowledged using revenue from cocoa smuggled through their zone to neighboring countries to fund their movement.

Local Media – Newspaper

Media Reports Suggest a Rise in Armed Robbery

(The Monitor, Daily Observer, The Informer and The News)

- Reports in several dailies strongly suggest an increase in armed robbery despite a recent Police report which indicated that the crime was on the decrease. In the last couple of weeks, there have been security concerns in some parts of Monrovia where innocent people were attacked by armed gangs. These attacks have prompted calls in various editorials including The Informer for the rearming of the Police to contain the raising wave of criminality. On the subject, The News encouraged the Government to broaden the scope of its security strategy in dealing with this matter decisively in order to bring relief to the population.

President Sirleaf Rules out Possibilities of Liberia Hosting AFRICOM

(Daily Observer)

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on Monday spoke to the implausibility of Liberia hosting the US African Command otherwise known as AFRICOM.
- Accordingly, the President indicated the impossibilities for the establishment of AFRICOM in Liberia in view of the fact that the country's infrastructure is 'underdeveloped.' Prior to the President's disclosure, the media had speculated that there were prospects of the US Military setting up its key African Command base in Liberia.

Liberia Mourns another Lawmaker

(The Inquirer, News and Heritage)

- The inescapable hand of death has again stuck the National Legislature; this time around in the Lower House taking away Margibi County District #4 Representative Fletcher Chideryou.
- Chideryou died over the weekend in Nigeria where he was taken for medical treatment following months of illness. Representative Chideryou last August, requested his colleagues for a one-month leave to undergo medical treatment. Due to the deterioration in his ailment, Chideryou was flown to Nigeria over the weekend for immediate treatment where he met his untimely death.
- The late Representative is the second from Margibi County to die and the fourth Representatives to die from the House of Representatives. He is also the fifth lawmaker to die since the sitting of the 52nd Legislature.

Local Media – Radio Veritas *(News monitored today at 9:45 am)*

Catholic Justice Commission Director Challenges Chief Justice

- In a statement, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) said that Chief Justice Johnnie Lewis' threat to jail journalists for 30 days for misspelling his name and misplacing his photos in the newspapers amounted to the violation of the rights, freedoms and liberty of individuals mainly the rights to press freedom.
- The Commission said that Article 74 of the Liberian Constitution stipulates that penalties for contempt to be imposed by the Supreme Court shall be fixed by the National Legislature in line with the fundamental rights.

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)

Education Ministry Penalizes Schools for Graduating Illegible Candidates

- Education Minister Dr. Joseph Korto said yesterday that the Ministry has found the El-McIntosh High School and Bilical Christian Institute violable of its mandate not to

graduate students who failed the West African exams and that the two schools will not be allowed to register 12th Graders for this academic year. However, the El-McIntosh High School President Stephen Brown denied graduating 12th Graders who failed the exams.

- Minister Korto said that although his Ministry does not have a policing power to monitor all high schools, it would mandate all County Education Officers to submit the list of students who have graduated.
- The Education Minister said that the students who failed the WAEC exams and graduated in the two schools will be allowed to register in different schools to complete high schools.

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)

Police Inspector Criticizes Rights Campaigners

- In an interview, Liberia National Police Inspector-General Beatrice Munnah Sieh criticized human rights groups for failing to advocate in defence of victims of armed robbery who are sometimes injured or killed by robbers.
- The Police Chief said that it was unfortunate that the human rights groups constantly advocate for free, fair and speedy trial of armed robbers but do nothing like that for victims.
- She assured the public that the Police was up to the task to combat armed robberies and other crimes in the Country and that as a show of this responsibility, several suspected armed robbers have been arrested and detained awaiting prosecution.

(Also reported on ELBS, Star Radio, SKY FM and Truth FM)

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. Weah Karpeh at karpeh@un.org.

Associated Press

Wednesday, 31 October 2007

Report: Myanmar Recruiting Child Soldiers

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) -- Myanmar's military government, already under criticism for abuses, is recruiting children



Government recruiters target children because of "continued army expansion, high desertion rates and a lack of willing volunteers," the 135-page report by New York-based Human Rights Watch said.

"Military recruiters and civilian brokers receive cash payments and other incentives for each new recruit, even if the recruit clearly violates minimum age or health standards,"

Ye Htut, deputy director general of Myanmar's Information Ministry, said the charges were "another example of biased

reporting by this organization, which based its report on the baseless accusations and exaggerated lies of insurgent groups on the border."

Allegations against both the government and the ethnic groups for using child soldiers are long-standing, and have been acknowledged by both sides in recent years as the United Nations has highlighted the issue.

The newest accusations come as more than 100 Buddhist monks marched in northern Myanmar for nearly an hour Wednesday, chanting prayers for the first time since a crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations, two monks confirmed.

The monks started their march at Shwegu Pagoda in Pakokku, a center for Buddhist learning with more than 80 monasteries located about 390 miles (627 kilometers) northwest of Yangon, the country's commercial center.

They marched without incident, two monks said in telephone interviews, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

Myanmar's ruling junta faces international criticism for its violent crackdown on peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations last month. Thousands were arrested, and the government acknowledges 10 deaths among the protesters, though critics say the real number might be closer to 200.

The junta has long been accused of other abuses, including brutal treatment of ethnic minority villagers caught up in counterinsurgency campaigns, and the use of forced labor in Myanmar, also known as Burma.

The report "Sold to Be Soldiers: The Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers in Burma" also charged that ethnic guerrilla groups in Myanmar use child soldiers, though on a much smaller scale than the government. Ethnic minorities along the country's borders have been fighting for autonomy for decades.

Human Rights Watch said recruiters routinely falsify enlistment records to list children as 18, the minimum legal age for service. It cited the case of a boy who said he was forcibly recruited at age 11, though he was only 4 feet, 3 inches tall and weighed less than 70 pounds.

According to the report, child soldiers are typically given 18 weeks of military training and some are then sent to combat zones.

"Child soldiers are sometimes forced to participate in human rights abuses, such as burning villages and using civilians for forced labor," said Human Rights Watch. "Those who attempt to escape or desert are beaten, forcibly re-recruited, or imprisoned."

Myanmar's armed forces have had regulations in place since 1973 forbidding the recruitment of minors as well as others forced to enlist against their will, said the Information Ministry's Ye Htut, responding to a summary of the new report.

Enforcement of the regulations was strengthened in 2004 with the establishment of a Committee for the Prevention of Recruiting Underaged Children from Military Recruitment, he wrote in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

"If the authorities find out that a recruit was recruited against his will or he is under 18 years, the responsible personnel will be tried according to the military law," he said.

Between 2004 and August 2007, some 141 minors were dismissed from the military and returned to their parents, and disciplinary action was taken against nearly 30 military personnel for violating recruitment rules, Ye Htut added.

Human Rights Watch said the government committee has failed to effectively address the problem, and devoted most of its efforts to denouncing outside reports of child recruitment.

The report agreed with U.N. assessments that ethnic guerrilla armies, both allied with and against the government, also use child soldiers, though several have taken measures to curb the practice.

The Karen National Union, whose military arm, the Karen National Liberation Army, was cited by Human Rights Watch for improving its record, said it punishes officers who use child soldiers.

TPMCafe

Tuesday, 30 October 2007

http://www.tpmcafe.com/blog/tableforone/2007/oct/30/applying_conviction_politics_to_iraq_n

Applying Conviction Politics to Iraq

By Tom Perriello

I saw a new Zogby poll last night showing that a majority of Americans would support a US military strike in Iran to prevent Iran from building a nuclear weapon – in short, preemptive strike on Iran. This is the result of failing to make the core case for why President Bush has made us less safe. Forget the peripheral bits, President Bush and the Congress – including my opponent Virgil Goode (R-VA) – made the decision to subvert over 200 years of American strategic and moral wisdom about security through legitimacy and validate the idea that might makes right. Our failure to make that case, resorting to the safer arguments about mismanagement and bad intelligence, leaves us playing defense again as the drumbeats crescendo.

Before applying conviction politics to Iraq, it is worth looking at an example of where the international community pulled off regime change in the right way – Liberia. The proudest moment of my life was playing a role in forcing Charles Taylor from power in Liberia. I served as Special Advisor and Spokesperson to the prosecutor of the Special Court that indicted Taylor – an indictment which became the lever and the legitimizer forcing Taylor from power. I have seen the elation on the faces of amputees and survivors of systematic sexual violence after seeing the mastermind of their torment locked up. And I have seen that when a strategy combines legitimacy, aggressive diplomacy and a credible threat, we can make the world a better and more secure place.

In early 2003, Taylor was a brutal dictator with a history of crimes against humanity, destabilizing his region, flaunting international agreements, and (unlike some others who fit that description), he had meaningful links to al-Qaeda. Today, Liberia is enjoying a rare period of peace and stability, recently elected the first female Head of State in Africa, and has a new window of hope. In short, they have everything we promised Iraqis.

The reason this regime change succeeded where Bush's strategy failed is the key. In Liberia, the key was (1) legitimizing the departure through Taylor's indictment by a court anchored in the region and validated by the international community; (2) smart diplomacy and regional leadership; and (3) a credible, over-the-horizon threat by US troops. Iraq had one of those legs and the table was destined to topple.

The Iraq war, now in its fifth year, continues to morph, but it is still the same at its core. We replaced an illegitimate dictator with an illegitimate democracy. The Iraqi constitution is a lousy deal that is not trusted or respected by the Iraqi people, and we are seen as a primary source of this illegitimacy. One of the arguments from Republicans and Democrats that infuriates me is that it is time for Iraqis to "step up" and do their part. Which Iraqis? Using what Parliament, police force or army? This entire argument is premised on a belief that the Maliki government is somehow more legitimate to Iraqis than any other faction in this civil war. Is it really possible this late in the game not to understand that legitimacy is the precursor to any functional security strategy?

Equally untenable is the "moral" argument that we cannot abandon the Iraqis. Though the principle is beyond reproach, it assumes as a factual matter that staying with the Iraqis helps the Iraqis. Again this misses the point about legitimacy as if some number of troops could change the political crisis that prevents a solution in Iraq.

We need to regain the moral force of legitimacy that can only come from acknowledging that the preemptive attack was unjustified, that the current government is illegitimate, and that a new process must be initiated including relevant Iraqi interest, nations of the region, and some independent entity acceptable to the Iraqis an overseer of the creation of a new constitution. This is the basis of the plan I support and helped to develop for a solution in Iraq. We call it the N.E.W. plan, which I helped to develop as part of the precursor to Avaaz.org and run in full-page ads around the world during key diplomatic moments. We developed the plan in consultation with security experts from the region and with the 5,000+ Iraqis that are part of the Avaaz.org community.

The result was a near consensus, some of which was also converges with the Baker-Hamilton report: **NEGOTIATE**: Iraq will be stabilized by a negotiated political process. All Iraqi factions and neighbors must be included.

EMPOWER INTERNATIONAL MEDIATORS: Who has the legitimacy to organize such a process? Neither the US nor Iraqi governments are seen as impartial. Some combination of international actors will be necessary to mediate new talks.

WITHDRAW RESPONSIBLY: The US should honor the wishes of 71% of Iraqis and permanently and completely withdraw its military presence under terms supported by the Iraqi people.

Withdrawal must be about more than getting our troops home. It should be a catalyst for bringing key actors (particularly Sunnis) to the table. In other words, we initiate a political solution by acknowledging both the moral obligations we have created and the practical concerns we are entitled to in regard to Iraq. This is the basis of legitimacy. We recognize that we owe the Iraqis both support and a commitment to withdraw, while we seek both a stable Iraq and path home for our troops. This is why withdrawing troops is not a cut and run strategy, but rather the key to winning in Iraq. But when we talk about it as needing Iraqis to step up or needing to take care of things back home, we should not be surprised when we get accused of selling out Iraqis. The sequence goes commitment to withdraw in order to create the new talks and once the talks are done we withdraw.

There are only two ways that civil wars end – overwhelming force or a negotiated deal. If we want to continue on the path of might makes right, we had better sign up for overwhelming force, and we had better sign up to hit Iran while we're at it. Such a strategy is not likely to work, and we can be sure our enemies will become even bolder in their “self-defense” preparations. But conviction in might makes right suggests this option. Otherwise, negotiation is the choice. Negotiations require that you get the right people to the table and offer a mediator that all sides trust. And any sort of meaningful negotiations must start from the premise that we are not accepted as an objective mediator. That was what we got wrong going in (unilateral legitimacy) and what we continue to get wrong about solving this crisis.

We can make the world more secure and be a standard-bearer for freedom again, and I believe America must do so. America was founded on the rule of law as an explicit rejection of the capricious rule of any one man. We understood that the rule of a King, no matter how compassionate, was ultimately arbitrary. We must understand that the same is true about this global community. When we validate “might makes right,” even for ostensibly compassionate reasons, we destabilize the world. The greatest gift of the Greatest Generation was offering our system of rule of law to the community of nations. For as long as we ignore that gift, we put our nation's security and soul in grave peril.

Special Court Supplement
Outreach, “Operations of the Special Court and the Impact on the Rights of Women and Children”
Tuesday, 30 October 2007 at the National Stadium

