

SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

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 of:

Tuesday, 6 December 2005

The press clips are produced Monday to Friday.
If you are aware of omissions or have any comments or suggestions please contact
Ibrahim Tommy
Ext 7248

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At Special Court...

Norman names Kabbah, Demby as witnesses

President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and former Vice President-Dr. Albert Joe Demby including former United States Ambassador to Sierra Leone-Mr. John Hirsch, Mr. Peter Penfold (former British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone), Berhanu Dinka, the

one time United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Representative to Sierra Leone have been named by Chief Sam Hinga Norman as key witnesses. The Special Court indictee has lined up a total of Seventy-seven witness as his Defence Team gets

ready to present its case. In the witness list of the former Civil Defence Forces (CDF) Coordinator released by the Special Court Monday 5th December, names of British and Nigerian military officers are also included. Notable among names of Nigerian military officers named by

Hinga Norman as witnesses are: General Abu Wan Mohamed and Victor Malu; the then ECOMOG Force Commander whiles General David Richards, Brigadier Riley of the British Army were also not left out. Other notables named in the witness list are: Managing Editor of Awoko newspaper-Mr. Kelvin Lewis, M.S. Dumbuya, Chief M.T. Collier

Norman names Kabbah, Demby as witnesses

*from
front page*

(former CDF host at Talia Yobekoh, Base Zero; Osman Vandi alias Vanjawai (Kamajor Battalion Commander), Mama Munda Fortune

(former Kamajor initiator) and a host of others are expected to serve as witnesses of the former Internal Affairs Minister- Chief Hinga Norman.

Kabbah to appear before Special Court January



Kabbah - witness

Story: Ibrahim Seibure

The Defense team for Special Court war crime indictee, Chief Sam Hinga Norman Monday submitted the name of President Kabbah as his second witness.

Summary of Kabbah's testimony includes the status of the witness within the state apparatus and in relations to the National Army and the military structure, mobilization of the CDF as a defening force to restore democracy, the military and political modus operandi of the

SLPP Government in exile, establishment, organization, logistical support and promotion of the CDF, responsibility for implementing policy and strategy for prosecution the war, how witness visited Kamajohs at Lungi Airport to plan a strategy for the war together with some of the ministers, about arms and ammunitions from Sand Line International and instructions given to General Khobe on how the arms should be used, about

the letter from the office of the President to "set up a committee to handle all policy matters relating to the National Militia/CDF" to be chaired by the Vice President with some ministers as members and how the president nominated specific persons as regional representatives and that command in the execution of what to do in each region were in the hands of the regional representatives and finally about the meeting held in Conakry by the President, ministers and some Kamajoh's on how to unseat the AFRC regime.

Albert Joe Demby former Vice President, Peter Penfold, former British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Gen. Victor Marlu erstwhile ECOMOG Force Commander, journalist Lans Gberie, and Kelvin Lewis of Awoko newspaper.

As Awoko's Kelvin Lewis is named as his last witness...

Hinga Norman names Pa Kabbah as his First Witness



His Excellency President Kabbah: First in line

In a 25 page document released late yesterday evening, Dr. Bu-buakei Jabbie, the lead counsel for detained Chief Hinga

Norman has named H.E. President Kabbah as the very first witness who will be called upon to testify to the Special Court when the

Defence Team opens their Defence on January 17th 2005. The Witness List which is made up of 77 witnesses

also names former VP Demby, former American Ambassador, John Hirsch and former British High

Contd: page 2

Page 4

Awareness 1

Hinga Norman names Pa Kabbah as his First Witness

From front page
Commissioner Peter Penfold as other witnesses. It also names the former UNDP Resident Representative to Sierra Leone as well as former ECOMOG Bosses Major General Victor Malu and Major General Abu Wan Mohamed. The Witness List also names scores of former Kamajor and CDF fighters as witnesses who are going to testify on

behalf of the detained Norman. The 77th and last person on the witness list is journalist Kelvin Lewis, Managing Editor of the Awoko newspaper. The document also mentions the complete list of exhibits that the Bu-Buakei Defence Team intends to present to the Special Court. From the brief description of some of these exhibits, it is not difficult to deduce that

they could be classified as minutes of top-secret meetings that were held by top government officials during the height of the prosecution of the war in 1999. The document also makes mention of logistical constraints that the Defence Team of Hinga Norman and other indictees of the Special Court have been facing. Read Awareness Times tomorrow for more details of this document.

Hinga Norman Vs SLPP...

Trial Begins Tomorrow

By Jarrah Kawusu Konte
Another legal battle is set
to commence between the

SLPP and Special Court
Indictee and former Min-
ister of Internal Affairs

and National Security,
Chief Samuel Hinga

Norman at the Supreme
Court tomorrow
Wednesday 7th Decem-

ber 2005.
According to court
sources, a notice of the

trial had been sent to all
parties involved, including
Contd. page 2

Trial Begins Tomorrow

From front page

the applicant, Chief Hinga Norman, whose counsel, Dr Bubuakei Jabbie received the notice on his behalf.

It was also revealed that the case would be presided over by five judges whose job would be to establish the veracity of the applicant's motion. The 1st, 2nd, & 3rd defendants are the SLPP, Alhaji U.N.S. Jah and Mr. Jacob Jusu Saffa; with the two being the National Chairman and the National Secretary General of the SLPP respectively.

Although Chief Norman had in July this year dragged the SLPP and some of its leading functionaries before the Supreme Court in an unsuccessful application that was quashed by the court on the grounds that he lacked the locus standi, which eventually enabled the party to convene its National Party Conference in the northern provincial town of Makeni, the current motion is said not only to have been filed under a different capacity, but largely watertight.

It would be recalled that the issue of VP Solomon Berewa doubling as VP and Leader of a political party (the SLPP) formed the crux of the arguments encapsulated in the first application against the holding of the SLPP party conference lodged by Chief Hinga Norman at the Supreme Court. Even before the delegates conference where VP Berewa was actually elected by acclamation as National Leader and Presidential Nominee of the SLPP, Norman had warned that, if what the SLPP was planning to do to make Berewa, Leader and Presidential Nominee of the SLPP while still serving as Vice President was not just a gross violation of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, the Political Parties Act of 2002 and the SLPP July 1985 Constitution, but also exposing the party to dismemberment or other disqualifications once the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) was formally constituted by the Supreme Court, whose cardinal role is to interpret the Constitution of Sierra Leone.

Cocorioko website

http://www.cocorioko.com/more_news_2

President Kabbah to appear before Special Court , as

HINGA NORMAN CALLS 75 WITNESSES, INCLUDING REV. SAMFORAY

Monday December 5, 2005

The Special Court saga is about to hit a more dramatic note , going by the witness list presented to the court today by Chief Hinga Norman , who is being tried by the UN-supported war crimes tribunal for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. .

Among the witnesses called by the former Commander of the Civil Defence Force (CDF) is President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and this is certain to soak up the drama at the court where the CDF will start their defence in full on January 17, 2006. If Hinga Norman will continue to act in his own defence, sparks are expected to fly in the court the day he places Kabbah under cross-examination.

Another interesting name in Hinga Norman 's witness list is the man who had been defending him ever so vigorously and faithfully since the saga started two years ago-- Rev. Alfred SamForay , who will at last have his chance to tell his story to the world.

The list also includes : Former Vice-President former VP Joe Demby, some ECOMOG generals, CDF commanders, Alfred SamForay , Peter Penfold and John Hirsch .



Turn Taylor Over Chorus

The Analyst (Monrovia)

EDITORIAL

December 5, 2005

Posted to the web December 5, 2005

SHORTLY AFTER THE run-off presidential elections in the country, the European Union Elections Observer Mission was the first to announce that the surrender of Taylor by the incoming government was a necessary precondition for post-war Liberia to gain Europe's developmental assistance. The statement by the head of EU Elections Observer team, Max Van der Berg, was met with mixed reactions by local actors and external stakeholders.

ONE REACTION TO this statement came from the chief facilitator of the Liberian Peace process, Rtd. Gen.

Abdulsalami Abubakar, who said that the observer team had overstepped its elections observation mission to comment on Liberian domestic politics. Besides the view of the chief facilitator, internal reactions from public officials, private sources, and media commentaries and editorials have been mixed at best.

But there is a chord with which everyone accepts and this is "any pressure for the surrender of Taylor, especially with an input from the tender Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf administration is likely to seriously jeopardize the peace process."

BUT THE RANCOR over the European Union's demand was simply waning down, when last week ushered in both a moment of joy and trepidation. It was the day when word came from Uncle Sam: President George W. Bush of the United States of America had phoned to congratulate the President-elect, Johnson-Sirleaf for her victory at the polls and underlined the sentiment with demand that Taylor be sent to the Special Court in Sierra Leone. This congratulatory and assignment message from the most powerful office on earth, has quashed all previous protestations, making the Taylor surrender issue a major hurdle to the much expected massive inflow of reconstruction assistance. It is no longer only a European Union demand but a worldwide requirement, seeing that the United Nations Security Council has passed a resolution requiring that UNMIL peacekeepers arrest the indicted war criminal upon his arrival in the country.

HOWEVER THE INCOMING leadership handles the Taylor surrender issue will significantly demonstrate how robust is its international contact grip or how regionally compliant it becomes nurturing a fragile security environment. No doubt the Taylor issue is the Achilles' heels for the incoming administration. In other words, it is the issue meant to disgrace the Liberian people, who overwhelmingly voted for the candidate as a product of her external contact as one giant reservoir to tap in accelerating reconstruction.

This particular "Turn over the Bandit' demand is increasing uneasiness among citizens because almost always it seems local judgment of the geopolitics at play just do not match the card of the powerful West.

MANY JUSTIFICATIONS ARE given for this seeming perspective of gloom. First and foremost is the fact that Taylor's purported 75% landslide win in the 1997 elections was seen to have been preceded by the promise for developmental assistance regardless of the victorious team. That promise did not come to

fruition mostly based on the victor's disposition to use power as an end in itself. With the frustration of the Taylor scenario, followed by the imposition of sanctions and a double barrel armed rebellion, the society had been a dejected and distraught one until the onset of international intervention to regularize the situation.

AFTER DEPLOYMENT OF the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the implementation of disarmament and demobilization of the various militia factions has been completed. However, the rehabilitation and reintegration of nearly 100,000 ex-combatants outstrip the funding needs of the organization, though reintegration and rehabilitation processes are ongoing. These aspects of the peace process need to be deepened with consolidation of security sector reforms beyond the formative stages. Many security experts continue to regard Liberia's current peace as fragile in a West African realm that is both volatile and fluid.

INDEED, THE NIGERIAN leader, Olusegun Obasanjo did vow that he would honor a request from any constitutionally elected president of Liberia to release Taylor. He said that once that were done, it could be up to Liberians to determine the expeditious decision on his fate. But such plan of gradualism must be seen alongside its workability. African leaders, especially Nigeria's Obasanjo, continue to see obvious difficulties in Taylor's surrender while securing a tenuous peace to which they have significantly contributed. Here is the source of the impasse. How can Nigeria support a surrender that would only cause a relapse of war to a country for which their nationals have bled and died to foster peace after fourteen years of war? Moreover, they insist that the agreement to take Taylor over for asylum was consummated with principal actors in the very United Nations.

WE DO NOT imply in any way that impunity in the current case should be upheld. What we are saying is that sufficient elbow-room is provided the incoming government, since by all counts, the administration is a weakling requiring everything be done for it. They are hemmed in by multiplicity of problems that are inherited from an era of crises. It therefore seems too hard a burden to expect the new administration solve a task that is far beyond its capacity. It did not take part in any concession for the asylum and to expect these leaders to perform a task that they may have to perform for the badly needed assistance for reconstruction. We think that a comprehensive approach is needed where all major players in the initial asylum agreement would discuss whatever amendment that may be necessary to dispose of this situation.

BUT AS WE say this, we must register that addressing impunity in Sierra Leone must also sharpen the world to reawaken in directing all of its voice and resources to fighting impunity wherever it exists. It is well known historically how protracted it has taken a blood-thirsty dictator like Augusto Pinochet to even lose his parliamentary (presidential) immunity or appear before a tribunal to answer for his crime. It must now be a point of graduating from having a choice among leeches, whose only strength has been the sucking of human blood. Let all vampires answer for their gross crimes against humanity.

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Daily OBSERVER



President-elect, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf with Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure during her stop over in Bamako. Madam Sirleaf received a tumultuous welcome at the 23rd Franco-African Summit, where French President, Jacques Chirac, extended her an open invitation to Paris. *Courtesy photo*
Ellen, Bush Agree on Taylor
As she scores at French African Summit

By Cheechiay Jablasone
Published: **05 December, 2005**

MONROVIA, December 5 -- The President-elect of Liberia, Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, has disclosed that she and United States President George W. Bush reached a "consensus" recently over the trial of exiled former Liberian leader, Charles Taylor.

Madam Sirleaf told journalists Saturday upon her return to the country from a sub-regional tour that the trial of former President Taylor would not be among the first things that her new government will consider.

She revealed that during her stopover in Nigeria, she received a telephone call from President Bush and the issue of Taylor's trial was discussed. "The general consensus is that they give the new government a chance to settle in and then decide how to move forward on this matter," she said.

During her very spirited phone conversation with President Bush, the American leader extended an open invitation to Madam Sirleaf to "come to the White House anytime after the Inauguration, and my

doors will be open to you.”

The Liberian President-elect's sub-regional tour took her to Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and then to Mali, where she received a tumultuous welcome at the 23rd Franco-African Summit.

The Summit brought together both French-speaking and English speaking African leaders, together with the President of the French Republic, Jacques Chirac. The French leader held a personal conversation with Madam Sirleaf in English, kissed her hand and invited her to the Paris at “anytime” of her choosing.

During her time at the Summit, she met with the President of Mali, Amadou Toumani Toure, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, among others.

Madam Sirleaf disclosed there was a common theme in her message to leaders in the sub-region. She thanked them for their contributions to peace in Liberia and for the hosting thousands of Liberian refugees in their respective countries.

Madam Sirleaf disclosed there was a common theme in her message to leaders in the sub-region. She thanked them for their contributions to peace in Liberia and for the hosting thousands of Liberian refugees in their respective countries.

The President-elect also affirmed her government's commitment to improve ties and enhance mutual cooperation with states in the sub-region. Ties between Liberia and its immediate neighbors soured during the Taylor administration, when insurgents used Liberian border points to invade Guinea and Ivory Coast, while the Liberian government provided a conduit for arms to rebels in Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leonean rebels waged a bloody conflict there, killing and maiming people, including the indiscriminate severing of the arms and legs of men, women and children.

Several members of Mrs. Sirleaf “controversial” Transitional Team accompanied her on the trip. These included Harry A. Greaves, Jr., Bryant's former Economic Advisor whose inclusion on the team now faces public opposition, and Dew Tuan Wreh Mayson, a khaki trousers and old army boot-wearing revolutionary with the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) during the Tolbert era. Mayson succeeded P. Clarence Parker as chairman of the National Investment Commission (NIC) following the April 12, 1980 coup. Mr. Parker was among the thirteen ministers executed by firing squad. Since the 1980s, Mr. Mayson been seen wearing custom-made suits and is reputed to be a millionaire, with homes in Nigeria, the United States and elsewhere.

Other Transitional Team members who accompanied Madam Sirleaf were Edward (Eddie) L. Dunn, Jr., Medina Wesseh, Richard Tolbert and Fumba Sirleaf, son of Madam Sirleaf, among others.

Awaiting the flight of the President-elect and her entourage, which touched down at about 18:30, three and the half hours later than expected, were Vice President-elect, Joseph Boakai, Unity Party Chairman Charles Clarke and a host of well-wishers, as well as journalists.

Meanwhile, the First United Methodist Church on Ashmun Street yesterday held an intercessory service and dinner in honor of its member, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and her Vice President.

Delivering the homily at the service on the theme: "Wait on God" the Pastor-in-Charge, Rev. Erlene Perry-Thompson, said that to wait on God requires patience. "God does not give a speedy answer", she told the congregation.

She claimed the Sunday's Service was in no way intended to honor Madam Sirleaf as a Methodist President rather as a national leader. Rev. Thompson assured the congregation that Liberian professionals that have left the country would soon return, as Ellen will restore the country.

The First Methodist Pastor said Mrs. Sirleaf needed to remain steadfast and focused in her commitment to doing what she is to do, proclaiming, "The same mouth or mouths that are saying negative things about you will soon praise you."

In a letter to the congregation, read by a proxy, the Methodist Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Nathaniel Innis, warned the President-elect to appoint officials of "good character" to posts in her next government.

Interestingly, Mr. Harry Greaves, Jr., whose inclusion on the Transition Team has drawn much public disapproval, sat on the front row with the President-elect. Greaves is being opposed by many due to his role as economic advisor in the transition government, which many in the public view as an administration that epitomized corruption.

Speaking at the Service, Madam Sirleaf recounted "family values" of honesty and commitment imbued in her by parental upbringing. She said her charge today is to "take all of the family values" and use them to take "hard decisions" and fight corruption.

As the country embarks on the "last mile of a long road" she will take decisions that will help the country and its people, she promised.

On her way home yesterday, Madam Sirleaf made a brief stopover at the Old Toyota Garage in Sinkor to visit a family whose 9-year-old girl was allegedly raped by an UNMIL peacekeeper recently.

In a brief chat with the Daily Observer at the family's residence, Madam Sirleaf said she was there to show the family "they have a

President who cares.”

She gave assurance that if the rape bill currently facing hitches at the National Transitional Assembly were to land on her desk on January 17, 2005, she wouldn't hesitate to sign that into law.

Rape of late has become widespread in Liberia. A local child-monitoring group, NACROP, recently warned against the increase of rape cases involving mainly children of tender age. The National Coordinator, Mr. Jerlimek Piah, told this paper that he thought tougher actions were needed to be brought against perpetrators of rape to discourage the crime.

He called for punishment of perpetrators who test positive to HIV to be graver than any provided for persons committing rape.

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Ellen's Dilemma

The Analyst (Monrovia)

NEWS

December 5, 2005

Posted to the web December 5, 2005

The National Elections Commission, on November 23, 2005, declared Unity Party's presidential candidate, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, winner of the presidential runoff. The runoff was conducted on November 8, 2005 as a constitutional requirement. Since NEC's announcement, Mrs. Sirleaf has been receiving congratulatory messages from world leaders and key allies of Liberia including the United States of America which is considered Liberia's political mentor and key economic partner. Few of these congratulatory messages, though did not come without statements of expectation that smack of dilemma for the incoming government.

Reechoing the now disavowed statement of conditionality of the head of the EU Elections Observer Mission in Liberia, U.S. President George Bush, last week, indicated that Washington looks up to the incoming Sirleaf administration to expedite the extradition of Charles Taylor to face war crime charges in Sierra Leone. While the Sirleaf team has not commented on the call, many say it is no lesser a dilemma. The Analyst's Staff Writer looks at the contentions, fears, and conjectures being raised by President Bush's statement.

U.S. no-nonsense president, George Bush, last week congratulated the Liberian president-elect, Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, on her election as Africa's first female head of state and then urged her help expedite the extradition of Taylor.

A press release of the Bureau of International Information Programs of the U.S. Department of State quoted President Bush as, in addition, highlighting the historic significance of Mrs. Sirleaf's election and reiterated the United States Government's commitment to the reconstruction of Liberia following years of violent conflicts.

"President Bush telephoned Liberian President-elect Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to congratulate her on her electoral victory, as well as 'the historic significance of her election' as the first elected female African head of state," the release noted.

According to the statement quoting President Bush's Press Secretary McClellan, the president emphasized the U.S. commitment and support to help build a democratic, secure, and prosperous Liberia." The compliments, which many UP supporters had been expecting with bated breath, and the restatement of Washington's commitment to the reconstruction of post-war Liberia, though, did not come without high expectations or as they would say, stings attached from Washington.

"McClellan also said the president conveyed his view of the importance of bringing former Liberian leader Charles Taylor to justice so that 'he can no longer threaten the people of Liberia and the region of West Africa'," said the State Department's release.

Contentions

While many see Mr. Bush's early compliments to Madam Sirleaf for her election as strong signals of US Government satisfaction with the outcome of the November 8 runoff, skeptics said the statement raised serious questions about Washington's sincerity in dealing with Liberia's and the sub-region's security question.

"We recall recently that in the same breath that the head of EU Elections Observer Mission in Liberia declared the elections free, fair, and transparent, he called on the incoming administration to ensure Taylor's extradition to Sierra Leone. Then, the EU EOM head revealed that future support to Liberia's reconstruction process would be tied to the extent to which they cooperate with the special court. The mission denied the connection later. But now President Bush is repeating the same statement. I think something is trouble here," said Economics student Aloysius Wanagbo of the African Methodist Episcopal University (AMEU).

Momo J. Jones, a businessman and UP partisan concurred: "We thought Washington will nurture the incoming government giving that the nation's economy has grounded to a halt for more than 15 years, poverty has escalated, and mistrust is a very steep social menace. More besides, there is a total breakdown of law. The people must reconcile, the economy and with it the security sector must be rebuilt, and opportunities must be created for the Liberian people.

These are the nation's priorities. The issue of Taylor is an antithesis of reconciliation and stability in post-war Liberia, not otherwise as Mr. Bush wants us to believe. The EU and now Washington are emphasizing the Taylor issue. Is this not undermining the peace process that they helped build? I think it is." Observers think Jones and Wanagbo make a lot of sense. In their views, the incoming administration would have no authority over Taylor since he is not in their custody.

"Even if he were transferred into the custody of the incoming administration, his extradition would be politicized in Liberia and used as an alibi by detractors of the incoming administration to heighten their smear campaigns," noted Jimmy T. Wreh of Paynesville.

Fears

Like other respondents before him, Wreh's contention may seem exaggerated, but analysts say it borders on fears held by many Liberians about the effectiveness of the peace process with the Taylor question at the center of it.

If Taylor is pushed by the incoming Liberian government to face criminal charges in Sierra Leone, Taylor's supporters and other former warlords fearing that the same thing may happen to them will claim witch-hunting and vindictiveness.

"If they do, that will be the beginning of the disintegration of the peace process. They will use it to restart the war. From what we know, none of the countries that are now pressing for Liberia's hand in the Taylor question will come in to stop such a war.

In fact they will call for another peace process and negotiation at the center of which will be Nigeria, the same Nigeria now that is advising against Taylor's extradition. We cannot continue in this vicious cycle," said Momolu Ahmed of Gardnersville.

With so many ex-fighters and warlords fearing their hands may sear in the new bid for retributive justice in order to stamp out impunity, some say, there is no question that many will run into exile to regroup and launch another "liberation war".

Conjectures

The U.S. is Liberia's key political mentor and prime economic partner, meaning that it knows Liberia's strength and weaknesses.

By insisting that Liberia play a role in the extradition debacle even though it was originally not part of Taylor's asylum arrangements to Calabar, some say, indicates that folks in Washington are trying to avoid direct confrontation with Abuja.

Instead rising out of concern for Liberia and ECOWAS subregion's security, they say, the call rose from miscalculation of the forces at bay and is therefore likely to pit Monrovia against Abuja in which case Nigeria may be angered to relinquish her role as peace broker in Liberia.

Early this year, Washington brought the full weight of its political and economic arsenals to bear on Abuja to release Taylor to Sierra Leone. Washington threatened to not to scrap Abuja's debt unless she agreed to release Taylor.

Abuja did not release Taylor, claiming the right to protect her dignity; but interestingly, it is not clear whether or not Washington did as it threatened.

"By switching the pressure to Liberia, Washington seems weary of the whole thing and is only hoping that the problem will burn its out," said Paul Soukeh.

In the view of Soukeh and others, unless Abuja, Washington, and Monrovia sit with the Special Court to work out modalities for Taylor's trial perhaps to some place in Europe, Taylor may spark off another round of bloodletting in West Africa.

According to them, those who are pushing for his extradition by Liberia in spite of his huge rebel followings in Liberia were the very ones that refused to commit troops between May and September 2003 to rescue innocent Liberians from raging murderers.

Dilemma

Whatever the contentions, fears, and conjectures about Taylor's extradition to face war crimes charges in Sierra Leone, it is the incoming government that will make the ultimate decision. Analysts say such a decision is bound to be the better of two evils.

For example, they say any attempt by the incoming government to allow Taylor to be brought back to Liberia in order to be transferred to Sierra would create a political national security problem that will be too unwieldy for the teething administration.

According to them, Taylor's presence in Liberia is more likely than not to encourage some of his die-hards to attempt a rescue or even to create instability in the country during which the country would be ungovernable.

"For Mrs. Sirleaf to insist on protecting the nation's national security by refusing to play a role in Taylor's extradition is to risk isolation. On the other hand, damning the consequences and hearkening to Washington's shots will, while risking national security and throwing Taylor's rebels at her heels, will build external support," said one observer.

There is no telling though that in the event that Monrovia refuses, Washington would be angry and adopt a wait-and-see attitude towards a government that needs the partnership of Washington for survival.

"This is like being between the devil and the deep blue sea or the rock and the hard place. If the nation emphasizes national security over impunity, it will risk the anger of Washington. But if on the other hand it promotes Washington's impunity, it will have to content with Taylor's violent, scheming constituents which history has shown Washington is not prepared to confront," said another observer.

History also shows that calling the shots from Washington to be implemented in Monrovia has always been

the problem for Liberian political leaders.

"The days people sit in Washington DC and dictate what should happen in Liberia are over. They must respect us as partners and not foot soldiers," said former president Charles Taylor as the war that was to banish him into exile in Calabar closed in on Monrovia.

"The problem is the Americans. They are against me," cried slain president Samuel Doe when the U.S Government suggested that he step down and leave the country as Taylor's NPFL rebel forces closed in on Monrovia in September 1990.

It is Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's time and even before she takes seat, Washington is demanding that which a stable government would risk engage in: hold the baboon so that it will be circumcised; something which those who conceived the idea dare not do.

The question is will Mrs. Sirleaf yield or appeal to sovereignty and call for a partnership in which Liberia's peace agenda and not Washington's concern for impunity is the central question of concern?

Some remembering Mrs. Sirleaf as "Iron Lady" say that is likely, but one analyst says a middle ground has to be sought "because Bush does not take kindly of challenges from Third World underdeveloped countries." He said any appeal to sovereignty will no doubt be an appeal to more hardship with dogged UN sanctions h

StarTribune.com**Susan Zakin: Eyes on another lord of war****Susan Zakin**

December 6, 2005

In the recent film "Lord of War," Nicolas Cage plays a Russian emigre and a gunrunner. Cage's Yuri Orlov isn't exactly immoral, even when he is giving a West African dictator boatloads of AK-47s to wax many people in his country, not to mention many more in neighboring diamond-rich Sierra Leone. Yuri just happens to have a single talent: providing weaponry to speed along the disintegration of the world order.

The film's most memorable character is the dictator, obviously based on former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who is facing extradition by an international war crimes court. Both Taylor and his fictional counterpart were educated in the United States and use outdated American idioms.

Taylor has a long relationship with the United States. After studying at Bentley College outside Boston, he returned to Liberia, only to flee after being accused of embezzling \$900,000 from the government. The U.S. detained him at a Massachusetts prison while he awaited extradition, but he escaped, reportedly with the aid of a rope made of bedsheets. Taylor has suggested that the CIA helped with his escape. At the time, the Reagan administration was having second thoughts about its support of Liberia's dictator, Samuel K. Doe.

Taylor came up with an inspired plan for Liberia. When he failed to win the presidency, he gained control of the country's timber and rubber, which he sold off to foreign concerns. By the mid-1990s, Taylor was waging a full-tilt civil war. His revenues were estimated at \$75 million to \$100 million a year, while the government was earning little more than \$17 million.

Taylor also backed rebels in Sierra Leone to gain control of its diamond mines. By the time he became president of Liberia in 1997, he had become the ultimate West African big man. He prolonged a civil war that killed as many as 200,000 people and drove about a quarter of Liberians from their homes. His backing of the rebel group Revolutionary United Front resulted in another 50,000 dead in Sierra Leone and 10,000 people who are now minus hands or feet because they were lopped off by Taylor-backed rebels.

Taylor was forced from office in 2003. He found asylum in Nigeria, where President Olusegun Obasanjo insists that he will not allow Taylor to be extradited unless the Liberian government demands it. But at the moment, that seems unlikely because Taylor still wields influence in Liberia, despite this month's election of a former U.N. official, reformer Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, as president.

A trial for Taylor is not merely about punishing one man. International justice is in a tenuous spot these days, with a number of countries reluctant to fund war crimes courts that are expensive and slow. To counter those criticisms, a tribunal handling charges arising from the Sierra Leone conflict is working under a strict deadline. Court officials say Taylor must be delivered to stand trial by year's end.

Congress and the U.N. Security Council have called for Taylor to stand trial. But the Bush administration has not pushed aggressively for his extradition. Why?

Africa-watchers suggest that the United States has much to fear if Taylor takes the witness stand. He might reveal not only his many ties to the U.S. and its support for his regime over the years, but also the U.S. failure to act on warnings about his ties to Al-Qaida, which date to well before Sept. 11, 2001.

David Crane, a lawyer and former Army paratrooper who oversaw creation of the Sierra Leone war crimes court, says the administration's attitude toward Taylor's trial changed in April, when investigators made public their findings about Taylor's links to Al-Qaida.

Letting Taylor skate would send a bad signal not only to terrorists but to people everywhere about democracy and the rule of law. It also would give tacit approval to the destructive notion that noncombatants

are fair game in war as long as the bottom line stays intact. That's the message we get at the end of "Lord of War."

If you haven't seen the movie and intend to, stop reading now. Not that the conclusion should surprise anyone: Yuri is always ready for another next deal.

Susan Zakin was a Heinz Fellow in Africa in 2001, and spent a month in Sierra Leone last summer. She wrote this article for the Los Angeles Times.

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Secret witness in Saddam trial

BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) -- A woman whose identity was being kept secret began testifying in the fourth court session of Saddam Hussein's tribunal on Tuesday.

But her testimony was halted after defense lawyers complained that equipment distorting her voice made it difficult for them to understand her.

Chief Judge Rizgar Mohammed Amin ordered the voice modulator to be turned off, which allowed defense counsel to hear her natural voice.

But people in the visitors' gallery and the media viewing area could not hear any of her testimony. The judge then ordered a brief recess to try to adjust the modulator.

The woman was testifying from behind a blue curtain. Amin said she would be referred to publicly as "Witness A." He told the court that defense lawyers would be told her identity but that they must not tell anyone outside the tribunal, The Associated Press reported.

From the few words that were audible and translated, she was apparently planning to give evidence on the deaths and torture of citizens in the mostly Shiite town of Dujail in 1982, CNN's Nic Robertson said from the courtroom.

Eight defendants, including Hussein, are on trial in connection with the deaths of more than 140 men in Dujail. The killings are considered retribution for a failed assassination attempt on Hussein.

Monday's events saw delays and graphic testimony by a witness describing the alleged torture of a man from the town: "They broke all his body parts."

Hussein called the testimony "laughable" and said, "I am not afraid of execution."

Ahmed Hassan Mohammed, a resident of Dujail, told the court how he and others -- including women and children -- were rounded up and transported to intelligence headquarters in Baghdad, where they were tortured.

The women, including young girls, were raped, sometimes before the eyes of the men, he said.

He named his torturers and their relations to the defendants on trial and graphically and tearfully described what he saw.

Of one man, Mohammed said: "They broke him. Broke his arm, his leg. This is during torture. They also shot at his foot, all of that during interrogation. He died under torture. They broke all his body parts."

Mohammed described seeing Hussein's half brother and co-defendant, Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti, wearing a cowboy hat, red boots and carrying an assault rifle.

The testimony prompted al-Tikriti, seated behind Hussein in the courtroom, to stand and call out, "That's a lie!"

Hussein, listening with close attention, also interrupted the witness on several occasions.

As Mohammed began, Hussein said, "Rest assured I will not touch you." He told Mohammed to tell the court what he had to say.

The defendants and their attorneys accused Mohammed of being coached on his testimony.

Al-Tikriti questioned Mohammed's ability to recall with such detail events that allegedly happened when he was 15 years old.

Al-Tikriti demanded that people who gave the information to the witness also be called to testify.

"I question everything he said," al-Tikriti said. "I swear that everything he said is false."

Former Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan called Mohammed "a liar."

Defense walks out, prompts delay

The trial was delayed for 90 minutes when the defense walked out because the presiding judge refused to hear their complaints.

The trial resumed after the judge reversed himself and agreed the attorneys could present oral arguments about the fairness and legitimacy of the proceedings.

Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, a member of the defense team, said all parties were entitled to protection, and that the measures offered to protect defense lawyers and their families were "absurd."

"Not only are the lives of all these people at risk, the very function of the judiciary is at risk," Clark said. "If every form of participation is not protected, the judicial system will fail and will be destroyed."

Two lawyers -- one representing Ramadan, the other representing Awad Hamad Bandar, the former chief judge of Hussein's Revolutionary Court -- have been killed within the past month.

Former Qatari Justice Minister Najib Nuaimi argued that international law did not support the creation of the court by the U.S.-backed authority.

"The occupation [by U.S. forces] is illegitimate," he said, "and the illegitimacy of the occupation results in the illegitimacy of the establishment of the court."

Meanwhile, one of the judges serving on the tribunal has recused himself because one co-defendant may have been involved in the execution of the judge's brother, said a Western official close to the trial.

The judge received a document showing a defendant was involved in a death warrant that led to his brother's execution, the Western official said.

The judge said he could not remain impartial any more.

CNN's Aneesh Raman and Nic Robertson contributed to this report.

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