

The Special Court for Sierra Leone: Media Coverage of Charles Taylor

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Introduction

For most of the news-reading world, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) has appeared under one context – Charles Taylor, former Liberian president and indicted war criminal at large. While the Court has generated some media attention in areas unrelated to Taylor, he is by far the most publicized topic and quite possibly the international community's primary window into the developments of the transitional justice system in Sierra Leone. Reports in the media indicate that the decision-makers and general public abroad are more interested in this single individual than the other accused war criminals combined. It is thus apparent that the indictment of Charles Taylor has contributed significantly to the publicity of the Special Court. What is less obvious, however, is the critical role that the media has played in shaping the events that have brought Taylor this far. The press has not merely served as a neutral medium through which information about the indictment is expressed to the public, but rather has been used by the Prosecutor, Charles Taylor, and others to shift government policies to their purpose.

In the following paper, I will conduct an analysis on international media coverage of the Special Court during key periods of the campaign to bring Charles Taylor to justice in Sierra Leone. My findings are primarily based upon press clippings provided by the SCSL Press and Public Affairs Office and interviews with Special Assistant to the Prosecutor Eric Witte, Prosecutor David Crane, and Registrar Robin Vincent. It is hoped that this analysis will not only provide insight into former strategies for dealing with Taylor, but also future implications for the Office of the Prosecutor and the legacy of the Special Court.

Background

On March 3, 2003, the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone issued an indictment against Charles Ghankay Taylor for seventeen-counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia, is charged with supporting rebel forces that committed armed attacks in Sierra Leone. He is currently in exile in Nigeria, where he is being granted asylum under the condition that he refrain from meddling in Liberian politics.

The Special Court has been calling for Taylor's extradition since his indictment was made public on June 4, 2003. Since then, a number of actions have been taken to bring Taylor to justice. After Taylor left office on August 11, 2003 and went into exile, an Interpol Red Notice was issued against him on December 4, 2003. Although the Court continued to push for his transfer, it was not until spring of 2005 when significant action steps were manifested to the public. Following a European Parliament resolution that passed on February 24, 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives introduced similar legislation on April 12, 2005 calling for the extradition of Charles Taylor. The resolution was passed in the House on May 4, 2005 and then by the Senate on May 11, 2005 with overwhelming support. These actions corresponded with a meeting between President Bush and President Obasanjo of Nigeria on May 5, 2005. The busy month culminated with Justice Ayoola's appearance before the Security Council on May 24, 2005, where he emphasized the importance of Taylor's transfer along with other updates on the Special Court¹. Although despite these efforts Charles Taylor is still at large, Prosecutor David Crane insists that it is now "a matter of when, not if" he is brought before the Court to stand trial.

Media and the Special Court

As one of the world's top 10 underreported big stories according to the United Nations, post-conflict development in Sierra Leone clearly has not been given the amount of media attention it deserves.² While the Special Court sporadically receives some comprehensive press coverage internationally, it is most frequently referred to within the context of another story. At times the Court has been mentioned in discussions about future war crimes trials for Iraq and Darfur, and at other times in the context of controversial institutional matters, such as the legal battles of staff members. Nonetheless, the story of Charles Taylor has not only received the most consistent coverage, but is also a topic that carries significant influence over the mission and legacy of the Court. Thus the impact of media coverage of Charles Taylor on the Special Court is twofold – the story helps incite interest in the Court as a whole, while also mobilizing governments and the general public to bring Taylor to justice.

For a better understanding of how much press coverage has been attributed to the Charles Taylor issue, **Exhibit A** depicts the number of international articles that mention the Special Court in the context of Taylor compared to those that do not. Due to practical limitations, only significant months of the campaign to bring Taylor to justice were documented. Between June and August 2003, the Court attracted large amounts of media coverage from the time Taylor's indictment was made public through the negotiations to send him to Nigeria. One of the only incidents that detracted attention away from Taylor was the death of Foday Sankoh in July. The next event to draw some media coverage was the Interpol Red Notice that was issued in December 2003. Coincidentally, this was also the month that Saddam Hussein was apprehended and discussions about how to set up an appropriate war crimes tribunal began, contributing to the large amount of non-Taylor related press coverage of the Court. Calls upon the Nigerian government remained relatively quiet until February 2005, when the European Parliament passed a resolution in support of Taylor's transfer to the Special Court. This event received minimal press coverage, and was largely overshadowed by the decision to jail a former investigator at the Special Court for molesting a minor. The staff member maintains his innocence and the appeal is due to be ruled on in the near future. Foreign efforts to pressure Nigeria resumed when the U.S. introduced a similar resolution in April 2005, which was passed in the House the day before President Bush met with Nigerian President Obasanjo in May. During this period, there was also significant media attention on Taylor's supposed connections with Al Qaeda and the assassination attempt on Guinean President Conte. Press coverage then began to wane at the end of May after Justice Ayoola briefed the Security Council on the Special Court.

¹ "The Case of Charles Taylor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone." SCSL Press and Public Affairs

² <http://www.un.org/events/tenstories/>

Public statements from the Court regarding the Charles Taylor issue have been primarily driven by the Office of the Prosecutor. While the Press and Public Affairs Office regularly distributes press releases and the Registrar conducts periodic interviews with reporters, Prosecution has by far been the most vocal with the international media. According to Allison Cooper, Chief of Press and Public Affairs and former court reporter, press coverage tends to focus on prosecution during the early stages when indictments are unsealed, and then shifts when defence begins to present its case. The Office of the Prosecutor at the Special Court has used this trend to its advantage, strategically drawing media attention to Charles Taylor through a variety of tactics to be examined later.

As I lay out the interactions between the Special Court and the media regarding Charles Taylor, it is important to keep in mind that the analysis will be limited to international press. While Sierra Leonean understanding of the Court and the Taylor issue is essential for victim's justice to be served, politically mobilizing the international community and/or the larger African community is what can ultimately bring the fugitive to stand trial. By surveying the international scene during key moments of the campaign to bring Charles Taylor to justice, I hope to highlight some of the contributions that the media has made towards the Special Court's mission.

The Fall of Charles Taylor

Perhaps the biggest success to date for the case against Charles Taylor was the resignation of the former head of state and his removal from Liberia. While Taylor's indictment was not made public until June 2003, Prosecution had been preparing to bring the accused war criminal into the spotlight well before then. According to Prosecutor David Crane, the international community does not care about West Africa, so he had to use the media to bring attention upon Liberia and Charles Taylor. One of his first steps was taken in April 2003, when the Prosecutor publicly accused Taylor of harbouring two Special Court indictees: Sam Bokarie and Johnny Paul Koroma. Crane claims that Taylor "took the bait" by denying the accusation, after which the Office of the Prosecutor produced evidence that the individuals were indeed in contact with Taylor. According to Crane, the public dialogue ended with Taylor being exposed as a liar and war criminal sympathizer, preparing the way for the Prosecutor's next move.

The decision to unveil Charles Taylor's indictment during the Peace Conference in Ghana was a deliberate decision by the Office of the Prosecutor to turn international eyes towards Taylor and the war crimes charges against him. While some of the press criticized the Prosecution in claiming there was never a chance that Ghana would have handed Taylor over to the Court, David Crane asserts that this was never his objective. Instead, Crane proclaims, "With a stroke of the pen, Charles Taylor was stripped of his political power before the world." When asked whether he believes Taylor is in his present state because of the timing of the public indictment, Crane nodded with assent.

Nevertheless, despite the catalytic role that the indictment is claimed to have made, there are several factors to consider that potentially minimize the effectiveness and significance of the Prosecution's decision. First, the indictment that was delivered to Ghanaian officials on the morning of the Peace Conference caught them by surprise, and led to a stream of criticism from African leaders. Most offended, of course, was President Kufuor of Ghana, who was also chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at the time. Not only did Kufuor publicly urge for the indictment to be lifted³, but he also called off private negotiations that were being held with the Special Court at the time. According to Registrar Robin Vincent, the Court and the government of Ghana had nearly reached an agreement regarding sending Foday Sankoh, one of the Special Court indictees, to Ghana for medical treatment. However, Taylor's indictment essentially became Sankoh's death warrant when Ghana refused to resume

³ "Ecowas Chairman Urges UN to Lift Taylor Indictment." *AllAfrica.com*, June 30, 2003

negotiations on the issue and Sankoh was not provided with the necessary medical care. At the moment, the Registrar is still struggling to secure a cooperation agreement with Ghana.

Second, despite efforts to capture the international community's attention through the Ghana Peace Conference, Charles Taylor's indictment received much less media attention than the events that would follow. Although the press covered the developments of the June conference, a media frenzy did not begin until July, when the U.S. was pressured to become involved. Press coverage skyrocketed as the White House deliberated over whether or not to send peacekeepers to Liberia. As President Bush called for the Liberian head of state to resign, Taylor responded in saying that he would only do so under various conditions that changed as time progressed – one of which included having the indictment dropped. When Taylor eventually acquiesced to calls for his resignation, it was a result of the pressure exerted by the U.S. government. While the Office of the Prosecutor might claim that the public indictment led to U.S. involvement in West Africa, it can also be argued that the deteriorating conditions in Liberia and its historical ties with the U.S. were what pushed the White House to act. From this perspective, the indictment only exacerbated efforts to remove Taylor from power.

Third, some critics view the Nigeria deal as an undermining of the Special Court and its efforts to end impunity. When discussions about granting Taylor asylum in Nigeria began, various nongovernmental organizations protested what they perceived as an escape from international justice. The Prosecutor seemed to think otherwise when interviewed about the subject as he commented retrospectively, "It was the right thing at the time." However, a CNN report issued in July 2003 stated, "A special prosecutor with the special court said offering Taylor asylum from the war crimes charges would violate international law."⁴ During that same period, the Office of the Prosecutor was also publicizing its intent to pursue Taylor even if he were granted asylum in Nigeria. This is not to point out Prosecution's inconsistencies, but rather to bring to light the challenges that arose as it strove to achieve the Court's objectives while operating within practical diplomatic constraints.

Even if the public indictment contributed to Charles Taylor's eventual exile to Nigeria, it was far from being the only driving force. For the most part, a combination of carrots and sticks was what forced Taylor out of office – carrots from the Nigerians and sticks from the U.S. The Nigerian offer was placed on the table relatively early on, but Taylor rejected the idea immediately because of the Special Court indictment against him. However, once the U.S. became involved and delivered an ultimatum for his resignation, the Liberian president changed his conditions and said he would leave only if the U.S. sent peacekeeping troops. Around the same time, Taylor also told the *New York Times* that the U.S. was supporting the rebels who were launching attacks on his government⁵. While Taylor's shifty proclamations received a significant amount of media attention, they probably did him more harm than good. Despite getting none of the conditions he demanded, Charles Taylor left office on August 11, 2003.

Political Efforts for Taylor's Transfer

When asked whether the Office of the Prosecutor uses the press to mobilize the public or the government to generate press coverage, David Crane responded, "Both." While the unveiling of Charles Taylor's indictment at the Peace Conference fell under the first of these options, the political efforts in the spring of 2005 followed the second strategy. After Taylor's transfer to Nigeria, the campaign for his extradition remained relatively quiet until February 2005, when the first of a number of political actions were taken to bring the indicted war criminal to the Special Court. These efforts were primarily a result of behind-the-scenes work with government officials in different countries, and received varying amounts of coverage from the international press.

⁴ "Obasanjo to Shield Taylor from Court." *CNN*, July 10, 2003

⁵ "Liberian Says U.S. Backs His Enemies." *New York Times*, July 8, 2003

The European Parliament resolution that was passed on February 24, 2005 was the first of several political events that would unfold in the upcoming months. However, the resolution received very little attention, and was largely overshadowed by other Special Court coverage that month. The story that captured the most publicity was the Sierra Leone High Court's sentencing of a former Special Court investigator to jail. There was also some press coverage on the Special Court when David Crane announced his intent to resign at the completion of his three-year term as Prosecutor.

When the U.S. House of Representatives introduced a resolution on Charles Taylor in April, the story was given a relatively significant amount of media attention. However, publicity peaked in early May when the House passed the resolution and President Bush met with President Obasanjo of Nigeria the following day. Similar to the trends following Taylor's indictment in 2003, press coverage of the Special Court only became prevalent when the U.S. entered the picture. The importance of U.S. involvement becomes even more apparent when the amount of media coverage of the European Parliament resolution is compared with that of the House resolution.

Although all of the Court's efforts in the preceding months were made with the hope of obtaining an enforceable resolution under Chapter VII powers from the Security Council, the events in themselves were also useful tools for bringing the Taylor issue back into public attention. Prior to Justice Ayoola's appearance before the Security Council, the Prosecution already began to announce its ambitions to obtain a resolution under Chapter VII powers before the press. Though this goal was never met, David Crane does not believe the announcement was an empty threat that undermined his office because he claims that such public statements are part of the usual campaign to have something accomplished through the Security Council.

When the day finally came for the Special Court to stand before the Security Council, the message about Charles Taylor was a lot weaker than initially anticipated. Neither the Prosecutor nor the Registrar was permitted to speak at the session for fear that the Special Court briefing would become dominated by the Taylor issue. At the end of the day, all of the member countries agreed that Taylor should be handed over to the Court, but differed as to what kind of approach should be taken. A resolution under Chapter VII powers was not granted despite the political efforts preceding the event, and for those that viewed the Security Council meeting as the Court's best hope, the five-month campaign resulted in disappointment.

Of course, as in most situations, reactions to the Security Council meeting were mixed. Although both Prosecutor David Crane and his assistant Eric Witte agree that obtaining Chapter VII powers was the primary objective of Prosecution at the time, they perceive the outcome of the Security Council meeting differently. While Witte appeared rather disappointed with the results, Crane emphasized the success of achieving international consensus to bring Taylor to trial. Because all member countries at the meeting supported Taylor's extradition, Crane believes it is now "a matter of when, not if" he will be brought to justice.

Mobilizing the International Community

The events above were not unaccompanied by strategic uses of the press. As the various political developments unfolded, Prosecution was also busy informing reporters with statements about Charles Taylor's involvement with Al Qaeda, the Conte assassination attempt, and the upcoming Liberian elections in October 2005. All of these allegations were made with intended audiences and outcomes.

The Prosecutor's assertion that Charles Taylor has been secretly funding Al Qaeda through the diamond trade was clearly directed at an American public that has historically placed security as its first and foremost priority. While David Crane and his lead investigator adamantly affirmed the veracity of their claim, the White House refused to accept the allegations without substantive evidence. According to Crane, Taylor's connections with Al Qaeda were established when he first

arrived in Sierra Leone, but he decided to focus on the issue throughout the months of spring 2005 in order to support the Court's efforts to obtain a Chapter VII resolution. Beginning in February 2005, Prosecution began releasing Al-Qaeda related information in "gulps" rather than delivering all findings at once in order to keep the story at the forefront of the international press.

Prosecution's approach towards Taylor's alleged involvement in Guinean President Conte's assassination attempt followed a similar strategy. Crane claims that his investigators knew about Taylor's role in the scheme since February 2005, almost immediately after the assassination attempt took place in January. However, in order to compliment the political efforts at the time, he waited until April 28th to make a public statement on the issue. Nonetheless, information about Taylor's alleged role in the assassination attempt was leaked to various government officials before then in order to facilitate the resolutions that were eventually passed in the European Parliament and the U.S. Congress.

Despite the strategic relay of information on the Al Qaeda and Conte issues, neither was wholeheartedly accepted by government bodies abroad. The White House specifically denied sufficient evidence to draw such conclusions, and for the most part, the allegations have remained theories rather than readily accepted facts. Nevertheless, these objections did not prevent the press from covering the flow of information coming from the Office of the Prosecutor. For future purposes, however, Prosecution seems somewhat divided on how to utilize their investigative findings. When interviewed on the subject, Eric Witte said that they were planning to place less emphasis on the contested allegations, and instead form a united front with the U.S. government on more conclusive topics such as Taylor's involvement in Liberian politics. On the contrary, David Crane claimed he had never heard of the concept of forming a "united front" and believes that Prosecution should pursue any topic that will excite public interest.

As previously mentioned, another allegation put forth by Prosecution involves Charles Taylor's meddling in Liberian politics. While this claim maybe more widely accepted than the others, it is also a less effective scare tactic for the international community. However, because the conditions for Taylor's asylum in Nigeria includes that he refrain from involving himself in the politics of his home country, this becomes an important way for Nigeria to step down from its promise to shield Taylor from the Court. In this sense, the story of Taylor's meddling in Liberian politics is not so much a way to scare the international community into mobilizing against him, but rather a way for Obasanjo to save face if he one day decides to transfer Taylor.

When discussing the impetus that could eventually bring Charles Taylor to justice, officials at the Special Court repeatedly refer to the international community. The analysis thus far has comprehensively included various governments, transnational institutions, and the general public under the umbrella term, "international community." However, when asked who specifically the Prosecution means when referring to such a group, David Crane replied, "the United States" If we were to learn from past media trends on the Taylor issue, this response should not come as a surprise. Following the public indictment, media coverage skyrocketed when the U.S. even considered sending troops to Liberia. When Taylor eventually decided to step down from office, it was almost entirely a result of pressure coming from the White House. At the moment, the President has not demonstrated the same commitment to transferring Taylor to the Special Court, but even without the forceful backing of the U.S., current circumstances still provide some potential for progress.

The African Community

Unlike earlier efforts to remove Charles Taylor from Liberia, the audience who must be persuaded to act is now a respected head of state rather than an indicted war criminal. Thus, given that the deciding power now lies with President Obasanjo, the threat of sending American troops to Nigeria does not seem like such an appealing approach. While Eric Witte suggested that Nigeria has ulterior motives for harbouring Taylor and now deserves to be dealt with harshly, both David

Crane and Robin Vincent think otherwise. Crane, who claims to have rejected this strategy several days before our interview, believes that African culture would not allow a man in power to bow down before threat. Similarly, Vincent concurs that the decision to transfer Taylor should be made with the support of Obasanjo's African brethren and not the forceful West.

The implication for future media coverage is that the public will unlikely come across harsh criticism of Nigeria's commitment to shielding Charles Taylor. Representatives from the Special Court will probably continue telling the press that Obasanjo had done the right thing at the time by facilitating peace in Liberia, but he no longer needs to uphold his side of the deal because Taylor has broken his promise to stay out of Liberian politics. At the same time, Nigeria will likely persist in its stance of transferring Taylor only under the request of the Liberian government.

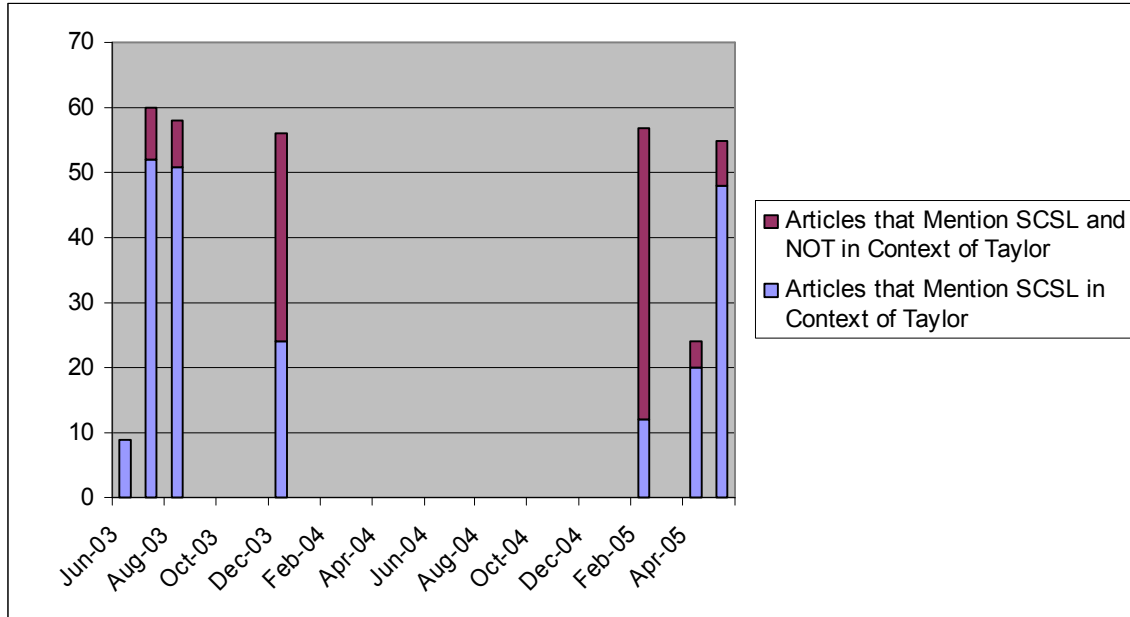
As to whether or not the new Liberian government will call for Taylor's transfer after the October 2005 elections, opinions are divided. Eric Witte remains sceptical of the Liberian government, which he said would be heavily influenced by Charles Taylor. However, the Registrar has already prepared a strategy that would prolong the Special Court's duration if Taylor is in fact brought over in October. According to Robin Vincent, regardless of how the government acts, the general consensus among the Liberian people is that they want a war crimes court of their own to try Charles Taylor. Thus there also remains the possibility that even if Taylor is sent back to Liberia, he may never be handed over to the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

If the Office of the Prosecutor were to continue using the press to mobilize the African community, it may find itself with a tougher challenge than it did in the past. While Americans share a common fear of terrorism, the various African leaders and their citizens often differ in their stance on the Charles Taylor issue. For example, after the Taylor indictment became public, some African press were critical of the Special Court whereas some were rather supportive. Also, because many African governments are not really democratically elected, they often do not represent the sentiment of the general public or try to manipulate public opinion by controlling the media. When dealing with the African press in the past, the Office of the Prosecutor has emphasized the need to end impunity and victim's justice over security issues such as terrorism. However, given that many African head of states have committed questionable acts of their own, the precedent of bringing a former Liberian president to trial does not always come across as very appealing. Nonetheless, efforts continue as civil society groups lobby the African Union for support and the Special Court oversees behind the scenes negotiations.

Conclusion

As long as Charles Taylor is still at large, the Special Court for Sierra Leone will continue in its commitment to bring him to justice. While obvious efforts include direct negotiations with Nigeria and other governments with influence over Nigeria, the media has also been useful in the campaign to extradite Taylor. The press is an extremely versatile tool that can be used to sway public opinion, influence political leaders, and create awareness on a topic. In addition, by evaluating the amount of coverage of an issue and the content of the reports, people are able to obtain a better understanding of what matters, who matters, and how to deal with the press accordingly so. This analysis has attempted to bring about some of the key dealings between the Special Court and the international media regarding Charles Taylor in order to provide insight into what strategies were used in the past and what can be learned for future purposes. As the world continues to develop a nascent international justice system, war crimes tribunals must cope with limited enforcement mechanisms to the best of their ability. While diplomatic efforts have been the traditional alternative to coercive law enforcement, the media should not be forgotten in the fight to end impunity. With combined contributions, it is hoped that one day it will be universally understood, "the rule of law is more powerful than the rule of the gun."

Exhibit A: International Media Coverage of the Special Court for Sierra Leone⁶



The chart above documents media coverage during five periods:

1. **June – August 2003:** From the month Charles Taylor’s indictment was made public through his exile to Nigeria.
2. **December 2003:** The month the Interpol notice on Taylor was issued. Also the month Saddam Hussein was found and discussions on his trial planning began.
3. **February 2005:** European Parliament passes resolution on Taylor. Also the month a former Special Court investigator was sentenced to jail and the resignation of Prosecutor David Crane was made public.
4. **April 2005-** The month U.S. House of Representative introduces resolution on Taylor and Crane accuses Taylor of involvement in Conte assassination attempt.
5. **May 2005:** The month U.S. House resolution on Taylor was passed, Obasanjo met with Bush, and Ayoola spoke before the Security Council.

Highlights from Interview with Eric Witte, Special Assistant to the Prosecutor
Conducted on June 8, 2005

⁶ The statistics above were generated from the press clippings collected by the Press & Public Affairs Office of the SCSL, which is not comprehensive of all international news sources. Each article that referred to the SCSL during the month was categorized into one of the two classifications. It must be kept in mind that these figures do not take into account the depth of coverage of the Court, as some articles briefly mention the institution, whereas others thoroughly report on the Court.

- Ø **Less focus on Taylor's alleged links to Al Qaeda and assassination on President Conte of Guinea.** Instead of infighting with the U.S. and E.U. on these contentious topics, Prosecution wants to form a united front. The plan is to shift focus towards Taylor's meddling in Liberia, which is more widely accepted.
- Ø **Hard-line approach towards Nigeria.** In the past, Prosecution tried to be diplomatic towards Nigeria, asserting that Obasanjo had initially done a good thing by accepting Taylor to bring stability to West Africa. However, now that Taylor has broken his promise to refrain from meddling in politics and Nigeria continues to harbour him, Witte believes it is clear that Obasanjo has ulterior motives. He says it is now time to shame Nigeria (although this is still in the process of seeking approval).
- Ø **Behind the scenes work to pressure Nigeria.** Prosecution wants to invoke UN Chapter VII powers if necessary. Two years ago, the U.S. passed legislation that bans debt relief to countries that harbour fugitives of international criminal courts (written by Senator Lahey – specifically for Taylor, although wording is vague so Nigeria does not appear to be singled out). European parliament also pushed for similar legislation in February.
- Ø **Differences in approaches towards African and international press.** More emphasis on victims' justice in Africa, and more emphasis on Taylor as a security threat in international press.
- Ø **Staff turnover in the Office of the Prosecutor may lead to new approaches.** The new Prosecutor and Chief Investigator will probably not be as adamant about Al Qaeda links and threats to American security. Nevertheless, the large turnover of lead figures in the department makes future dealings with the media difficult to predict.
- Ø **Window of opportunity to extradite Taylor has passed for now.** Recently, a number of factors had increased momentum for Taylor's extradition (Danes were President of the Security Council, U.S. House resolution on Taylor, May meeting between Bush and Obasanjo, significant media attention abroad). However, Prosecution believes the window of opportunity has passed for the time being. There is a small possibility that the G8 summit on debt relief for Africa might help put pressure on Nigeria to transfer Taylor, but there does not seem to be another opportune time in the near future.

Highlights from Interview with David Crane, Prosecutor

Conducted on June 20, 2005

- Ø **Making the indictment public during the Peace Conference in Ghana was an intentional act that used the press to bring attention to West Africa and Charles Taylor.** Prosecution did not anticipate that Taylor would be sent to the Court immediately, but instead hoped to strip him of his power publicly. Although in some articles, Prosecution called for Taylor to be directly transferred to Sierra Leone, it was actually supportive of the Nigeria deal. According to Crane, "It was the right thing at the time." He believes the timing decision for the indictment not only sped up the process of sending Taylor to Nigeria, but was also its primary cause.
- Ø **Al Qaeda connection may have been an issue since Crane first arrived, but it became an area of emphasis under the campaign for Chapter VII powers at the Security Council.** Prosecution started releasing information on Al Qaeda in February, but did so in "gulps" to keep the story at the forefront rather than throwing all information out at once.
- Ø **Investigators knew about Taylor involvement in the Conte assassination attempt back in February 2005, but the connection was not made public until April 28th as part of the Security Council campaign.** However, Prosecution leaked information to the European Parliament and other government bodies to encourage resolutions against Taylor.
- Ø **Prosecution announced it was seeking Chapter VII powers to the press in order to put pressure on the Security Council.** While obtaining Chapter VII powers was the primary goal of the campaign in May 2005, the fact that they were not granted does not mean Prosecution's efforts were futile. The campaign, which was in the works since January 2005, helped build international commitment towards the extradition of Taylor. Crane says that now Taylor's transfer to the Court is "a matter of when, not if."
- Ø **Responses to Eric Witte's Interview on June 8th:**
 - § Prosecution will not back away from Al Qaeda and Conte issues. Whatever excites public interest in the transfer of Taylor will be emphasized. Prosecution will continue to place pressure on the U.S.
 - § Crane rejected the option to take an aggressive approach towards Obasanjo. He says African culture is not conducive for a male to back down in face of threats
 - § De Silva will continue Crane's strategy since they have been working together for the past three years. He believes there will be no significant change in approach.
 - § Crane disagrees that the window of opportunity has passed. He says the window is always there and it is up to the international community to decide when Taylor will be transferred.

Highlights from Interview with Robin Vincent, Registrar

Conducted on June 23, 2005

- Ø **It is the job of the Registrar to support the Prosecution, but the timing of the public indictment of Charles Taylor harmed behind-the-scenes negotiations with Ghana.** At the time, Sankoh was ill and the Court was working to have him transferred to Ghana for medical treatment. However, after the Peace Conference negotiations were not concluded. The Registrar apologized to Ghanaian officials and explained that the indictment decision was not controlled by the Court.
- Ø **Media interest after the indictment was made public either focused on the background of the issue or criticized the Court for not handling the situation well.** The critical press claimed that there was never a chance that Taylor would be turned over to the Court.

- Ø **The Registrar's statements to the media have been less dramatic and inflammatory than the Prosecution's.** Vincent consistently insists that his role is to serve a legitimate arrest warrant and does not treat the Taylor case any different from other indictments.
- Ø **Vincent agrees with Crane that Taylor's transfer to the Court is "a matter of when, not if."** However, while all countries at the Security Council meeting concurred that Taylor should eventually be turned over to the Court, they disagreed over whether the situation should be dealt with aggressively or diplomatically. Nonetheless, the Registrar has established back-up plans in the case that Taylor is transferred after the Special Court has concluded.
- Ø **The Special Court does not have a stance on the Prosecution's allegations about Taylor's involvement with Al Qaeda and the Conte assassination attempt.** Vincent says no one knows the extent to which the claims are true, and while he has confidence in the investigative work of the Prosecution, he also believes the allegations have been used as a scare tactic for the American public.
- Ø **Vincent believes that if Obasanjo were to hand over Taylor, it would be a decision made with the support of the African community and not under the threat of Western states.** However, other factors such as Nigeria's desire for debt relief and a seat on the Security Council may contribute to the efforts to extradite Taylor.
- Ø **There have been several instances when the Registrar has disapproved of the Prosecution's statements in the press.** Vincent attributes some of the conflict to cultural differences between how the press covers court proceedings in the U.S. and how it does so in the U.K.
- Ø **The Registrar has been using the media to obtain funding.** According to Vincent, the first challenge of the Court is funds and not Taylor.