



Case No. SCSL-2003-01-T

THE PROSECUTOR OF
THE SPECIAL COURT
V.
CHARLES GHANKAY TAYLOR

WEDNESDAY, 29 JULY 2009
9.30 A.M.
TRIAL

TRIAL CHAMBER II

Before the Judges:

Justice Richard Lussick, Presiding
Justice Teresa Doherty
Justice Julia Sebutinde
Justice El Hadji Malick Sow, Alternate

For Chambers:

Mr Simon Meisenberg
Ms Kate Gibson

For the Registry:

Ms Rachel Irura
Mr Benedict Williams

For the Prosecution:

Ms Brenda J Hollis
Mr Mohamed A Bangura
Mr Christopher Santora
Ms Maja Dimitrova

For the accused Charles Ghankay
Taylor:

Mr Courtenay Griffiths QC
Mr Morris Anyah
Mr Silas Chekera

1 Wednesday, 29 July 2009

2 [Open session]

3 [The accused present]

4 [Upon commencing at 9.30 a.m.]

09:31:24 5 PRESIDING JUDGE: Good morning. We'll take appearances,
6 please.

7 MS HOLLIS: Good morning Mr President, your Honours,
8 opposing counsel. This morning for the Prosecution are Mohamed A
9 Bangura, Christopher Santora, myself Brenda J Hollis, with Maja
09:31:41 10 Dimitrova our case manager.

11 PRESIDING JUDGE: Thank you. Mr Griffiths.

12 MR GRIFFITHS: Good morning Mr President, your Honours,
13 counsel opposite. For the Defence today are myself Courtenay
14 Griffiths, assisted by my learned friends Mr Morris Anyah and
09:31:59 15 Mr Silas Chekera, and we're joined today by Ms Priyanka Reddy who
16 is an intern with us.

17 PRESIDING JUDGE: All right. Welcome, Ms Reddy.

18 Mr Taylor, I'll remind you just before your counsel asks
19 you further questions that you're still bound by your declaration
09:32:22 20 to tell the truth. Yes, Mr Griffiths.

21 DANKPANNAH DR CHARLES GHANKAY TAYLOR:

22 [On former affirmation]

23 EXAMINATION-IN-CHIEF BY MR GRIFFITHS: [Continued]

24 Q. Mr Taylor, yesterday when we adjourned we were looking at
09:32:37 25 events in November late 1997. Do you recall that?

26 A. Yes, I do.

27 Q. And do you remember we had dealt with your visits to the
28 Republic of China, South Africa and Libya?

29 A. That is correct.

1 Q. And do you recall that I then mentioned to you a nationwide
2 address which you made on 20 November 1997 which I referred to at
3 page 218 of the presidential papers?

4 A. That is correct.

09:33:12 5 Q. But before we come back to that I would like a little more
6 clarity, please, about a phase in the evidence you gave
7 yesterday. Now, do you recall us discussing a meeting in Abuja
8 on 10-11 October 1997?

9 A. Yes, I do.

09:33:36 10 Q. And do you recall that at the conclusion of the communique
11 which followed that meeting reference was made to a follow-up
12 meeting in Conakry on 20 October 1997?

13 A. That is correct.

14 Q. Did you attend that meeting on 20 October 1997?

09:33:57 15 A. We are still dealing with that - the meeting in question is
16 actually a follow-up meeting of the Committee of Five. That's
17 actually the - the meeting in Abuja is the fifth meeting and the
18 one immediately thereafter is the sixth meeting in Conakry. No,
19 I didn't.

09:34:26 20 Q. The sixth meeting?

21 A. That is correct.

22 PRESIDING JUDGE: Is Mr Taylor saying he was there, or not?

23 MR GRIFFITHS: Well, I'm coming to that:

24 Q. Were you there, Mr Taylor?

09:34:36 25 A. No, I did not attend that meeting.

26 Q. So who attended?

27 A. It is the foreign minister.

28 Q. Right. Now, did you thereafter receive a report from him?

29 A. Oh, definitely. Definitely.

1 Q. And help us, what was the outcome of that meeting?

2 A. By this time, if we look at the records very clearly,
3 things are evolving very, very fast and it's good to alert you
4 now that decisions are being taken and some of them are not being
09:35:06 5 exposed.

6 Here you have the fifth meeting early in October and the
7 sixth meeting immediately into Guinea. At this meeting in Guinea
8 another set of decisions are as follows. A six month maximum
9 time is given in that meeting for the return of President Kabbah.
09:35:31 10 That return should actually end - by April of 1998 he must be in
11 power. That's the decision of that particular meeting.

12 And again looking at humanitarian problems, opening
13 corridors for humanitarian agencies to work, the coming in of
14 more NGOs and all of this, but for me the most crucial briefing
09:36:07 15 that I received and read about at that particular time was it was
16 decided that there would be a six month time cut off where Kabbah
17 had to return to power.

18 Q. And help us, as far as you were concerned did you have any
19 difficulty with that timetable?

09:36:22 20 A. Oh, no, not at all. Not at all. We were all part of that
21 decision.

22 Q. And in addition to that decision, was any other step taken
23 by the Liberian government at this time?

24 A. Yes. At this particular time what we do while that meeting
09:36:42 25 is going on, we then close the borders with Sierra Leone while
26 that meeting is going on. And let me just add you're hearing
27 foreign ministers meetings, foreign ministers meetings. Foreign
28 ministers don't take decisions. These decisions are while
29 meetings are going on and I'm sure the Court - I'm not trying to

1 tell you what you don't know, but just for the record. Foreign
2 ministers are in constant contact with their capital. They are
3 getting instructions from their Heads of State. Foreign
4 ministers don't just go to meetings and decide on what they want
09:37:18 5 to decide. In fact foreign policy matters - while they are
6 foreign ministers, but foreign policy matters are decisions for
7 Heads of State through the foreign ministers. So we are aware
8 and we acquiesce. There is no disagreement. If there is
9 disagreement it will come up at the meeting, but this is with
09:37:37 10 full agreement. It's not that people are - you know, foreign
11 ministers are taking decisions and wondering how the Heads of
12 State would react. It doesn't work that way.

13 Q. So that meeting - that decision to close the border is
14 taken some time around about 20 October 1997, is that right?

09:37:57 15 A. Yes, about the 20th. Yes.

16 Q. And help us, for how long does that remain in place?

17 A. The border with Sierra Leone is closed from October until
18 July 1999 after the Lome agreement is signed before we open that
19 border.

09:38:23 20 Q. Right. Now who was enforcing that closure, Mr Taylor?

21 A. Well, I will say a combination of all of us. We still have
22 peacekeepers in the area helping. Our own few security personnel
23 are trying to enforce it. Remember we are not armed. We do not
24 have arms. But it is a combination of our forces and the
09:38:48 25 peacekeepers that are still around.

26 Q. And help us, do those peacekeepers include the UNOMIL
27 contingent we'd heard about?

28 A. Well, the UNOMIL contingent, I want to get this clear for
29 the records. They were more United Nations observer mission

1 like. They were not armed. I want to clarify that. So they are
2 not like peacekeepers. They are present, but they are not -
3 well, they are observing the situation I can say.

09:39:27 4 Q. That's the point. So in addition to having ECOMOG and
5 others monitoring the border you also have UN forces monitoring
6 the border, is that right?

7 A. That is correct.

8 Q. And does that remain the situation until that closure is
9 lifted after Lome?

09:39:42 10 A. To a great extent yes, but with a much reduced amount.
11 But, yeah, there is some observation.

12 Q. Now thereafter - well before we move on, so that's taking
13 place round about the 20th. We know then on 24 October there is
14 that letter that you write to President Sani Abacha, yes?

09:40:13 15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And why do you write to him so closely on the heels of that
17 Conakry agreement?

18 A. Well, there is an ongoing discussion between Abacha and
19 myself about a series of things and what you really have here is
09:40:34 20 a situation where we - you know, I'm beginning to really try to
21 put more pressure on Abacha to act actually. There is no real
22 connection because we are trying to - no, I'm just basically
23 trying to get Abacha to act. We know what's coming down. Let
24 there be no doubt when I say what's coming down, by the time we
09:41:04 25 hold this - by the time we go to that chiefs of staff meeting,
26 coming into these two meetings --

27 Q. Which chief of staff meeting?

28 A. Well, the ECOWAS chiefs of staff meeting which is attended
29 by foreign minister Ikimi.

1 Q. Yes?

2 A. By the time we go through that meeting and come into
3 October - well, there are two meetings in October, one in Abuja
4 followed immediately by the meeting in Conakry - we all know now
09:41:35 5 that we are dead serious that if nothing is done that there will
6 be some military action. It is not published, but we now know
7 what is coming down and everyone is trying to position himself in
8 a way to make sure that there is success in this operation.

9 Q. And the timetable for that, if I understand what you're
09:41:59 10 telling us, is that the understanding is following Conakry that
11 that military action will take place sometime round about April?

12 A. Well, no. No, I don't want to put it just that way. I'm
13 trying to say to you that it is said that by April he must have
14 been returned. That's the cut-off point. Now at what point the
09:42:23 15 military action is taken, I'm not saying definitely it would be
16 in April. It simply means that it could be any time before
17 April, but April was the cut-off date.

18 Q. Now help us, who was taking the lead on the need to use
19 military force? Who was prompting that idea, Mr Taylor?

09:43:06 20 A. Well, counsel, that's a very tough question.

21 Q. That's why I asked it.

22 A. I will help the Court this way, because I do not want to
23 abrogate our responsibilities on the Committee of Five, but
24 necessarily let me just first state that we are all in agreement
09:43:23 25 but as to the specific word "lead", of course in West Africa at
26 that particular time ECOWAS is being chaired by Nigeria and so
27 necessarily Nigeria would be in the lead on this, but with the
28 acquiescence, we are all together.

29 JUDGE DOHERTY: Mr Griffiths, I'm sorry to interrupt, but

1 before we lose sight of it, I wanted to clarify. Mr Taylor had
2 mentioned that the borders were being policed, to use a term, by
3 our forces and peacekeepers. Is that implication that only the
4 Liberian-Sierra Leone border, or the border of Guinea and Sierra
09:44:02 5 Leone, was it also closed?

6 MR GRIFFITHS:

7 Q. Can you assist us with that, Mr Taylor? Which border was
8 closed with whom?

9 A. The borders with Liberia and Sierra Leone were announced
09:44:16 10 closed by my government. Not on the Guinean side, your Honour.

11 MR GRIFFITHS: There's a lot of activity going on here,
12 your Honours. It's quite distracting.

13 PRESIDING JUDGE: That activity is distracting. If you
14 need us to adjourn for a short time, we will. Could you tell us
09:44:36 15 what's going on.

16 MS IRURA: Your Honour, I cannot log on to my LiveNote and
17 in event of a redaction, I would not be able to effect it.

18 PRESIDING JUDGE: Do you want us to leave the Court while
19 you do that?

09:44:47 20 MS IRURA: Your Honour, in the present situation it would
21 seem appropriate. Because if there was anything that needed to
22 be done, I would not be able to proceed with my computer in the
23 present situation that it is.

24 PRESIDING JUDGE: We don't know what's involved in fixing
09:45:02 25 your computer. What I'm asking you is rather than distract
26 everyone in the hearing, would you like us to leave the Court so
27 that the technicians can look at your computer?

28 MS IRURA: Your Honour, I would be much obliged.

29 PRESIDING JUDGE: All right. We will take an adjournment.

1 [Break taken at 9.45 a.m.]

2 [Upon resuming at 9.59 a.m.]

3 PRESIDING JUDGE: I'm told the problem with the Court
4 Manager's computer has been rectified now, Mr Griffiths, so
10:00:12 5 please continue.

6 MR GRIFFITHS: Thank you, Mr President:

7 Q. Mr Taylor, let's just retrace our steps. Which borders
8 were closed?

9 A. The borders between Liberia and Sierra Leone.

10:00:27 10 Q. Were the borders with Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire closed?

11 A. To the best of my recollection, no.

12 Q. Now I was asking you, Mr Taylor, about who was prompting
13 the possible use of force in Sierra Leone and you were dealing
14 with that. Do you recall that?

10:00:57 15 A. Yes, maybe I could put this in some context. If you see
16 the sequence of meetings it really, like I said, showed that
17 there is tension and there are pressures on all sides. For one
18 Nigeria, being the chairman of ECOWAS, is pressing for action.
19 If you see the letter that I wrote to President Abacha --

10:01:37 20 Q. 24 October?

21 A. That is correct. That comes a little after that meeting in
22 Conakry, where with all of the movements I'm trying to - you
23 know, to caution him to, "Listen, let's do this right", because I
24 know force is going to be used. The British are already in the
10:02:06 25 know of what is about to happen and there are strong statements
26 coming out from his representative. I talked about Ambassador
27 Weston a few days ago at the United Nations. I'm under
28 diplomatic pressure on my side to be very careful, because a lot
29 depended on it and by that I mean aid and other assistance.

1 So I'm basically trying to say, "Well, look, let's try to
2 make it a Security Council resolution. Let's make sure it's
3 under Chapter 7. Let's make sure." But the pressure is coming
4 from the Nigerian side very, very, very strongly on everybody,
10:02:47 5 including Liberia, and I have the big countries also putting
6 pressure on me from the other side to take precaution in what we
7 are about to do.

8 And it shows the level of frustration going on in ECOWAS at
9 that particular time and what a lot of us believe - and I
10:03:06 10 personally believe - was deliberate attempts on the part of some
11 members of the international community, especially Britain at
12 that particular time, in trying to stall everything that ECOWAS
13 was trying to do. Every time we made one move they would try to
14 come in with a counter move and it was this belief that I
10:03:29 15 mentioned before in this Court of not permitting Nigerian
16 hegemony in Sierra Leone and all this kind of stuff. So actually
17 there was this forceful pressure coming from Nigeria, but I do
18 not want to shun my own responsibility that we acquiesced but
19 that lead was from Nigeria. It was a very forceful lead.

10:03:50 20 Q. Right. Now we will pick up that thread of your account
21 again when we come into 1998, but having dealt with those events
22 you recall that after that letter to President Abacha we have the
23 visits to China, Tripoli and South Africa in early November, yes?

24 A. Yes.

10:04:19 25 Q. Now, Mr Taylor, yesterday I directed your attention in the
26 presidential papers to page 218. Do you recall that?

27 A. Yes, I do.

28 MR GRIFFITHS: I wonder if the witness could once again be
29 shown that document, please. Mr President, can I mention one

1 matter at this stage?

2 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes.

3 MR GRIFFITHS: This particular document, the presidential
4 papers, has not hitherto been marked for identification, but

10:04:58 5 we've made numerous references to it and I'm wondering whether it
6 might be sensible to mark it for identification at this stage so
7 that we have a reference point for further usage of the document.
8 I don't know if there's any objection to that?

9 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, I think that's a good idea really.

10:05:24 10 We'll mark the presidential papers spanning from 2 August 1997 to
11 31 December 1998 as MFI-28.

12 MR GRIFFITHS: I'm grateful:

13 Q. So MFI-28, Mr Taylor, page 218. Do you have it?

14 A. Yes, I do.

10:05:54 15 Q. Now we see that this address is dated 20 November 1997.

16 Now before we come to the details of what was said, Mr Taylor,
17 what was the purpose of this nationwide address?

18 A. We are trying to put in perspective all of the situations
19 going on; our little difficulties with the ECOMOG forces, how we
20 want to begin building a capacity in the country. It is also in

10:06:23 21 a very shrewd way setting the stage for what we know will be
22 happening and we deal again with the Sierra Leonean problem and
23 how we see it as a member of the Committee of Five and sharing
24 borders with Sierra Leone. We deal with all - just preparing the
10:06:56 25 legislature and the country in the way of a few things that we
26 knew would be happening in the near future.

27 Q. When you say "in a very shrewd way setting up the stage for
28 what we know will be happening", what are you talking about?

29 A. We know that problems are going to come in Sierra Leone.

1 We know that force is going to be used. We know that. And so -
2 when I say "we", I as President, we know. So we are beginning to
3 just put up what you will call yellow flags that in the future
4 when we have to explain this to the nation we can make some
10:07:35 5 references, but sometimes when you watch statements coming from
6 nations they allude to certain things without getting into the
7 details, but they also use that subsequently to say that, "Well,
8 remember in our statement of this date we mentioned this", and
9 then it becomes softer. It's a softer landing for the citizenry.

10:07:57 10 So this nationwide address deals with the general security
11 problem in Liberia, Sierra Leone and gave some hints as to where
12 Liberia would be going regarding her own internal security.

13 Q. Very well. Can we pick it up, please, on page 218 in the
14 third paragraph on the left:

10:08:18 15 "Over the last several weeks there have been various
16 issues raised locally and internationally that if not corrected
17 could bring questions to the minds of our citizens, probably
18 frighten them, probably frighten investors and drive away the
19 goodwill that is existing in the interest of the Liberian nation.

10:08:39 20 I would like to inform the nation that Liberia is at peace with
21 ECOWAS and all member states of ECOWAS. Liberia shares a very
22 warm relationship with member states and I as President share
23 very warm and cordial relationship with my colleagues in the
24 sub-region where we have respect for each other."

10:09:06 25 Now was that true, Mr Taylor?

26 A. Yes.

27 Q. I ask for this reason, you see. Remember your neighbour
28 Guinea had been supporting ULIMO, so what was your relationship
29 like with the President of Guinea?

1 A. You know, in dealing with colleagues in international
2 community you put your country first. So two Presidents may be
3 having some discussions maybe in the public arena, on the news or
4 maybe releases, but it is not about them. It is about the
10:09:54 5 country. So you always - relationships are - I mean for us in
6 West Africa we always say it's good even though there may be some
7 little underlying differences, but we don't take it to a very
8 great extreme. Remember a country had supported ULIMO, but when
9 I go to Monrovia in 1995 subsequently based on evidence we've
10:10:21 10 seen here we visit General Conte. So it's this thing, yeah,
11 there were differences. I would put it to good.

12 Q. Okay, going back:

13 "On the issue surrounding the presence of our West African
14 brothers known as ECOMOG I want to allay the fears of the people
10:10:46 15 of this republic by saying as follows:

16 i) We have always deeply appreciated the presence of our
17 West African brothers here and that will continue for the very,
18 very long future.

19 ii) The young men and women, officers and others that have
10:11:02 20 served and continued to serve and will be serving in the future
21 whether as ECOMOG or in some other arrangement, we want to say
22 that we always appreciate their services and that they have
23 dedicated their lives to duty. Liberians not being ungrateful
24 people will always cherish this thoughtfulness and this hard work
10:11:25 25 and dedication to duty as has been seen.

26 This administration and its President has no problem with
27 ECOMOG. I want to also make it very clear that Liberia is not in
28 a position now or in the very near future to see the total
29 removal of military personnel from the West African sub-region."

1 Did you believe that, that Liberia was not in a position
2 now or in the very near future?

3 A. Yes, I believed that simply because it was very certain
4 that the Security Council had refused to lift the arms embargo
10:12:08 5 from Liberia as requested by ECOWAS. It was also very clear that
6 the Liberian armed forces would not be receiving arms until we
7 had restructured and trained an armed force. So for me it was
8 very clear that the present and very near future we would not be
9 in the position to remove these securities. It was clear.

10:12:35 10 Q. "Fellow citizens, it is important to note that ECOMOG, as
11 the name is, will be ending its tour of duty in Liberia as of 2
12 February 1998. I want you to understand that we mean by they
13 will remain here for the very long future, but they will be
14 ending their tour of duty by 2 February. ECOMOG is the Economic
10:13:02 15 Community of West Africa Monitoring Group. As a peacekeeping
16 force the mission of ECOMOG must, and will, change as of 2
17 February. It does not mean that the personnel will all go.
18 Peacekeeping in Liberia has ended as we know, the conflict has
19 ended.

10:13:20 20 Elections have been held. By maintaining a peacekeeping
21 intervention force tells the world that Liberia is still not at
22 peace. Therefore, we will have to change the name and the
23 mission. We have to get this very clear that the new mission, as
24 agreed by the authority of ECOWAS, is a capacity building
10:13:42 25 mission. That mission will say: Fellow colleagues in Liberia,
26 we are going to help you to maintain peace and security."

27 So, Mr Taylor, there is, after all, something in a name, is
28 there?

29 A. Yes.

1 Q. And what was it about the name change that you felt was
2 significant?

3 A. The mission mostly I think is, in essence, what the name
4 change will signify. If you listen, there are statements being
10:14:22 5 made all of the time coming from the United Nations and other
6 international groups. You have peacekeeping, you may have peace
7 building, and you also have peace enforcement. These are
8 missions, based on how they are defined, will determine what the
9 force will do in the country.

10:14:46 10 So peacekeeping will entail the presence of soldiers to
11 help the environment in a military situation with a right to
12 self-defence. Now, that entails if the peacekeepers come under
13 fire, okay, they can defend themselves. Now, peace enforcement
14 is when you go in and you use force at every instance to make
10:15:20 15 sure that the mission is accomplished.

16 So what we were saying, that we had to in fact redefine the
17 mission from peacekeeping that was in place during war where the
18 troops could act at will, and because we had elections in the
19 country and you had sovereignty restored, that we had to change
10:15:46 20 the name and the mission from peacekeeping to capacity building;
21 that is, to assist us in the training of our armed forces, our
22 security personnel, but with one authority in the country; that
23 is, the President of the republic.

24 During the crisis in Liberia, in effect the de facto leader
10:16:12 25 of Liberia was whoever became chairperson of ECOWAS. I mean,
26 this is factual. Decisions were taken and, yes, there was a
27 Council of State, but the real decisions were being taken by
28 ECOWAS and under the chairmanship. So as the chairmanship moved,
29 in fact orders - orders to ECOMOG in theory meant that the

1 chairman of ECOWAS could order the forces commander, and I'm
2 saying in theory. But in reality, we got to realise that the
3 large peacekeeping missions in Liberia - and the largest at that
4 time was Nigeria - took orders from their chief of defence staff
10:17:03 5 in their country. So there was this little problem on the
6 ground, so we had to change the mission from peacekeeping to
7 capacity building.

8 Q. And you go on to explain that in this way:

9 "If you look at Bosnia, there was one force of NATO in that
10:17:28 10 country before elections. After elections it changed to ISFOR
11 with a different mission."

12 Then you go on to deal with different types of military
13 missions, and then you go on to say this:

14 "The mission of ECOMOG in Liberia was peacekeeping.
10:17:43 15 Liberia does not need peacekeeping now. Liberia needs capacity
16 building. Some of the men and women in ECOMOG will stay here to
17 make sure that they assist me as President.

18 There will not be parallel authority in this republic. No
19 officer from any mission or any force in Liberia will share power
10:18:03 20 with the President of this republic or challenge the authority of
21 the Republic of Liberia and stay here.

22 We want to separate individual actions from ECOMOG. They
23 are still very decent people and they are mature and they are
24 disciplined people."

10:18:22 25 Let's miss the next two paragraphs of military history and
26 go to the bottom paragraph:

27 "Liberia needs someone to assist me with the
28 constitutional responsibility to maintain peace and security in
29 Liberia, and anybody who wants to help will remain, and I'm not

1 saying ECOMOG, I'm saying that person who does not want to work
2 with this government will leave or be expelled by this republic."

3 Then you go on to deal with some of the practicalities
4 involved and you say:

10:19:09 5 "We want to make it very clear that Liberia, as a founding
6 member of ECOWAS, in fact, the most senior founding member, will
7 uphold the principles of ECOWAS. Liberia will be engaging in
8 bilateral discussions of which my colleagues in the region have
9 been informed, including the chairman of ECOWAS, of our desire to
10:19:29 10 negotiate bilateral arrangements for military personnel to
11 continue to assist in our capacity building exercises.

12 Some of these countries have already agreed, and we will be
13 pursuing these notions to begin in order that we may be prepared
14 for a final pullout on 2 February.

10:19:48 15 Another point: The Armed Forces of Liberia is not
16 dissolved; the AFL exists."

17 Did it?

18 A. Yes, this is really technical. This is really technical.
19 They had played their games. I mean, I may take some time here,
10:20:07 20 but I will just beg the indulgence of the Court to understand.
21 Because I had said in the previous statement here that the Armed
22 Forces of Liberia had splintered themselves, and now you see here
23 I'm saying they are not dissolved. So I'm sure this question
24 will follow: Well, you said this before; now you're saying this
10:20:32 25 now. But let me clarify this.

26 You must understand by now there's a lot of tap dancing
27 here. Diplomatic tap dancing. You can see anger in - I mean,
28 reading this, you see anger on the part of the government,
29 dissatisfaction in how we're dealing with some of the officers.

1 You hear me here talking about parallel authority. We feel that
2 we're being challenged as a government. We feel that some of
3 these officers are misbehaving, and if you remember in that
4 letter written to President Abacha I did mention that we had
10:21:15 5 agreed that we would pull some of these senior officers out that
6 were there before my being elected as President and change some
7 of them, which had not happened.

8 So there is a picture of here of distress on the part of
9 government trying to deal with these aggressive attitudes. So I
10:21:36 10 am basically now trying to put the pieces together by saying:
11 Okay, fine. Yes, we had this split-up of the armed forces, but
12 now those that are prepared to help the republic have given their
13 loyalty back to the republic, and so it is not dissolved because
14 in fact what I'm saying here technically, the Armed Forces of
10:22:04 15 Liberia is created by an act of the legislature and ECOWAS or
16 President Taylor cannot dissolve it. It is dissolved by an Act
17 of the legislature.

18 So what I'm saying here in effect is that, look, it is not
19 dissolved, and I'm dealing strictly with the legal interpretation
10:22:26 20 of creating and dissolving an armed forces which is not - it does
21 not fall within the powers of the President of the republic. So
22 I'm really just trying to hint to them that: Hey, be careful.
23 With all this stuff you're talking about, you're not the army.
24 There exists an army and until it is dissolved by an Act of the
10:22:44 25 legislature, it exists as an army. This is what the picture is.

26 JUDGE SEBUTINDE: Mr Griffiths, could I seek a
27 clarification. In view of what the witness has said the last 10
28 minutes or so, could you clarify. Did ECOMOG under its new
29 assignment stay in Liberia as a result of a request from you, or

1 as a result of something that ECOWAS imposed on Liberia? In
2 other words, did you have a choice in the matter as Liberians?

3 THE WITNESS: Yes, we did have a choice, and remember we
4 talked about a status of forces agreement. After that agreement
10:23:28 5 was signed the confusion ceased, and they continue under a new
6 mandate of capacity building.

7 MR GRIFFITHS:

8 Q. Let's pick it up now at the second bullet point in the
9 right-hand paragraph on page 220:

10:24:05 10 "This government, over the next 30 days, will make
11 available the first 1 million United States dollars to be put
12 into the process of restructuring of our armed forces and
13 security enforces. These monies will be used for the renovation
14 of the police academy barracks in Paynesville and some renovation
15 work at Camp Schefflein while taking care of some of the
16 retirement benefits for officers and members of the AFL."

17 Were you able to accomplish that, Mr Taylor?

18 A. We did start the process, yes. We were able.

19 Q. Let's go down to the next paragraph but count about eight
10:24:40 20 lines down:

21 "We do not expect that any individual connected with that
22 force will overstep his bounds, because in fact when we speak
23 about the authority of ECOWAS, I am a member of that body and I
24 cannot, and will not, be excluded from being called an authority
10:24:56 25 of ECOWAS. It is very interesting to note that if there are any
26 political questions or technical questions regarding statements
27 of positions of the government of the Republic of Liberia, I
28 expect as President that my colleague, President Sani Abacha, or
29 other colleagues of mine in this region will raise that issue

1 with me and nobody else.

2 We want to state that there is a real threat, my fellow
3 citizens, of the activities on the Liberian-Sierra Leone border.
4 That threat, I may inform you, is not sufficient for our citizens
10:25:40 5 to panic. I want to inform the national legislature that there
6 is no absolute crisis."

7 Mr Taylor, was that strictly correct, or were you seeking
8 to prevent any kind of general panic in the country? What's the
9 position?

10:26:05 10 A. Exactly. We were trying to prevent general panic. If the
11 President had gotten up and said, "Wow, there is a big problem,"
12 you have panic. I'm basically trying to calm the country, but
13 there are problems.

14 Q. Did you consider those problems to be serious?

10:26:20 15 A. Yes. Yes, there were serious problems, yes.

16 Q. And it continues:

17 "There is ample evidence that we have in terms of several
18 Kamajors being under arrest in our custody and seizure of massive
19 documentation that proves that there is a threat. We have
10:26:40 20 documents in our custody, hospital document, rosters and names
21 and identifications of individuals that have been carrying on
22 clandestine activities at our borders."

23 Did you have such proof?

24 A. Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

10:26:57 25 Q. Did you ever take up that proof with ECOMOG, for example?

26 A. Well, ECOMOG is not the factor. Remember I just said here
27 in the paragraph that you read earlier that, if there are any
28 issues, we had to discuss this at the Heads of State level. That
29 is what had been presented to Abacha when I said to him that I

1 could not help along that line, that Guinea was stronger and that
2 my government was too new and fragile. This is that whole
3 connection.

4 Q. And it continues:

10:27:35 5 "We are not guessing. It is a reality and it is a fact but
6 it is not sufficient that we can say a national crisis exists,
7 because if there was a national crisis I would have made it very
8 clear. Yes, Liberia is not armed yet but we will begin that
9 process."

10:27:57 10 When were you hoping to begin that?

11 A. After the armed forces was trained.

12 Q. "If Liberia is threatened from outside there are ways that
13 we will take the arms from those that have them and protect
14 themselves."

10:28:11 15 Who were you going to take them from, Mr Taylor?

16 A. Oh, no, my first duty as president is to protect the lives
17 of Liberian citizens. If Liberia came under attack and the arms
18 that - and they know that we are not armed and the arms that had
19 been taken from our combatants during the war are there, what is
10:28:34 20 the President supposed to do? If we requested them and they did
21 not give them, of course, my first responsibility would be to
22 take those arms and give it to people to defend the republic.
23 That's what I'm hinting to here.

24 Q. "Let no one be fooled that by having the guns it makes you
10:28:52 25 the boss. We are trained people in this country too and if
26 Liberia is pushed in her defence she will face up to the
27 challenge. We must state here, my fellow citizens, that we
28 support 100 per cent the effort of ECOWAS in resolving the crisis
29 in Sierra Leone. We support all existing United Nations

1 resolutions regarding Sierra Leone. We believe that armed
2 conflict is not the way to bring final resolution to the Sierra
3 Leonean crisis."

4 You're speaking here almost at the end of 1997, Mr Taylor.

10:29:31

5 A. That is correct.

6 Q. Had that been your position from the start of your
7 presidency?

8 A. From the very start. My inaugural address, everything.

10:29:49

9 Q. "We believe that all member states of ECOWAS should adhere
10 to the protocols of ECOWAS and the final communique of the Heads
11 of State. Liberia will not shun her full responsibility in this
12 region, even though we are recovering from war. We are in accord
13 with the six month plan for restoring the legitimate government
14 of President Tejan Kabbah. Even though Liberia will not and may
15 not be able to send military personnel as members of the
16 peacekeeping force going to Sierra Leone, Liberia intends to be
17 present in diplomatic and political terms on the ground in Sierra
18 Leone as a member of ECOWAS and a member of the Committee of
19 Five."

10:30:11

10:30:32

20 Now, Mr Taylor, were you fully committed to all of that?

21 A. Fully.

22 Q. Can I ask you a --

10:30:52

23 JUDGE SEBUTINDE: Mr Griffiths, you've just read an excerpt
24 in which the President then was saying, "We believe that armed
25 conflict is not the way to bring final resolution to the Sierra
26 Leone crisis." What armed conflict is being referred to here?

27 THE WITNESS: Your Honour, remember I mentioned to this
28 Court we see the Kamajors, I meet them on the ground in Liberia,
29 they are being armed and they are going in and they are fighting.

1 This war doesn't end like that. They are fighting. The Kamajors
2 begin the penetration. Some of our own ex-combatants have been
3 recruited. They have been armed. I see the conflict going and
4 this is what I'm referring to. This armed conflict - this new
10:31:33 5 insurgency that has been developed by ECOMOG - is not going to
6 help the situation. That's what I'm referring to.

7 JUDGE SEBUTINDE: But you also told us yesterday that
8 ECOWAS had approved the use of force to remove the illegal regime
9 in Sierra Leone.

10:31:50 10 THE WITNESS: Yes.

11 JUDGE SEBUTINDE: Now this conflict, is it not part of that
12 use of force to remove the illegal regime?

13 THE WITNESS: No, no, no, your Honour. ECOWAS had agreed
14 that by the cut-off date if the regime - the junta had not
10:32:08 15 removed themselves they would resort to the use of force, but
16 let's not forget even with that use of force it cannot take
17 effect unless it is authorised under Chapter 7 of the United
18 Nations. So, yes, we are stating our intent, but it cannot
19 happen until finally we exhaust our timetable and then go to the
10:32:31 20 Security Council.

21 Now, ECOWAS did not authorise this insurgency. It did not
22 authorise it. This was something that was started by the ECOMOG
23 on the ground and it was a real covert action that I saw as
24 posing a danger to the border, because in fact it was really
10:32:49 25 outside of the mandate that had been given ECOMOG by the Economic
26 Community. We had not authorised the use of force yet. We had
27 threatened the use of force.

28 MR GRIFFITHS:

29 Q. Now, Mr Taylor, that passage which I just read, "Even

1 though Liberia will not and may not be able to send military
2 personnel as members of the peacekeeping force going to Sierra
3 Leone", can I ask you this hypothetical question. If you as
4 President of Liberia had at that time the capacity, would you
10:33:29 5 have contributed force - soldiers to an ECOMOG force to remove
6 the junta in Freetown?

7 A. Definitely.

8 Q. Why?

9 A. Because we, as a union, decisions that I take - I believed
10:33:45 10 in the fact that the AFRC was an illegal regime and once a
11 decision was taken by the community of which I'm a part of that
12 decision I then could not come back and say, "Well, oh I'm a part
13 of it, but I cannot do this." I would have to do whatever I can
14 to support that decision that I was a part of making.

10:34:07 15 Q. So in November 1997 you would have been willing to send
16 Liberian soldiers to Freetown to remove the junta?

17 A. Yes, Liberia - yes, I would have done that. Liberia had
18 done that before. Liberia had forces in the Congolese crisis in
19 the early years before Mobutu came to power, so Liberia had some
10:34:36 20 experience in peace keeping and we would have done that.

21 Q. "My fellow citizens, we are on the road to restoring our
22 dignity as a people and as a nation and as a result we're going
23 to support and continue to support the United Nations and its
24 resolutions and we are going to condemn all acts of terrorism
10:34:59 25 around the world no matter who carries them out."

26 Pause there. When you speak of restoring our dignity,
27 first of all who is the "our"?

28 A. The people of the republic.

29 Q. And help us, how did you see supporting and continuing to

1 support the United Nations as helping to restore your dignity?

2 A. Well, let's look at the United Nations. The crisis in
3 Liberia, our own stance as being the oldest independent African
4 country, Liberia was one of the original signatories of the
10:35:53 5 document creating the League of Nations and the United Nations.
6 At that particular time, remember there were not too many
7 independent African states. So for us the United Nations and all
8 of its resolutions, we find ourselves in the position where we
9 had to support them. So our dignity had to be for us at that
10:36:18 10 time retaking our seat amongst the comity of nations. That's the
11 dignity I'm referring to here.

12 Q. Because when we look at the agreed facts, CMS 227, Liberia
13 became a member of the United Nations in 1945. Do you recall
14 that?

10:36:39 15 A. Oh, definitely.

16 Q. And became a member state of the Economic Organisation of
17 West African States in 1975, yes?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. ECOWAS?

10:36:52 20 A. That is correct.

21 Q. And you became a member state of the Organisation for
22 African Unity in 1963?

23 A. That is correct.

24 Q. And remained a member of its successor organisation the
10:37:03 25 African Union, yes?

26 A. Yes.

27 Q. Now, Mr Taylor, before I leave this particular passage,
28 though, let's look at the end of the sentence: "...and its
29 resolutions and we are going to condemn all acts of terrorism

1 around the world no matter who carries them out." But hold on,
2 you were a terrorist from your days in Libya and you had a design
3 to terrorise the citizens of Sierra Leone, didn't you?

4 A. That's total nonsense. If I haven't stated it before, let
10:37:46 5 me state it here and now. The pan-African struggle that was
6 helped significantly by Libya during the years of the Cold War,
7 where even some of the major democracies supported the apartheid
8 regime in South Africa, I think it is ludicrous for us to begin
9 to look at this. If it had not been for this very Libya,
10:38:15 10 probably the apartheid regime in South Africa would still be
11 sitting there. So it is total nonsense to use these labels of
12 terrorism.

13 I think that Gaddafi is a very great African leader who has
14 helped in so many liberation struggles across Africa and, as a
10:38:33 15 result of that, a lot of these countries now are democracies
16 because of the assistance that he gave. So I want to get away
17 from the Cold War rhetoric where labels are attached to
18 individuals. Whoever wants to call him a terrorist, that's their
19 business. I am sure - I sure am not, have not and will never be
10:38:55 20 a terrorist and our pan-African actions from that time coming on
21 now I think were justified and helped across the continent. From
22 east, central, south, west, that movement helped.

23 So this whole thing about I am supposed to be coming to
24 quote unquote terrorise the people of Sierra Leone is just what I
10:39:24 25 said, nonsense. And, you know, when these buzz words are going
26 around the international community where you don't agree with
27 something all of a sudden you become - you know, you become a
28 terrorist. But we know - I'm a former President and we know
29 these things. George Bush came with the war on terror. We don't

1 hear that phraseology any more. These are all statements made
2 for special times and descriptions when you want to demonise an
3 individual or something. These things changed. I don't hear
4 President Obama talking about war on terror. It's been changed
10:40:04 5 to something that probably has a less lighter - I would say, you
6 know, lighter maybe connotation you may want to call it. So
7 someone trying to say that a pan-Africanist at that time is a
8 terrorist I'd say is talking pure nonsense.

9 Q. I mean Nelson Mandela was called a terrorist at one time,
10:40:26 10 wasn't he, Mr Taylor?

11 A. Yes, I think for a long time he - even upon becoming
12 President they still had that on certain books in America, but
13 one would hardly want to even - I think to even associate that
14 word with Mandela you would call maybe a taboo. Why would
10:40:54 15 anybody? But it depends on the era. Liberia and Ethiopia were
16 the only two countries that challenged in this very International
17 Court of Justice here in this Hague the apartheid regime in South
18 Africa. It was Liberia and Ethiopia, the late emperor Haile
19 Selassie and William VS Tubman.

10:41:13 20 In fact, if you read Mandela's book you find out that the
21 last country that donated \$25,000 United States to the ANC for
22 resistance was Liberia. So when you look at these things, some
23 of these very major western countries supported that apartheid
24 regime to the point where South Africa was so rich that it
10:41:35 25 succeeded in doing what: In building a nuclear bomb. South
26 Africa, do you understand me? But when it comes to what they say
27 as what they want to do at a particular time, they do it when
28 they want to demonise you and destroy you. They begin to assign
29 labels and titles, demonise you to a point that even if you drop

1 dead, everyone would cheer, "Thank God this demon" - for example,
2 like, things like saying Charles Taylor is eating human flesh and
3 all this type of nonsense. They know that's so low. That's
4 very, very, very low. And so --

5 PRESIDING JUDGE: Mr Taylor, the court reporter can't keep
6 up with you. Could you please slow down.

7 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. I'm sorry, your Honour. I will
8 slow down. But I'll just end it here. The point I'm trying to
9 make is that these are words that - and phrases and terminologies
10 to demonise people and destroy them, just as what they've tried
11 to do to me. I'm supposed to be a terrorist. I'm trying to
12 terrorise Sierra Leone. I'm trying to take the wealth of Sierra
13 Leone. What else are they going to say? If I were to drop dead
14 here now, I guess it will all be finished. It's all just what
15 they did with the apartheid regime. It was a good thing for some
16 of the major western countries. A very good thing. Had it not
17 been later on for, I think, if I'm not mistaken, the Sullivan
18 Principles for South Africa, we would still be dealing with
19 apartheid, and we had to fight.

20 All of us that were pan-Africanists had a voice, whether it
21 was the ANC in South Africa, or whether it was SWAPO that dealt
22 with what was south West Africa that is now Namibia. Gaddafi
23 helped all of them. Rightly so. I think if I had been in a
24 position in Liberia, I would have done exactly what Gaddafi did.
25 Look, Africa has to be free. Africa has to determine its own
26 destiny. Yes, things are rough and yes, we are pushed around.
27 But our actions cannot be - should not be construed as terrorism.
28 So I resent the very statement attached to my name. It's sheer
29 nonsense.

1 PRESIDING JUDGE: Mr Taylor, what did you mean by saying
2 this: "I think if I had been in a position in Liberia I would
3 have done exactly what Gaddafi did"?

10:44:11 4 THE WITNESS: The pan-African assistance to the ANC and to
5 SWAPO for the liberation of South Africa and south West Africa
6 that is now Namibia; the is the assistance to other liberation
7 movements, that any pan-Africanist would have and should have -
8 and if I was in that position at that time I would have also,
9 your Honour.

10:44:31 10 PRESIDING JUDGE: I understand. I thought you were
11 referring to something that Gaddafi may have done in Liberia. I
12 understand now.

13 THE WITNESS: No, no. Very well.

14 MR GRIFFITHS:

10:44:50 15 Q. Let's continue:

16 "It is pleasing to note that Liberia continues to object to
17 economic sanctions, especially where food and medicines are
18 concerned, because women and children died. These are very firm
19 policies of this government. We are on our way, fellow citizens,
10:45:09 20 to economic recovery. After the first 100 days we can see our
21 civil servants being paid."

22 Pause there. Mr Taylor, just roughly when did you pass
23 that first 100 days stage?

24 A. You have to check from --

10:45:28 25 Q. 2 August?

26 A. Yes.

27 Q. Very well. And you continue: "We can see our civil
28 servants being paid." Is that true?

29 A. Yes.

1 Q. "We can see the Government of National Unity take shape, a
2 very strong Cabinet performing as a family", is that true?

3 A. That is true.

10:45:53

4 Q. "For those that have tried to divide us have found it
5 impossible." Had persons tried to divide you?

6 A. Yes, yes. In a way, yes.

10:46:14

7 Q. "Our people continue to make it clear to the world that we
8 want peace, and Liberia has re-entered the world comity of
9 nations. We want to say here that this process is going to
10 continue. We want to continue to ask our people to tighten their
11 belts. We are going to begin the process of restructuring the
12 civil service."

13 Why was that necessary?

10:46:33

14 A. We had a very, very large bureaucracy that had been created
15 as a result of all of these people coming on the Council of
16 State, and it was pretty - the civil service bureaucracy had
17 grown ten-fold.

10:46:52

18 Q. "We must begin to look at our foreign missions that we can
19 be represented properly at international levels. We have passed
20 the human rights bill."

21 Had you?

22 A. Yes.

10:47:06

23 Q. "And we are going to be pursuing human rights in this
24 republic. We are beginning the process of strengthening the
25 judiciary that The Honourable, the Chief Justice and members of
26 the Supreme Court can be seen, and serve, as an independent and
27 credible judiciary."

28 Did you consider that to be of any significance,

29 Mr Taylor --

1 A. Very, very.

2 Q. -- an independent and credible judiciary?

3 A. Definitely. Definitely. Definitely. That's the only way
4 I figure we would be able to be a country of laws and not of men.
10:47:33 5 The only way.

6 Q. "We have seen that our police forces at this particular
7 time have taken the challenge of combatting crime and acts of
8 terrorism in Monrovia."

9 Now, what are we talking about in terms of crime and acts
10:47:49 10 of terrorism, Mr Taylor?

11 A. Immediately following the war we had armed robberies,
12 holdups, where people would at night go at people's houses, hold
13 them up at gunpoint, you know, take their things. And so we had
14 to begin to stamp that out for us - well, I guess we all are
10:48:20 15 using the general word "terrorism", but, I mean, for me if you
16 went to an innocent family and held them up at gunpoint where
17 there were women and children and old people, I think that's an
18 act of terrorism for me.

19 Q. And was that situation coming under control by this date?

10:48:40 20 A. Yes, we were beginning to stamp it out.

21 Q. "We see our National Security Agencies moving around and
22 logistics being provided. We see our armed forces personnel that
23 have pledged their loyalty to this government and continue to
24 show their readiness to defend this nation.

10:48:59 25 Fellow citizens, we do not want to give ourselves a pat on
26 the back, but we have reasons to believe that Liberia is moving
27 forward."

28 Pause there. What was the basis for that optimism,
29 Mr Taylor?

1 A. There are several things. One, we had put together a
2 cabinet, a government really of national unity. All of the
3 factions, or most of them, were involved. Remember when we went
4 through the cabinet list, you had two former commanders of the
10:49:33 5 Armed Forces of Liberia, General Hezekiah Bowen and General
6 Philip Kamah that had come on. You had individuals from ULIMO.
7 In fact, some junior deputy ministers were spread across the
8 board. All factions were involved. That was positive.

9 The next thing that we had, a lot of the thousands of the
10:49:58 10 former armed forces personnel that were connected with ULIMO-J
11 and K, yes, they had fled across the border, some of them had
12 joined - had been recruited for this Kamajor situation, but a lot
13 of them had stayed in the country also and had pledged their
14 loyalty to the country. We were beginning - if you see over here
10:50:24 15 I talked about ambassadors. We were beginning to straighten up
16 our diplomatic missions. We were beginning to get the attention
17 of members of the international community in terms of what was
18 possible.

19 And so we were moving in on crime, trying to wipe out these
10:50:47 20 robberies and different things that were going on. There was
21 this whole atmosphere of anticipation of good things, and I was
22 just trying to re-echo this for the republic.

23 Q. Yes. Can we just pause for a moment and just go back
24 briefly to that previous paragraph where you mention the chief
10:51:15 25 justice and members of the Supreme Court serve as an independent
26 and a credible judiciary. In light of that comment, Mr Taylor,
27 can we just go back a few pages to page 190 in this bundle,
28 please.

29 A. 190.

1 Q. 190. Do you have it?

2 A. Yes, I do.

3 Q. What do we see there?

10:51:47

4 A. These are members of the Supreme Court, the chief justice
5 and two other members.

6 Q. And do you see immediately below that reference to:

7 "Statement by President Charles Ghankay Taylor on the
8 occasion of the induction ceremony of the Chief Justice and
9 members of the Honourable Supreme Court Bench of the Republic of
10 Liberia in the parlours of the Executive Mansion."

10:52:12

11 What's the date, Mr Taylor? What's the date that comes
12 immediately after what I've just read?

13 A. That's August.

14 Q. Yes?

10:52:23

15 A. 1997.

16 Q. 22 August. So 20 days after your inauguration, yes?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Did you consider this a matter of priority?

10:52:41

19 A. Yes, yes. The delay was mostly, from our part, the time it
20 took for the Senate to consent. That was the longest delay. The
21 first part of the delay was the committee that had to go through
22 the process of vetting these jurists. They had to be vetted
23 within the presidency and making sure that we wanted qualified -
24 the best that the country needed, and so we had to move
25 immediately.

10:53:12

26 Q. And just so that we can put it in context, 22 August, so a
27 couple of days before you went off to Abuja for your first ECOWAS
28 Heads of State meeting?

29 A. That is correct.

1 Q. Can we go back to page 222, please. "As you are aware, we
2 have just returned from the Far East", and we dealt with that
3 yesterday, didn't we?

4 A. Yes.

10:53:42 5 Q. "Where we received an honorary doctorate degree. We are
6 very thankful to God that the Republic of China, in its quest to
7 assist us, will shortly be sending a very powerful team as part
8 of our joint commission." What was that team to do?

9 A. Look at areas where there could be cooperation in terms of
10:54:05 10 the economy and other capacity building measures.

11 Q. Now help us, Mr Taylor. At this stage, beyond the Republic
12 of China, were other countries queuing up to assist Liberia?

13 A. Yes, yes. Some members of the European Union. The United
14 States was beginning to look at what we were doing, yes.

10:54:36 15 Q. "As you very well know, the International Monetary Fund,
16 the World Bank and the African Development Bank, all of these
17 agencies have seen that we are ready, and we are willing, and we
18 are committed to a process of restructuring our economy, a
19 process of having a nation of laws and not of men; a process of
10:55:01 20 knowing that we prepared to make the hard decisions, to take the
21 hard choices whenever we have to, and we are going to work with
22 the international community to make absolutely sure that Liberia
23 continues to move forward.

24 During this Christmas holiday we're going to be looking
10:55:19 25 very, very seriously at our ex-combatants. We believe that all
26 the former warring factions have problems. The young men and
27 women need to be paid attention to. It is unreasonable for us to
28 stay here and believe that we can go along our normal businesses
29 and have thousands of our young men and women without jobs, no

1 privileges, and no schools. We are going to launch a major
2 programme within the next 45 days to repair our schools and
3 hospitals. This programme will ensure our young men and women
4 can go to work and can earn a dollar; that they do not have to
10:55:58 5 walk around with their heads hung down. It will also provide
6 facilities for educating them and giving health care. We intend
7 to assist in this process. We also, fellow citizens, will
8 continue our travels. We believe that Liberia has to sell
9 herself at this particular time."

10:56:19 10 What do you mean "we will continue our travels"?

11 A. Well, I have taken these trips to South Africa, Libya,
12 Republic of China. A new President coming into office will have
13 to go out. You are your nation's number one ambassador, trying
14 to go out to make friends, influence people and people develop a
10:56:47 15 feel for you to see, "Is this the person that we can work with?"
16 All of these. You are really your country's number one
17 ambassador. That's what I mean.

18 Q. And help us, Mr Taylor. How extensive was this and serious
19 was this problem of ex-combatants?

10:57:07 20 A. Very, very serious. The report shows some 30,000 arms that
21 were collected and that's reflected in the records here from the
22 ex-combatants, but in reality all combatants combined during the
23 war I would say that some 60,000 young men and women went through
24 this war at different stages. Now some people, like I said, will
10:57:51 25 fight for two or three months and then you don't see them again
26 and they're gone.

27 But here we are after the war and something terrible
28 happened in Liberia. There was no real demobilisation. I
29 mentioned in my testimony before about the mobilisation in

1 Mozambique. That was good, where ex-combatants were assisted.
2 In the case of Liberia, demobilisation never really took place.
3 After disarmament and election we were just left there to fight
4 our own battles and so you have these thousands of young people
10:58:33 5 doing nothing. This will contribute to so many factors. It
6 contributed to the fact of crimes. There is no work. The young
7 people are coming from a war with nothing to do.

8 Then this second factor of non-state action - non-state
9 actors on their part. By non-state I mean that is why we had
10:58:58 10 people being encouraged to go back to combat inside Sierra Leone
11 by the ECOMOG that had recruited some of them.

12 So all of these, we were looking at them. They were
13 becoming a very serious problem. You don't have that many young
14 men and women in the country that you just want to keep without
10:59:18 15 working. It was a major problem.

16 Q. And continuing:

17 "Some people believe that we have been thrown in the bottom
18 of the pit. No, we are going out there. This is warfare but a
19 different kind of war. If we do not sell ourselves nobody will
10:59:40 20 buy us. We are going to travel within a fortnight. I will be
21 travelling to the Kingdom of Morocco."

22 Did you?

23 A. Yes, I did.

24 Q. When?

10:59:50 25 A. Oh, gee, I think this is somewhere in early - I think
26 somewhere in '98 I visited the late King Hassan II.

27 Q. "Following that to cement our relationship within the
28 sub-region I am under immense pressure to visit more West African
29 states."

1 Were you?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. What kind of pressure?

4 A. Well people were saying, you know, "Go around. Meet your
11:00:20 5 brothers and see how they can help", those countries that were
6 contributing countries to ECOMOG. Let's go at the beginning, we
7 are talking about Gambia, we are talking about Ghana, we are
8 talking about Nigeria, we are talking about Guinea. In fact, I
9 did pay one visit to Guinea somewhere around this area. In fact,
11:00:44 10 Tejani was still there. But I'm being encouraged to go out and
11 meet my colleagues fully, not just from meeting them at a meeting
12 but sitting down tete-a-tete.

13 Q. "We've been invited for a state visit to La Cote D'Ivoire
14 La Cote D'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Guinea and on and on. We have
11:01:09 15 also been extended an invitation to visit a major western
16 European country."

17 Which one is that?

18 A. Eventually it becomes France.

19 Q. "We are going to undertake these visits in the interest of
11:01:21 20 our state and the welfare of our people.

21 By and large, fellow citizens, we thought to say to you
22 today that the sky is the limit. Liberians have a long history
23 of freedom and liberty. We are too old to get worried about
24 anyone threatening us, we are very old. Liberia has a history of
11:01:38 25 fighting for the rights of people. It is based on our moral
26 principles that decisions have been taken regarding so many
27 actions dating back to our fight with the apartheid regime of
28 South Africa filing a suit in the International Court of Justice,
29 to fighting for the independence of so many western, central and

1 eastern African nations.

2 We are very small nation, but we are a great people. And
3 we are going to retake our place and nothing will stop us from
4 retaking our place among the world comity of nations. We are a
11:02:18 5 proud nation and that tradition will continue.

6 God bless you."

7 Now, Mr Taylor, by this stage in your presidency how are
8 you feeling about the prospects for Sierra Leone?

9 A. Well, I have great prospects. I know that for the first
11:02:44 10 time in the Sierra Leonean crisis you now have the full attention
11 of the international community. I do see by this time efforts
12 are being made now to extend the mandate of ECOMOG into Sierra
13 Leone. We see the acquiescence on the part of the OAU. We do
14 see the attention of the United Nations. So I'm very, very, very
11:03:24 15 hopeful that Sierra Leone will very shortly normalise again. I'm
16 very optimistic at that point.

17 Q. Now before we move into December of 1997, Mr Taylor, we're
18 now towards the end of November. At this stage is Roberts
19 International Airfield open?

11:03:57 20 A. We have put the pressure on and there is supposed to be now
21 - by now a board meeting has been held. We are now putting
22 together a programme. We've gotten promises from at least two
23 European countries and some assistance to get the airport back up
24 to snuff. Even in the case of Spriggs Payne Airport we are
11:04:29 25 trying to see if we can get some extension. No, we are now in
26 the position with a framework now to begin putting the
27 international airport together to open it in line with
28 international travel guidelines.

29 Q. Which board meeting had been held?

1 A. The Roberts International Airport operates as an autonomous
2 agency of the Liberian government. There's a board that governs
3 the activities of the running of the airport.

4 Q. And when had this board meeting --

11:05:06 5 PRESIDING JUDGE: Just before you leave that point, your
6 question was, "At this stage is Roberts International Airport
7 open?" So I take it the ultimate answer is no?

8 MR GRIFFITHS: Well, let's ask:

9 Q. Was Roberts International Airport open for commercial
11:05:22 10 traffic at this stage, Mr Taylor?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Now the board meeting, when had that taken place?

13 A. This board meeting is happening - because I'm very busy -
14 somewhere around I think November. October/November the board
11:05:39 15 meets to look at these issues.

16 Q. And who is the chairman of the board?

17 A. If I remember it may have been I think Honourable Ernest
18 Eastman could have at that time been the chairman of the board.

19 Q. And as President, were you kept abreast of these board
11:06:04 20 meetings?

21 A. Oh, definitely. Definitely. Remember I've written Abacha
22 about this and so it's a priority for the government also.

23 Q. So help me, did you receive a report about that board
24 meeting?

11:06:14 25 A. I received a full report that came to me from the board
26 that outlined everything that had to do with the restructuring,
27 extension, putting on lights and all that kind of stuff. That
28 was brought to me, I read it and it was a part of my archives
29 papers that I turned over to the Defence.

1 MR GRIFFITHS: I wonder if the witness could be shown the
2 document behind divider 6 in bundle 1 of 3. So it's behind
3 divider 6, bundle 1 of 3:

4 Q. What are we looking at here, Mr Taylor?

11:08:00 5 A. This is a letter to the chairman of the board - the
6 co-chairman of the board - by the secretary to the board.

7 Q. And it refers to a board meeting of directors held in the
8 cabinet room of the Executive Mansion on Wednesday 12 November
9 1997, yes?

11:08:24 10 A. That is correct.

11 Q. Let us ignore the agenda which is over the page and which
12 is duplicated. Let us also ignore the table of contents and just
13 quickly get an idea of what the state of Roberts International
14 Airfield was at the time and the kind of issues you were

11:08:47 15 contending with as President. So have you got the page which
16 begins "Introduction", Mr Taylor?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. "The Republic of Liberia has been in the grip of civil war
19 for the last seven years which has virtually destroyed all areas
20 of its economy including the once thriving civil aviation

11:09:06 21 subsection. The capital city, Monrovia, was subjected to a
22 massive destruction, vandalism and looting and the two major

23 airports, James Spriggs Payne Airport and Roberts International
24 Airport, were no exceptions. The main runway at RIA was

11:09:34 25 bombarded with resultant craters and potholes. The new terminal
26 was destroyed by rocket and shell strikes and set on fire.

27 Destruction and looting at both the airports left them devoid of
28 the essential and basic facilities such as communication and
29 navigational aids, fire fighting and rescue vehicles and

1 equipment and meteorological instruments, et cetera.

2 As a result of this destruction, Roberts International
3 Airport remained closed to civil traffic since 1990, but some
4 military flights, however, have been using the runway after the
11:10:17 5 temporary repairs to - ECOMOG have been using the runway after
6 the temporary repairs to the runway since 1994. ECOMOG have been
7 using Roberts International Airport for their troop movements and
8 for essential supplies of food and medicine."

9 Reference is made to a layout plan of the airfield and if
11:10:51 10 one just flicks through a few pages to behind page 8 there are
11 appended a plan of the James Spriggs airfield and the Roberts
12 International Airport. Yes, if we can just put those briefly up
13 on the screen, please, so that we can all see. Yes? Have we
14 seen both now?

11:11:47 15 Then it continues:

16 "James Spriggs Payne airport though damaged by the civil
17 strife from time to time have remained generally operational for
18 the flights to and from neighbouring countries and also for the
19 flights bringing in humanitarian relief supplies of food and
11:12:03 20 medicines. This was made possible by piecemeal patch repairs to
21 runway and other facilities though not to ICAO safety standards."

22 And there is a further reference to - well, I think it
23 might be important for us to deal with that:

24 "On request from the government, UNDP/ICAO fielded a
11:12:45 25 technical team in June 1993 for site survey and assessment of
26 facilities at both the airports. On completion of the mission at
27 both the airports in September 1993 a comprehensive report was
28 submitted giving recommendations for urgent rehabilitation and
29 medium term improvement required as per ICAO standards and

1 recommended practices. The total cost estimates for all the
2 recommendations worked out at 54.129 million US dollars for both
3 the airports. This included the cost of
4 rehabilitation/reconstruction of facilities and equipment in
11:13:28 5 order of priority and the project was planned to be completed in
6 five years including training and fellowships for the staff and
7 technicians.

8 This report was accepted by the Government of Liberia in
9 principle but could not be implemented because of sporadic
11:13:41 10 incidents and non-availability of funds from the international
11 donors who have been waiting for the democratically elected
12 government to be put in place."

13 Then we have if we skip a couple of lines, "The 6 April
14 crisis." What are we talking about there, Mr Taylor?

11:14:08 15 A. 1996. That's the Roosevelt Johnson situation.

16 Q. "The 6 April crisis was the last blow to the already
17 crippling facilities at the James Spriggs Payne airport. The ACT
18 tower was completely smashed by a bomb and the terminal building
19 was very badly damaged. Also there were splinter damages caused
11:14:33 20 to the main runway, taxiway and parking area pavements which made
21 the operations more and more risky and dangerous.

22 Because of the deteriorated condition of runway and lack at
23 ATC facilities there has been three unfortunate accidents in the
24 past two years. The recent one in July 1996 when Weasua airline
11:14:55 25 lost their Yak-40 aircraft and the cargo on board."

26 Do you recall that incident, Mr Taylor, the airplane crash?

27 A. Yes, I do.

28 Q. "After the July 1996 air crash, the Government of Liberia
29 requested UNDP to urgently provide the essentially Nav/Com aids

1 to minimise the risk of operating at James Spriggs Payne Airport.
2 UNDP/ICAO took immediate action and provided a mobile ATC tower
3 which was airlifted from Canada and commissioned and dedicated to
4 the Liberian people by the chairman of the Council of State
11:15:39 5 Mrs Ruth Sando Perry. In addition, UNDP is committed to
6 providing two vehicles and other equipment. In all UNDP has
7 spent and committed to spend a total amount of 1.5 million US
8 dollars including the cost of first mission for technical
9 assistance in September 1993."

11:16:03 10 And then there's provided a list of further commitments
11 under the project and when we go over the page we see what
12 financial assistance was expected from donors and if we just look
13 very quickly at what was needed to be done at the two
14 airports. At James Spriggs Payne Airport firstly reconstruction
11:16:36 15 of the runway, secondly provision of fire fighting and rescue
16 vehicles and equipment, thirdly security fencing to stop people
17 from walking across the airfield, airfield lighting, water
18 supply, power supply, Nav/Com/meteorological aids, ground
19 handling equipment, maintenance back up vehicles, renovation of
11:17:04 20 buildings, rehabilitation of taxiway, miscellaneous. It was in a
21 bad way, wasn't it, Mr Taylor?

22 A. That is correct, yes.

23 Q. And then when we go to Roberts International Airport there
24 again renovation and furnishing of two buildings for use as
11:17:23 25 temporary terminal and administration building,
26 Nav/Com/meteorological aids required, fire fighting and rescue
27 vehicles, security fencing, airfield lighting, repair, cleaning
28 and paint marking on the runway, power and water supply,
29 maintenance back up vehicles et cetera, et cetera, yes?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. So a similar situation there?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. So can you help, Mr Taylor, before we leave this document,
11:18:03 5 how long did it actually take you to get these airports back
6 operational? Can you help?

7 A. It took a few years and even by the time I left Liberia we
8 still had not really brought the airport - especially Roberts
9 International Airport, there were still some parts that had not
11:18:33 10 been completed. This was a very expensive programme that we had
11 some assistance, but did not get the promises that had been made.
12 We did not get all of the donations that had been promised.

13 MR GRIFFITHS: I'm going to move away from that document,
14 but can I ask for it to be marked for identification, please,
11:18:56 15 Mr President, as MFI-29. It is the report of the board meeting
16 of Roberts International Airport dated 12 November 1997.

17 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, that document is marked MFI-29.

18 MR GRIFFITHS: Can we put this bundle away now, please --

19 PRESIDING JUDGE: I'm sorry to interrupt, but is that
11:19:28 20 appellation for that document strictly correct? You've said
21 report of board meeting of Roberts International Airport.

22 MR GRIFFITHS: You're right.

23 PRESIDING JUDGE: It's actually a briefing for a board
24 meeting that is yet to be held.

11:19:44 25 MR GRIFFITHS: Yes, it's a briefing for a board meeting.
26 I'm sorry.

27 PRESIDING JUDGE: All right. Well, we will call that
28 document a brief for the minister of transport, Government of
29 Liberia, for an RIA board meeting to be held on 12 November 1997.

1 MR GRIFFITHS:

2 Q. Mr Taylor, what we're going to do now is we're going to
3 move into December and what I'd like us to do is to take up the
4 presidential papers again, please. Now before I invite your
11:21:09 5 attention to a particular page in this document, can I ask you a
6 specific question, Mr Taylor. By the beginning of 1997, what is
7 the state of play regarding the Conakry - the agreement made at
8 Conakry in late October?

9 A. By the beginning of 1997?

11:21:35 10 Q. No, by the beginning of December 1997?

11 A. Oh, by this time I think all systems are on at this
12 particular time. We know exactly what is expected and all of our
13 countries - I have, as I said before, closed my border and we are
14 just now moving into a different I would call preparing for some
11:22:17 15 other activities that follow about a month or two later. I don't
16 want to get into that yet, but by the end of the year we're
17 looking forward to the new year, but there is almost like a plan
18 of action as we go forward into the new year and so we are really
19 looking forward at that.

11:22:34 20 Q. Do you recall now - and if you don't say so - whether you
21 went on any foreign trips at the beginning of December 1997?

22 A. At the beginning of December 1997? There were so many
23 trips that I don't quite recall right now.

24 Q. Very well. I'm not going to press you on that, but can I
11:23:01 25 invite your attention to page 121, please, in this document. Do
26 you have it?

27 A. Yes, I do.

28 Q. Can I draw your attention to the top photograph. Who is in
29 that photograph, Mr Taylor?

1 A. That's President Jimmy Carter, his wife, his son to the far
2 right of that photo and my wife at the time.

3 Q. Yes, and what occasion does this record?

11:24:06

4 A. Oh, they're at a church service. I don't quite recollect
5 what it was, but this had to be some programme. I don't
6 recollect what this is. I didn't go personally.

7 Q. Yes, but which month is this taking place in?

8 A. This is December.

11:24:25

9 Q. Yes, and do you recall a visit by President Carter to
10 Liberia at or about this time?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And did he come as your guest, or in any other capacity?

11:24:52

13 A. Well a former President coming, yes, in a way, but
14 President Carter had a very good liking for Liberia and so I'm
15 sure he had to come as my guest.

16 Q. Okay. Now let's now go, please, to page 224 in this
17 document. Do you have it?

18 A. Yes, I do.

11:25:41

19 Q. Now, this page is headed "Nationwide Statement by His
20 Excellency Dankpannah Dr Charles Ghankay Taylor President of the
21 Republic of Liberia on the Mysterious Abduction and Death of
22 Former First Deputy Speaker of the Transitional Legislative
23 Assembly, Honourable Samuel S Dokie, at the Parlours of the
24 Executive Mansion, Thursday December 4, 1997".

11:26:02

25 I don't want to go into the details of this statement,
26 Mr Taylor. I'm interested in two things. Firstly, the date note
27 4 December. Secondly, what's this about?

28 A. This is about the death of Honourable Samuel Dokie, you see
29 here of the TLA. That was before my government. But Samuel

1 Dokie was a very - was somebody that I knew very well. This is
2 about his death.

3 Q. Yes, and what were the circumstances surrounding it?

4 A. This was more like - in fact I was out of the country at
11:26:46 5 the time of his death. To be exact his death had occurred a
6 little before this. It was during my trip while I was in South
7 Africa that his death occurred and I'm commenting on it. This
8 was more like an old family tribal feud that occurred between
9 Honourable Dokie and some citizens from Nimba and he was killed,
11:27:16 10 along with some others.

11 Q. Now the next date I want to move to is this - so you notice
12 we're in December now, yes? Let's go to page 226, please. Now
13 what we note here is this: This is a statement by His Excellency
14 Dankpannah Dr Charles Ghankay Taylor, President of the Republic
11:27:56 15 of Liberia on his return from the fourth extraordinary ECOWAS
16 summit held in Lome, Togo, 16 to 17 December 1997. Do you recall
17 going to that meeting, Mr Taylor?

18 A. Definitely, yes. I couldn't remember it earlier, but.

19 MR GRIFFITHS: Do we have time to embark on this,
11:28:25 20 Mr President?

21 PRESIDING JUDGE: I don't think we would have. Well, we
22 could embark on it, but you wouldn't finish it I don't think,
23 Mr Griffiths.

24 MR GRIFFITHS: Yes, so would that be a convenient point?

11:28:39 25 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, we will adjourn for the short
26 morning break now and resume at 12 o'clock.

27 [Break taken at 11.28 a.m.]

28 [Upon resuming at 12.00 p.m.]

29 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, continue, Mr Griffiths.

1 MR GRIFFITHS: May it please your Honours:

2 Q. Mr Taylor, just before the short break, I had invited your
3 attention to page 226 of the presidential papers; do you recall?

4 A. Yes, I do.

12:02:12 5 Q. 226, please. Now we see that this entry in the publication
6 is headed, "Statement by His Excellency Dankpannah Dr Charles
7 Ghankay Taylor, President of the Republic of Liberia on His
8 Return From the Fourth Extraordinary ECOWAS Summit Held in Lome,
9 Togo, December 16-17, 1997." Mr Taylor did you attend that
10 meeting?

11 A. Yes, I did.

12 Q. Can you first of all just give us a general overview as to
13 what was discussed and thereafter decided at that meeting? So
14 first of all, the discussion.

12:03:41 15 A. Let's deal with the word "extraordinary". It means that
16 this is one of these ECOWAS meetings that are not a part of our
17 regular schedules. So principally at this meeting we are now
18 dealing with some of these - remember in October you had this
19 Abuja and then you had Conakry. Decisions are evolving at this
12:04:18 20 particular time. We meet at Togo as you can see.

21 In fact, Abacha did not attend this meeting, but the mood
22 in this meeting is very clear, he is represented and we get the
23 full picture of what is about to happen in Sierra Leone. And
24 that meeting is a very rough meeting amongst us but these things
12:04:48 25 never come outside. There are agreements that force should be
26 applied immediately. There are discussions that let's follow the
27 route of negotiations and do the six months plan that had been
28 agreed upon. That six months plan, I explained to the Court that
29 extended into April of 1998.

1 So it is not a very good meeting but we come out of the
2 meeting united and I get back home and, as I recall, I begin to
3 go through the history of Liberia, what Liberia has meant to the
4 continent. It involved problems of other types so I really go on
12:05:38 5 and begin to deal - in other words I'm just laying out how
6 Liberia feels that she will continue to move as she used to move
7 before - whether it had to do with even the independence of
8 Nigeria, what we had to do, how we were instrumental in helping.

9 So it's not a very clear - it's a stormy meeting and I come
12:06:06 10 back and address the nation and I'm using I would say figurative
11 language here in just trying to reassert in our little way
12 Liberia's own historic position and it is intended not just for
13 the Liberian consumption, it is intended for also external
14 consumption.

12:06:28 15 Q. Right. You've told us a lot there and I want you to help
16 me with some of the detail. Decisions are resolved, you say.
17 What decisions?

18 A. The whole - what should happen. Should we stick with the
19 six months plan of negotiations and doing all this or should we
12:06:48 20 apply force immediately? And apparently we left from that
21 meeting still knowing that we would wait for the six months but
22 everyone was not pleased and we know what happened subsequently.

23 Q. You also say it was a rough meeting. What do you mean?

24 A. There were exchanges of views. Heads of State were
12:07:13 25 expressing their opinions behind closed doors, I mean analysing
26 situations. You know, little meetings that were not open to the
27 public.

28 Q. Was there disagreement?

29 A. Definitely there was disagreement. There was disagreement.

1 Q. Was there stated opposition to the declared course of
2 action?

3 A. You know, I need to be very careful with this, counsel,
4 because I want to separate opposition in the meeting and coming
12:07:48 5 out united.

6 Q. Let's start with the meeting.

7 A. Okay. Inside the meeting of course there were oppositions
8 as to how to proceed and when to proceed. We had agreed that at
9 the end of the day by April force would be used if the junta had
12:08:06 10 not turned over. That was accepted.

11 Now, we are confronted in the meeting where it is now being
12 said that, "Look, why wait? These people are never going to turn
13 over, so let's move in and do it immediately". There's another
14 view that, "Look, yes, even though we must do it let's wait for
12:08:30 15 the Security Council resolution", but then others are arguing
16 because I have already warned Abacha that the British would not
17 permit that kind of force in Sierra Leone because they had
18 interests and they would water down any Security Council
19 resolution dealing with a Chapter 7 use of force. So people just
12:08:55 20 felt, look, let's go ahead and do it and if they want us to give
21 it back then we will ask them if they want us to give it back.
22 So there were these kinds of behind the scene discussions.

23 Q. Yes. I want to go back a little further still. You say it
24 was an extraordinary meeting. So what prompted the sudden
12:09:13 25 urgency?

26 A. I would say they stepped up military activities on the part
27 of ECOMOG, the Nigerian ECOMOG, at that particular time prompted
28 this extraordinary meeting.

29 Q. And what were the stepped up activities of ECOMOG?

1 A. The bombings. I mean they were on a war footing. I'll put
2 it this way, they were on a war footing. And if I remember very
3 clearly, if we take one little minor step forward, if we go back
4 into the final what reached to us - to me from my foreign
12:09:55 5 minister at the time, the final beginning of the crisis -
6 remember this so-called intervention starts at the beginning of
7 February and if we look at the cause, what's the cause? That the
8 junta was supposed to have attacked some ECOMOG facilities I
9 think around Lome airport and then things snowballed, okay. But
12:10:18 10 throughout - there was not quiet I'm trying to say. As of
11 December there was not quiet. There were bombings, there were
12 incursions by - there was a war atmosphere on the ground.

13 JUDGE SEBUTINDE: Mr Griffiths I don't want to get lost on
14 this, but the Security Council - had the Security Council in
12:10:44 15 principle approved using force to remove the junta in
16 Sierra Leone?

17 THE WITNESS: No, your Honour. Even after the intervention
18 the Security Council had not. I stand corrected but there was no
19 resolution passed under Chapter 7 authorising the intervention in
12:11:03 20 February of 1998. I stand corrected on that, but to the best of
21 my knowledge that resolution was never granted.

22 MR GRIFFITHS: Can I continue, your Honour?

23 JUDGE SEBUTINDE: Perhaps one more clarification. You say,
24 Mr Witness, that the UK was opposed to ECOMOG striking in
12:11:30 25 Sierra Leone.

26 THE WITNESS: Sir John Weston, the British ambassador to
27 the Security Council, a permanent member, spoke publicly
28 condemning Nigeria's action and saying that the Security Council
29 at the time of the beginning of the crisis had not authorised

1 under Chapter 7 force to remove the junta for the reinstallation
2 of Tejan Kabbah into the presidency. That was the full official
3 position of the British government. He made it in many speeches.

4 In this Court I think there has been some squabbles about
12:12:08 5 the use of the Sierra Leonean web page, that HTT, but it was done
6 on the BBC. It is public information of the British position at
7 that particular time in opposition.

8 MR GRIFFITHS:

9 Q. So that was the nature of the meeting, Mr Taylor?

12:12:29 10 A. That is correct.

11 Q. Let's now look at what you were saying in this address at
12 page 226:

13 "When we left the country a couple of days ago it
14 characterised Liberia's historic role in approaching peace from a
12:12:52 15 quite dynamic perspective of dialogue and exchange of idea, we're
16 wherein the legacy of our wisdom as Africa's oldest independent
17 nation is accorded an opportunity of communication. It so
18 happens that our determination to add our voice towards the
19 development of a mechanism for conflict resolution coincides with
12:13:18 20 the annual spirit of Christmas. As Christ Jesus availed himself
21 of the harbinger of goodwill, and thus the sacrificial lamb of
22 peace to the world, so too did we engage our last mission to
23 Lome.

24 The fourth extraordinary session of the Authority of Heads
12:13:39 25 of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African
26 States took place in Lome, Republic of Togo on the 17th. Our
27 colleague His Excellency General Sani Abacha, Head of State and
28 commander in chief of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of
29 Nigeria, and current chairman of ECOWAS, was expected to have

1 presided. Most unfortunately however, due to matters of state,
2 he instead directed his minister of foreign affairs to read a
3 letter on his behalf."

4 Who was his minister of foreign affairs, Mr Taylor?

12:14:21 5 A. Chief Tom Ikimi.

6 Q. The same Tom Ikimi?

7 A. That is correct.

8 Q. "My fellow citizens, the great question of how to create
9 this mechanism for conflict prevention, conflict management and
10 peacekeeping weighed heavily on the hearts of all my fellow
11 colleagues. Against the background of global approach to
12 conflict prevention, management and resolution, the foreign
13 minister of Nigeria referred to various instruments drawn up
14 regionally and globally; particular reference to the Cairo
12:14:34 15 Declaration of 1992 which established the OAU summit mechanism
16 for implementation."

17 Pause there. Mr Taylor, what was the relevance of that
18 Cairo Declaration to these issues?

19 A. In terms of conflict resolution and management, that's all.

12:15:17 20 Q. "Noteworthy is the spirit and intent of other UN
21 authorities that spearheaded the concretisation of conflict
22 resolutions, economic recovery and development worldwide. Its
23 emphasis lies on capacity building of government for successful
24 implementation.

12:15:41 25 As the latest formal document on conflict resolution,
26 prevention and management is being considered the Economic
27 Community of West African States must rely on its parent
28 organisation the Organisation of African Unity, the depository of
29 its legal instruments, in developing an appropriate and juridical

1 formulated permanent structure in isolation of a continental
2 approach.

3 My fellow citizens, we in Liberia envisage that the African
4 reality is now of utmost importance, especially with giant
12:16:23 5 superorganisms such as the European Union, the Asian and Pacific
6 States Organisation and the North-South American Trade
7 Arrangements dominating world trends in development. Therefore
8 special attention must be accorded to the Cairo Declaration of
9 1993 in updating existing ECOWAS protocols of 24 July 1993 when
12:16:50 10 it comes to a collective security mechanism.

11 The strength of our foreign policy and indeed the bedrock
12 of our diplomacy are derived of our consistency over the years.
13 The formulation of Liberia's foreign policy was erected out of
14 the virtues of the emancipation, creation and independence of the
12:17:13 15 nation which more than 150 years ago stood the test of time
16 against colonial aggression and in the ensuing years helplessly
17 lost close to 80 per cent of its territory.

18 Liberia's participation, with the help of German gunboats,
19 in the abolition of the slave trade by using its territory as a
12:17:38 20 safe haven for the settlement of recaptured slaves from the Congo
21 en route to North America.

22 In defence of its sovereignty Liberia about 60 years ago
23 successfully staved off an attempt by the League of Nations to
24 subjugate the nation through the status of a protectorate over
12:17:59 25 charges inability to govern itself as a result of allegations of
26 slave trading in the Fernando Po scandal.

27 Liberia's long-standing leadership role in Africa,
28 particularly in the critical pre and post independence area, was
29 the essential factor that helped to shape the protocols and

1 structures of conventional and regional organisations.

2 Monrovia served as the venue in 1959 for a five-day meeting
3 of foreign ministers from nine independent states to find a
4 solution to the end of the Algerian war. African independence
12:18:43 5 was stressed, while the concept of our African solution to
6 conflict resolution was given birth. The big three at the
7 conference, Guinea, Ghana and Liberia, called for the recognition
8 of the provisional Algerian government of Ferhat Abbas in Cairo.

9 The three countries also protested against France's plan for
12:19:10 10 atomic tests in the Sahara dessert because of the fallout dangers
11 for neighbouring African countries.

12 The Sanniquellie conference of 1959 served as the historic
13 occasion for the final settlement of the modality for African
14 unity. President William VS Tubman of Liberia prevailed over
12:19:31 15 Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana when he called for a loose
16 association of African states as opposed to Nkrumah's united
17 states of Africa."

18 Pause there. You've already spoken about that, haven't
19 you, Mr Taylor?

12:19:49 20 A. That's correct.

21 Q. And what President Tubman's motivation was in that regard?

22 A. That is correct.

23 Q. "President Tubman's policy of diversity and unity set the
24 basis for the Organisation of African Unity. However, he called
12:20:01 25 for the delay in starting the OAU for several years to wait for
26 the independence of Nigeria, the British colony that is bigger
27 and more prosperous than Ghana, Guinea and Liberia together.

28 While fighting for its independence Nigeria formulated a
29 key principle of foreign policy it is stated. We have to be

1 objective in pursuing a policy which deals with the science of
2 what is possible. In the context of the role of a future
3 organisation for African independent states, Nigeria joined the
4 big three in calling for a community member's obligation appear
12:20:45 5 limited to doing nothing contrary to the spirit and objective of
6 the community. The community's main objective is described as
7 the need to help other African territories to earn their
8 non-independent status.

9 President Tubman went further in fostering that the
12:21:04 10 community will have an economic council, a cultural council and a
11 scientific and research council. This proposal of Tubman
12 stressed what is probably the community's principal long-term
13 usefulness; economic cooperation, harmonisation of tariffs, and
14 possibly a common market eventually for all or most of Africa,
12:21:27 15 after the goal of all-African independence was achieved around
16 1970.

17 The West African summit, as Sanniquellie was called, also
18 passed resolutions on certain African affairs."

19 Can I pause there Mr Taylor. Firstly, why did you feel it
12:21:49 20 necessary to provide this historical narrative to the people of
21 Liberia?

22 A. We are coming from this rough meeting and I'm really
23 troubled, but I'm a part of the process and our long last goal of
24 getting Liberia started. What I describe as being a respected
12:22:21 25 member of the comity of nations, I see it under threat because as
26 long as there is no peace in Sierra Leone quite frankly there's
27 no real peace in Liberia.

28 This is just to remind our people to give them hope to
29 remind them of the historic role that we've played and that we

1 must continue to play in dealing with the problems now across the
2 border in the sisterly Republic of Sierra Leone. It is just
3 maybe, you know, a reminder, a reawakening of the Liberian
4 spirit, to tell us that, "Look, we are our brother's keepers.
12:23:02 5 We've done great things in the past. We can still do it in the
6 future. We need not despair."

7 I would just call this that this was a need to cheerlead a
8 little bit and then remind some of these big countries we had -
9 you see here what Liberia had done in holding up the OAU to wait
12:23:24 10 for Nigeria, so even though we were small we were great and in a
11 way reminding some of them of what we had done for them; that
12 when their houses were on fire we came to their rescue. This
13 historic thing is to remind them and give our people some sense
14 of dignity and honour, that's all.

12:23:48 15 Q. So, Mr Taylor, why did you not address the Liberian people
16 along the lines of, "Steps will be taken in our sister country of
17 Sierra Leone which may have consequences for you, the citizens of
18 Liberia, for whose welfare I as President have responsibility."
19 Why not warn them along those lines?

12:24:11 20 A. That would have - that would have figuratively speaking let
21 the cat out of the bag. I think everybody knew that there was a
22 six months delay. Everyone new publicly that if they did not
23 adhere to this there will be force. We were still - most of us
24 in West Africa were of the conviction that the junta would turn
12:24:35 25 over in time based on our April deadline, so by making a
26 statement like that could have even warned the junta of possible
27 force coming and so it would have been inappropriate.

28 Q. Let's just complete this and then I'm going to ask you some
29 more questions about that:

1 "True to our tradition and heritage of diplomacy, this
2 administration has remained firm and consistent to its foreign
3 policy principles of reciprocity, strict adherence to the
4 resolutions of the UN, OAU and ECOWAS and protection and
12:25:15 5 preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of not
6 only Liberia but all African nations. Our views and policy on
7 conflict resolution, which embodies crisis prevention and
8 peacekeeping, were initially spelled out in an address to the
9 20th ECOWAS summit in Abuja of 28 August" - we've looked at that,
12:25:40 10 haven't we?

11 A. That is correct.

12 Q. "...in which we linked the long term security of the
13 sub-region to economic development and enhance regional
14 cooperation to a high level where we should be seen as acting in
12:25:55 15 concert with a firm resolution showing tolerance for our
16 differences of opinion while respecting the territorial integrity
17 and sovereignty of each member state.

18 Of late, we have clearly spelled out in a policy statement
19 on Sierra Leone our strict compliance with UN resolution 1132,
12:26:16 20 and stated emphatically that Liberian territory will not be used
21 for the destabilisation of any sister African state."

22 Let us pause and take things in stages. UN resolution 1132
23 was to what effect?

24 A. A return of the government of Tejan Kabbah, the
12:26:45 25 negotiations as set out by ECOWAS. That resolution was basically
26 the ECOWAS plan at that time.

27 Q. And still staying on that last paragraph, "...that Liberian
28 territory will not be used for the destabilisation of any sister
29 African state", what's that a reference to?

1 A. The Kamajors moving in and out outside of the agreement of
2 the Committee of Five, ECOWAS and the OAU.

3 Q. Now, earlier you mentioned that the reason why you were
4 giving this in effect historical lecture to the people of Liberia
12:27:23 5 was because of your fears.

6 A. That's correct.

7 Q. What were those fears, Mr Taylor?

8 A. Like I say, I knew that there was going to be a crisis
9 coming again. There was going to be a major war and everything
12:27:37 10 that we thought about would never obtain again for some time.

11 Q. What do you mean "everything we had thought about"?

12 A. Okay, I'm talking about bringing peace, stability, moving
13 refugees back into Liberia, moving other countries' refugees back
14 into the country.

12:27:57 15 Q. Let me pose the question differently, Mr Taylor. What did
16 you anticipate to be the consequences for Liberia of the
17 intervention you knew was going to take place?

18 A. The consequences simply would have been Liberia would have
19 found herself starting all over.

12:28:17 20 Q. And did you want to be taking that step backwards?

21 A. No, not at all.

22 Q. That's why I'm asking you, you see? You're here making a
23 decision which you know will have serious consequences for your
24 country, yet you are telling them bottom of the last paragraph on
12:28:38 25 the left-hand side:

26 "True to our tradition and heritage of diplomacy, this
27 administration has remained firm and consistent to its foreign
28 policy principles of reciprocity, strict adherence to the
29 resolutions of the UN, OAU and ECOWAS."

1 It sounds as if you are willing to sacrifice the needs of
2 Liberia to those bodies. What do you say to that?

3 A. Oh, I would say no. No. Let's be very clear about this.

4 The UN is not a hawkish organisation that will just bounce in and
12:29:26 5 use force and destruction. ECOWAS - I mean OAU, which is the
6 mother organisation on the African continent, also had protocols
7 for conflict resolution. ECOWAS followed those protocols. If
8 you get to see a little later, you will see that at most OAU
9 summits on the margin of those summits regional organisations
12:29:54 10 also meet on the margins of those summits. And so these
11 organisations work together and by the time the Security Council
12 makes - takes a decision under Chapter 7, under most
13 circumstances every avenue have been exhausted before there is a
14 use of force. So we subscribe to that, that force is used as a
12:30:27 15 last resort and that is enshrined in the agreements of all of
16 these major organisations.

17 Q. I think we may be at cross-purposes, Mr Taylor, so let me
18 try my question differently. You've told me a little while ago
19 that you appreciated that military intervention in Sierra Leone
12:30:50 20 would have consequences for Liberia in terms of setting back the
21 progress you had made. Do you follow me so far?

22 A. Oh, I do.

23 Q. And do you agree with that proposition?

24 A. Well, maybe I could qualify something. Military
12:31:14 25 intervention the way that it was being conducted, you know,
26 unilaterally by the Nigerians at the time was what I'm opposed
27 to.

28 Q. Let me try again.

29 A. Uh-huh.

1 Q. So the manner in which it was being conducted was having
2 consequences for your country?

3 A. That is correct.

12:31:50

4 Q. My question then is, if that is the case, why are you
5 supporting a policy which is having these detrimental effects on
6 your own country? Do you follow me?

12:32:18

7 A. Well, I need some help. That question presupposes another
8 track of this argument, so maybe I need some help from you. I
9 don't understand. What I am supporting - the agreement on the
10 part of ECOWAS has not reached to the point of the use of force,
11 so I am supporting the protocols that call for negotiations and
12 giving a time for the junta to return.

12:32:45

13 Now we have not authorised force, so in support I'm not
14 supporting the force as is being used. This is why if you go
15 back to that letter that I write to Abacha, I am telling him that
16 his actions will lead to isolating him, that would not be proper
17 and that he had to work within the confines of ECOWAS.

12:33:10

18 Q. Yes, Mr Taylor, I appreciate you've told us that and force
19 might not have been authorised in the sense you suggest, but help
20 us. You knew within your heart of hearts what was going to
21 happen, didn't you?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And what was that?

24 A. That the attack was going to take place.

12:33:21

25 Q. And what consequence did you think such an attack would
26 have for Liberia?

27 A. Destructive consequences.

28 Q. So help me. Knowing that, why were you continuing to
29 support your big brother Mr Sani Abacha?

1 A. You know, for the purposes of this case I will tell you. I
2 will just make this statement. A lot of countries get dragged
3 yelling and screaming into issues on this planet now that really
4 they have no control over. I can give you some examples now.

12:34:02 5 Let's go back if you look at the war in Iraq, a lot of little
6 countries got dragged in there probably doing nothing.

7 Listen, this is a global community and going against
8 Nigeria at that time by myself, trying to act big and bad, would
9 not have been in the best interests of Liberia and I handled it

12:34:30 10 as diplomatically as I could. Everyone could sense the tension,
11 but it was smart. Nigeria could have smashed my little
12 government within a day's time. I was not armed. They had a
13 mechanised division in the country. Come on, let's get real
14 here. This is the real world that you do get dragged into

12:34:53 15 situations sometimes and you just have to be careful. If you're
16 not careful, you get smashed.

17 Q. I ask you these questions at this stage, Mr Taylor, because
18 we have now reached towards the end of December 1997, haven't we?

19 A. Uh-huh.

12:35:12 20 Q. So let's just take stock for a moment. We're one year into
21 the indictment period, as established by the statute which sets
22 up this Court.

23 A. That is correct.

24 Q. Okay?

12:35:25 25 A. Yes.

26 Q. By December 1997, had you done anything at all to support
27 the AFRC junta in Sierra Leone?

28 A. Nothing whatsoever. Nothing.

29 Q. And here you are in December 1997 acquiescing in the

1 decision by ECOWAS that force might at some stage be used against
2 the very regime this Prosecution claims you were supporting. So
3 help us, why did you do that when it might have consequences for
4 your own country? Do you follow me now, Mr Taylor?

12:36:14 5 A. I follow you. Because I had no interest in destabilising
6 Sierra Leone. My interest was in a free, peaceful Sierra Leone
7 and not as the Prosecution said.

8 Q. So at this stage, the end of the first year of the
9 indictment period, December 1997, had you had any contact with
10 the AFRC junta?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. When?

13 A. The first contact was - and I'm calling it a contact - the
14 letter that was sent by the chairman, Johnny Paul Koroma, that I
15 never responded to.

16 Q. 3 October 1997?

17 A. The second was a delegation led by the gentleman whose name
18 I wrote on that piece of paper that I refused to meet because
19 Liberia did not recognise the junta.

12:37:16 20 Q. So help me, did you respond to the letter?

21 A. No, I did not.

22 Q. Did you meet that delegation?

23 A. No, I did not. And the --

24 Q. By the end of December 1997, had you had any direct contact
25 with anyone to do with the junta?

26 A. No, none whatsoever.

27 Q. Now by this stage, December 1997, when was the last time
28 you had spoken to Foday Sankoh, your minion?

29 A. The last time I, Charles Ghankay Taylor, had spoken to

1 Foday Sankoh was in 1992. That was the last time I spoke to
2 Foday Sankoh.

3 Q. Where was he, Mr Sankoh, at this time to the best of your
4 knowledge?

12:38:13 5 A. In Gbarnga, just before the break-up.

6 Q. No, in December 1997 where was Foday Sankoh?

7 A. Foday Sankoh in December 1997, he was in the custody of, I
8 think, the Nigerians.

9 Q. And whilst in their custody did you speak to him at any
10 stage?

11 A. No, I did not speak to him at any stage.

12 Q. And help us. By this time, December 1997, where is
13 Dr Manneh?

14 A. December 1997, Dr Manneh I really don't know, but he is
12:38:59 15 somewhere - I really do not know. I have not been in contact
16 with him for a few years.

17 JUDGE SEBUTINDE: Mr Griffiths, perhaps I might intervene
18 again. When the witness says that the intervention in
19 Sierra Leone would have had destructive consequences for Liberia,
12:39:34 20 could he elaborate exactly how that would translate into
21 consequences for Liberia.

22 MR GRIFFITHS:

23 Q. Could you do that, please, Mr Taylor?

24 A. Yes. We used the word "intervention" now as is described
12:39:54 25 at the time of the attack in February. What I'm using
26 intervention to mean is that any renewed armed conflict in
27 Sierra Leone would be disastrous for Liberia.

28 Q. In what sense?

29 A. You have fighting, refugees coming in again, we have

1 non-state actors that we are hiring. I told you about our
2 ex-combatants from the war that were being used in Sierra Leone
3 recruited by the Nigerians and fighting alongside the Kamajors.
4 All - and the possibility of them going and returning with
12:40:38 5 renewed war. So for me, any military conflict at that time
6 without preparing Liberia for it would have been detrimental to
7 our move for peace and stability.

8 JUDGE SEBUTINDE: And a related question. Was Liberia the
9 only member on the Committee of Five who was uncomfortable with
12:41:01 10 what Nigeria was doing at this time?

11 THE WITNESS: No, your Honour, we were not the only ones.
12 I beg not to be asked to call their names because we are in a big
13 area of deniability. You will be hearing tomorrow, "Oh, no, no,
14 no". But there were at least I would say two and a half nations
12:41:24 15 that - it was almost 50/50 that were very uncomfortable with what
16 was being proposed and forced through.

17 MR GRIFFITHS:

18 Q. What about the half? What did that represent?

19 A. Well, when I say two and a half nations, you'll find some
12:41:43 20 people waver on this particular subject they - well, you know,
21 and they are wavering. Their whole - I would say their survival
22 depended on one of these big nations involved that they did not
23 want to offend, so sometimes they would play little games. It
24 happens all the time.

12:42:14 25 Q. All right. So before we move into 1998, Mr Taylor, just
26 sum up for us, will you, where you felt Liberia had got to by the
27 end of 1997?

28 A. By the end of 1997, we had reached a point where: One,
29 internally we were on the verge of regaining our respect. We

1 were making those structural changes. We had put together a
2 national unity government. We were now talking to our foreign
3 partners, Bretton Woods Institutions trying to get a feel back on
4 what they would require for good governance. We had put together
12:43:29 5 a human rights commission. In fact, by the way, that commission
6 was headed by a retired Judge, Judge Badio. That's B-A-D-I-O.
7 We had put in a Supreme Court. The Legislature was functioning.

8 We were busy alluring the international community and
9 giving all of the appearances of a nation moving from an era of
12:44:01 10 war into an era of peace. We were a part of the West African
11 family. We had come on the Committee of Five. We were now
12 fighting to get Sierra Leone back to track, because we realised
13 that the survival of Liberia, our attempt to break out of this
14 cycle of violence and step back amongst the community of nations
12:44:37 15 meant that our sister the Republic of Sierra Leone had to know
16 peace as we were beginning to know it. So we see ourselves
17 working on that front.

18 We are taking an active role at the OAU. We are taking an
19 active role back at the United Nations. We have many visits
12:45:04 20 going on. So we see ourselves as making the type of progress
21 that a country coming out of a seven year civil war found itself.
22 We were taking those little steps, trying to work our way
23 forward. And we saw ourselves as being peace loving individuals
24 that wanted to put this whole concept of war behind us. So for
12:45:31 25 me, if I sum up 1997 with the brief what we say about six months,
26 we are on track in trying to regain our strength as a nation and
27 people.

28 Q. And did you harbour any concerns as you entered the new
29 year of 1998?

1 A. Oh, yes. The concerns were there. They were looming.

2 Q. And what were they?

3 A. We saw on the horizon problems. We had not really
4 sufficiently dealt with the issues of our own security and you
12:46:19 5 know from other documents before this Court these little tensions
6 are between ourselves and the attitude of the Nigerian security.
7 But we also see that there's a determination to almost
8 unilaterally solve the Sierra Leonean problem and throw it out of
9 whack. So we are concerned about this looming - what you call
12:46:47 10 these gathering problems.

11 Q. And any cause for optimism as you entered that new year?

12 A. Yes, we were hopeful that reason would prevail and I was
13 hopeful because the diplomatic pressures that were coming, yes,
14 there were pressures from I would say Britain and to a great
12:47:16 15 extent the United States about being very prudent in how - in
16 observing what was about to obtain in Sierra Leone, because I
17 knew that once these two big countries were looking prudently at
18 trying to resolve this in the best possible way and we had
19 certain promises from some of these governments, for example, we
12:47:41 20 mentioned the airport - in fact the Dutch I think and Danish
21 governments were very, very instrumental in promising monies.

22 So we harboured a large degree of optimism from the
23 international community based on our own attitude. We were
24 convinced that based on the constructive nature - manner, may I
12:48:11 25 say, in which we had approached government, that it would have
26 helped us. So we were optimistic.

27 Q. Very well. Let's close the page on 1997 and let's start on
28 1998. Can I invite your attention, please, to the presidential
29 papers, MFI-28. Can I invite your attention to page 152. Do you

1 have it?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. We're just setting the stage at this point, Mr Taylor. We
4 see in the top photograph there's you along with Dr Amos Sawyer
12:49:49 5 and Cllr David Kpomakpor in Tubmanburg during a nationwide tour
6 in early 1998, yes?

7 A. That's correct.

8 Q. And we see at the bottom you and your wife, the First Lady,
9 on a tour in Bomi and Cape Mount in early 1998, yes?

12:50:18 10 A. That is correct, yes.

11 Q. Now help us. What was the purpose of these tours?

12 A. Just trying to meet the people and reconcile with them and
13 start up a conversation with them.

14 Q. Had you had opportunity to conduct such a tour before?

12:50:46 15 A. I think this is about my first major tour. I had been
16 very, very busy coming into office.

17 Q. Let's now go to page 130, please. Let's direct our gaze to
18 the top photograph. "President Taylor confers with his close
19 friend and brother, President Henri Konan Bedie of Ia Cote
12:51:35 20 d'Ivoire during his visit to Abidjan, early 1998", yes?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Do you recall that visit?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And help us, Mr Taylor. When we say early 1998, can you
12:51:51 25 help us with a month?

26 A. This must be around January, because I think I do this
27 before - before I address the nation. This is early January.
28 And don't forget that Ia Cote d'Ivoire is a member of the
29 Committee of Five too.

1 Q. Now help us. Was there a purpose behind that visit to the
2 Cote d'Ivoire in early 1998?

3 A. Yes. We share borders with La Cote d'Ivoire, one. La Cote
4 d'Ivoire is a member of the Committee of Five, two. And this is
12:52:32 5 mostly to share notes on common concerns and common interests.

6 Q. Yes. And can you recall now - if you can't, say so - how
7 long you remained there?

8 A. These visits don't last no more than a day or two.

9 Q. Now, at this time, Mr Taylor, how regularly would your
12:53:11 10 cabinet meet?

11 A. I would say there were almost monthly meetings, but the
12 beginning of the year, let's say every January, there is what we
13 call a major meeting, because in line with the constitution we
14 have to address the legislature on what we call the state of the
12:53:41 15 nation. So I would meet them in January. This January was a
16 major meeting in January.

17 Q. Can you remember when in January that was?

18 A. Oh, this had to be - I'm not too sure of the date, counsel,
19 but it's in the first half of January that we have to meet,
12:54:00 20 because we're putting together this programme for the
21 legislature.

22 Q. Is there any record of that meeting available, Mr Taylor?

23 A. Oh, yes, there is.

24 Q. Yes?

12:54:09 25 A. There is, yes.

26 Q. Is it a record you've seen?

27 A. Yes, I've seen it, I read it. It was a part of my archives
28 too.

29 Q. So it comes from your archives?

1 A. That is correct.

2 Q. And help us, what is the nature of the record you are
3 referring to?

4 A. At the end of every cabinet meeting, the director-general
12:54:35 5 of the cabinet will put together the records of that meeting,
6 decisions taken, programmes that are being planned and it is - it
7 becomes an official document of the government.

8 Q. Right. Let's just pause then and see what we have in terms
9 of foundation. You've seen a document?

12:54:57 10 A. Yes.

11 Q. It comes from your archives?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. It's a list of decisions made following the cabinet meeting
14 and such a meeting took place in the first half of January 1998?

12:55:10 15 A. And that I chaired the meeting.

16 Q. And you chaired the meeting?

17 A. That is correct.

18 MR GRIFFITHS: If there is no objection, I would like the
19 witness, please, to be shown the document behind divider 8 in
12:55:23 20 bundle number 1 of 3:

21 Q. Do you have the document, Mr Taylor?

22 A. Yes, this is the document.

23 Q. You recognise it?

24 A. Oh, yes.

12:56:33 25 Q. "Republic of Liberia Office of the Director-General of the
26 Cabinet. Third Regular Cabinet Meeting, Wednesday, January 14,
27 1998. Summary of decisions:

28 Accountability: The bureau of general audit will be
29 institutionally re-structured, logistically reinforced and

1 professionally staffed so that it will become a problem to the
2 management of those public and private entities that do not
3 understand what is meant by transparency and accountability. The
4 bureau will be the watchdog of the government. There will be
12:57:30 5 routine field and book audits conducted in keeping with rules and
6 professional ethics, but there will be no witch-hunting."

7 What's that mouthful about?

8 A. What do you mean the witch-hunting part, or the whole
9 paragraph?

12:57:48 10 Q. Well the transparency, the accountability, the watchdog and
11 the witch-hunting, what's that all about?

12 A. All foreign aid is tied up to this good governance,
13 accountability, transparency. We are trying to set up shop in
14 preparation for some of the questions that will be posed to the
12:58:11 15 government by donor agencies. We are just preparing the
16 groundwork for this assistance that we are working on.

17 Q. "Transparency: Each agency is expected to educate the
18 public on policies, rules, guidelines and laws relating to the
19 execution of its mandate. Professional workshops, seminars,
12:58:38 20 symposiums and citizens meetings are encouraged. The public
21 needs to know what government is doing. Good governance requires
22 participation and joint public/private efforts. Officials of the
23 administration, particularly members of the cabinet, are expected
24 to familiarise themselves with the NPP platform. Every effort
12:59:01 25 must be made to meet the party's promise to the Liberian people.

26 Management of Presidential Time: Presidential time will be
27 managed in such a manner that it will contribute to proficiency
28 and efficiency in government. Officials are expected to
29 understand their statutory mandates and, with such understanding,

1 administer the affairs of their respective agencies with minimum
2 need to see the President. There will be greater consultation
3 and collaboration amongst and between the various agencies at
4 both the policy and technical levels."

12:59:44 5 Mr Taylor, why was it felt necessary to discuss that issue
6 of managing your time and coming to this decision?

7 A. Well, most cases we had seen in the past ministers will not
8 take decisions. Every day they want to see the President. In
9 most countries - I don't want some of my African brothers to get
10 angry, but I mean ministers just - you have your responsibilities
11 to spell out and you know what the laws are, but you will not
12 take a decision. You go and see the President every day and so
13 the President will find himself instead of concentrating on key
14 matters, he will be meeting ministers after ministers and after
13:00:32 15 ministers and nothing gets done. So I'm trying to say here,
16 "Look, every agency in government is created by an act of the
17 legislature. It spells out what you're supposed to do. Go and
18 do your work."

19 Q. Now what had been happening, Mr Taylor, which caused this
13:00:54 20 to be on the agenda for discussion?

21 A. Well, ministers were trying to burden me down every day
22 with requests to see me.

23 Q. And for how long had that been going on?

24 A. From the time almost I took over the presidency. It was an
13:01:18 25 old historic thing that they had seen in the past.

26 Q. Tell us was this a daily occurrence, a weekly occurrence,
27 or what?

28 A. Oh, it would sometimes be daily, sometimes weekly
29 occurrence, people would be requesting to see the President.

1 Q. So help me, what consequences did that have for your time?

2 A. I would be so - I would be so tied up that before major I
3 would say foreign policy matters that I want to concentrate, or
4 maybe some little domestic matters that I could take care of, I
13:01:53 5 was basically trying to take care of ministers instead of the
6 ordinary Liberian that had probably a better reason to want to
7 see the President.

8 Q. Well, Mr Taylor, the cynic might say the reason why you
9 didn't have any time was because you were too busy running
13:02:08 10 Sierra Leone at the same time?

11 A. Oh, yes, well the cynic would say anything. That would be
12 total foolishness.

13 Q. But were you doing that?

14 A. No, I was not. No.

13:02:16 15 Q. So what was occupying your time which caused you to have to
16 put this on the agenda in January 1998?

17 A. Trying to do Liberia's business. That was occupying my
18 time.

19 Q. Just help us, Mr Taylor. In that period up to this point
13:02:35 20 when you felt the need to raise this matter, just give us an idea
21 of the average Taylor presidential day? After you had been made
22 President up to this time, what was the average day like?

23 A. Oh, the --

24 Q. Let's start at the beginning. What time do you get up?
13:02:57 25 Let's start with the basic things.

26 A. You find yourself - I found myself getting up in the
27 morning sometimes I would say at 9 a.m., sometimes at 9.30,
28 because I will go to bed about 3/4 in the morning. I mean, you
29 hardly get any rest.

1 Q. Well, just take us through the day. So you get up at
2 9/9.30. Skip the cornflakes, we're not interested in them, but
3 after the cornflakes what happens?

4 A. Try to get ready, yes, take a little breakfast and then
13:03:42 5 come down to office. The presidency has been described here as
6 an eight storey building. The President lives on top floor.

7 Q. What location are we talking about?

8 A. The Executive Mansion.

9 Q. Thank you.

13:03:56 10 A. That's my official residence and on the fourth floor of the
11 building are the presidential offices. So the family is upstairs
12 and so I could work in my office late at night, go up and then
13 come down. So by not later than sometimes about 10 a.m. in the
14 morning I am full in office, but sometimes it was earlier than

13:04:19 15 that. I didn't - I mean, what kind of President comes into work
16 at 10 o'clock in the morning? That was not an everyday
17 situation. If we worked very late at 3/4 in the morning, I got a
18 few hours. There were some days that by 8 a.m. I was at my desk.

19 Q. Yes. And then?

13:04:36 20 A. I would be briefed first thing in the morning by the
21 national security advisor. I received my minister of state. We
22 would then begin to look at what sometimes our long-term planning
23 programmes were and what they will be. Diplomatically what was
24 of urgent concern. Internally, politically, regionally what were

13:05:10 25 some of the actions that were necessary. If I had to take a
26 trip, when that trip would be, or if there were any goodwill
27 messages that had to be sent out to foreign countries, or the
28 receipt of goodwill missions. A possible meeting with the
29 foreign minister. Possible meetings with the - probably the

1 national security minister. We would deal with probably seeing
2 any of our traditional leaders, or this type of programme. You
3 are occupied one hour to the next.

4 And signing into bills. If they are available we might -
13:05:58 5 my first few months pushing through major legislation. We talked
6 about the human rights commission that we put through, yes, and
7 my first six months I've said that we get the Supreme Court put
8 in. We are dealing with the preparations for the receipt of
9 foreign envoys and diplomats. That's a long, long day that you
13:06:30 10 have.

11 Q. And what kind of time would it finish?

12 A. The official hours would be through by 5 p.m., but like I
13 say the President would stay in office sometimes until - good
14 days, or good nights for me would be 9/10 at night. Bad nights
13:06:48 15 would be sometimes up to 3 o'clock in the morning.

16 Q. And would you also have to undertake other functions like
17 opening schools, hospitals, kissing babies, that kind of stuff?

18 A. Of course. That's the whole presidential planning; what's
19 to be done internally. Yes, all kinds of little things. Maybe
13:07:15 20 visiting a village, opening a new project. It was so - it was a
21 unique situation, you know, to renovate a hospital at that time.
22 That was a unique situation, so for simple renovation you want to
23 be there. If you renovate a little school some place, it's
24 unique for the President. You are visible. You are very, very
13:07:39 25 busy, because everything that is happening after the war is
26 virtually unique, hospitals, schools. We're trying to put money
27 into the barracks. Every little thing is important.

28 Q. Now go on, Mr Taylor, tell us. Did you have time to slip
29 to that little radio room you had in the Executive Mansion to

1 give your mates in the RUF a little tinkle down the line? Did
2 you?

13:08:12 3 A. No, the President does not talk on the radio ever. The
4 President of Liberia never spoke and I challenge anyone to bring
5 me one recorded statement that Charles Taylor spoke on an SSB
6 radio. Total nonsense. Never.

7 Q. Mr Taylor, you have heard witnesses called by this
8 Prosecution say there was a special radio room in the Executive
9 Mansion for keeping in touch with the RUF. Do you remember that?

13:08:39 10 A. I remember that.

11 Q. Was there such a room?

12 A. There was no such room. And in fact it would be stupid for
13 anyone wanting to talk on the radio to talk on an SSB. If we get
14 this maybe one of the things we ought to do is to bring an SSB
15 for the judges to see.

16 What is an SSB? I'm not technical person and maybe they
17 will need an expert. An SSB is not the type of radio, that
18 truckers and all people use, that the President of a republic and
19 this President would get in a radio room and have a dedicated
13:09:20 20 room to talk about for the RUF.

21 Q. Did anything like that go on, Mr Taylor?

22 A. Never. Ever.

23 Q. Let's go back to the document:

24 "With minimum need to see the President. There will be
13:09:40 25 greater consultation and collaboration amongst and between the
26 various agencies at both the policy and technical levels.

27 '98 budget. The first post war budget outlining
28 expenditures estimated at 1.7 billion Liberian dollars or 41.4
29 million US dollars for the fiscal year 1998 will be proposed to

1 the legislature."

2 Mr Taylor, 41.4 million US dollars, is that the total
3 budget of the Liberian government for the fiscal year 1998?

4 A. That is correct. The first post war budget, this is it.

13:10:35 5 When you compare this to what I have heard that Taylor got
6 billions, the national budget that we proposed in January for the
7 fiscal - that's it, \$41 million.

8 Q. And out of that you had to run schools, hospitals, armed
9 forces, repair Roberts International Airfield, all those other
10 things. Is that right?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. "There will be no borrowing to finance any aspect of the
13 budget." Why not?

14 A. We are already in the hole 3 point something billion
13:11:20 15 dollars. We don't know where we are going to get the first cent
16 to pay. Nobody has even - and we have already forfeited certain
17 rights under the Bretton Woods Institute. And don't you know
18 that throughout this war, the seven years of war, the Bretton
19 Woods Institutions, World Bank, IMF, are still calling for
13:11:40 20 Liberia to still be paying certain amounts on the interest for
21 the loans granted. So why would we want to borrow to finance 41
22 million? That's only to add more burden to the little country
23 that's got nothing. So I just said that we're not going to
24 borrow, we're going to use what we have, and this is why we took
13:12:06 25 this decision.

26 Q. "All revenues are expected to be generated from domestic
27 sources." Such as?

28 A. The maritime programme and --

29 Q. Which you've explained.

1 A. Exactly. The second source would be what we'll call a
2 sales tax that is placed on items coming into the country and a
3 little bit of income tax. Because businesses are all destroyed.
4 There's virtually nothing.

13:12:46 5 Q. Well, help us with this: When you say domestic sources, at
6 this stage were you being provided any assistance from overseas?

7 A. Not directly, no. Except for the - and when you talk about
8 assistance, I want to be very fair to the international
9 community. Whatever monies are put into these humanitarian
10 operations, that's also carried as assistance to the country.
11 Presidents and governments never really see them, but it's also
12 noted as assistance.

13 So if we look technically at assistance I can say yes, but
14 it does not apply to government. But NGOs, what they get, they
13:13:32 15 call it assistance to Liberia. What they gave, all of these
16 humanitarian goods, whether it is World Food Programme, whether
17 it is Medecins Sans Frontieres, all of these kinds of assistance
18 comes in a big figure you hear going to the country. But as it
19 affects the budget of the country, no, there was no such
13:13:57 20 assistance.

21 Q. Now help us. Let's just look at the figures below that so
22 that we can identify what were the priorities of the Liberian
23 government which you headed. We see development was going to get
24 the biggest amount, yes?

13:14:13 25 A. Yes.

26 Q. 10.7 per cent?

27 A. Yes.

28 Q. Then property renovation?

29 A. Yes.

1 Q. Then education, yes?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Why was education being made such a priority?

4 A. We wanted to do everything to get our young people back to
13:14:33 5 school for the years lost, and we figured that the bedrock of any
6 nation is an educated populace and so we wanted to really push
7 this particular programme.

8 And let me just remind you when you talk about development,
9 rehabilitation, restoration, property renovation, even some of
13:14:58 10 that money would apply to education because we're talking about
11 renovating hospitals and clinics. So by education, this did not
12 - it could be a bigger percentage when we look at what came from
13 a development side into that figure.

14 Q. Now, we note that after education, next comes health care?

13:15:22 15 A. That is correct.

16 Q. And after health, the next is justice?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Coming in at six is defence?

19 A. Yes.

13:15:38 20 Q. Why is defence so far down the food chain, Mr Taylor?

21 A. Because we have ECOMOG, they're providing our security. We
22 have not trained an army. So the biggest part of defence really
23 is salary, trying to get salary. We don't have to think about
24 equipment, armament, arms, ammunition. We don't have to think
13:16:06 25 about that. So this is mostly in terms of salaries for the armed
26 forces. That's why it's way down the line.

27 Q. Thereafter at joint seventh we've got domestic debt
28 servicing and external debt servicing, a total of 8 per cent of
29 the budget was going on servicing debt. So help us, that 8

1 per cent of the budget, was it staying in Liberia or was it going
2 elsewhere?

3 A. No, no, no, it's going - it's going elsewhere.

4 Q. Like where?

13:16:44 5 A. External debt servicing, that's the Bretton Woods
6 Institutions. We had to pay amounts to the World Bank, the IMF,
7 the African Development Bank. All the loans that had been
8 received by previous governments, the interest on those loans are
9 still being paid during the war.

13:17:12 10 Q. So some 8 per cent of your budget was going to do that?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And then finally in eighth position we have agriculture?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Yes?

13:17:29 15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Over the page, "When approved the budget will be strictly
17 followed." Why?

18 A. If you don't do that people try to spend what is not
19 appropriated to them to spend and probably go and try to credit.

13:18:11 20 That is a part of the domestic debt servicing we are talking
21 about. For example, a ministry may have let's say \$10,000 to
22 let's say buy a vehicle. They will go to the automobile garage
23 and the vehicle may be 12 or 15,000 dollars. They will tell
24 them, "Give me the vehicle. In my next appropriation we will pay
13:18:40 25 you". So we wanted to stop this kind of thing, that they would
26 spend only what is provided for them to spend in the budget.

27 Q. Right. Let's skip A, B, C, D and E thereunder and go to
28 paragraph 6:

29 "In compliance with Article 58 of the constitution, the

- 1 President will address a joint session of the national
2 legislature during which time he will submit the budget for the
3 fiscal year '98. He will deliver the state of the republic
4 message and present the administration's legislative agenda for
13:19:22 5 1998."
- 6 Yes?
- 7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. And then let's go over the page and let's just get an idea
9 of what the money was going on. "Priority programs. Restoration
13:19:37 10 of civil authority". Second, "Reinforcement and expansion of the
11 judiciary system". Thirdly, "Reinforcement and expansion of the
12 civil security system". What's that, Mr Taylor?
- 13 A. The civil security system is dealing with - really we're
14 talking about the police, and there's a system that was used
13:20:09 15 before in Liberia where every district, every town, every village
16 served as a lookout. If a stranger came to your village and had
17 somebody in a village we would know. It was a way of keeping
18 problems out of the country where you are your brother's keeper,
19 so we wanted to know who was coming and who was going.
- 13:20:38 20 Q. "Expansion of efforts towards good governance". What's
21 that?
- 22 A. Good governance, we are talking about accountability.
23 That's making sure that we will stamp out corruption, and
24 accountability.
- 13:20:57 25 Q. "Rapid food production initiatives". What's that?
- 26 A. Well, we're coming out of the war and Liberia had always
27 been dependent on importation of food. I'm trying to get them to
28 begin to grow and produce what we eat instead of having to
29 import, because we have no money anyway.

- 1 Q. "Reconstruction of hospitals, health facilities and social
2 welfare institutions" is fairly self-explanatory. "Restoration
3 and construction of safe drinking water facilities across the
4 country", again self-explanatory. "Restoration of primary health
13:21:38 5 care services, reconstruction of school buildings and vocational
6 centres". You've already mentioned that, yes, Mr Taylor?
7 A. Yes.
- 8 Q. "Restoration of the national school system, provision of
9 instructional material and basic school supplies".
13:21:54 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. "Improvement and expansion of programme for youth and
12 recreation", yes?
13 A. Yes.
- 14 Q. "Restructuring of the AFL".
13:22:05 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. "Reconstruction of roads and bridges. Reconstruction of
17 public buildings". Yes?
18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. "Restructuring of the civil service. Restoration and
13:22:18 20 construction of electricity facilities. Restoration and
21 construction of communication facilities. Restoration of
22 socioeconomic database facilities and systems". What's that?
23 A. We were beginning to put together a massive computer
24 related system for putting together a civil service. The whole
13:22:46 25 thing had broken down. We were trying to rebuild this system.
- 26 Q. And then was that linked to item 20, "Automation and
27 standardisation of government of Liberia operations"?
28 A. To a great extent, yes.
- 29 Q. Then we see a list of the legislative agenda for 1998?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Now, just looking at that legislative agenda, and I don't
3 ask you about any particular item, to what extent would you as
4 President be involved in pushing this legislation through the
13:23:28 5 legislative chamber?

6 A. Yes, the President would - to the extent where you are in
7 touch with the majority leader. We had a legislative aid from
8 the presidency if there were any hitches or if the legislators -
9 we have a two-chamber house system in Liberia, the Senate and the
13:23:56 10 House of Representatives. So the President would be involved in
11 clearing out any hiccups that develop. You would want to clear
12 that up and send somebody down, or maybe invite a few senators or
13 senior representatives down. Even talking to the opposition.
14 You'll be involved at that level.

13:24:14 15 Q. And to what degree would you have to keep your eye on the
16 passage of these bills?

17 A. It was important. It was important that you - no President
18 wants to submit a bill to the legislature and get it thrown out
19 through the window, so you do keep an eye on it.

13:24:38 20 Q. Let's go over the page, shall we. Now special activities
21 for 1998. "Closure of all displaced shelters and resettlement of
22 IDPs". IDPs are what?

23 A. Internally displaced persons.

24 Q. So what was the objective then behind this?

13:25:07 25 A. We had seen this in other countries and I wanted to stop
26 this in Liberia. You know, the internally displaced persons,
27 they are put up in little tarpaulin shelters. The World Food
28 Programme - if you look on the television you'll see what is
29 happening in Darfur. You will just see miles and miles of human

1 mass just out there with little pieces of tarpaulin. And some of
2 these people are under these conditions for a long time.

3 Our internally displaced persons have been going through
4 this and another little part there attached to it, you must live
13:25:55 5 in that area to get the food ration. You must live in that area
6 to get this assistance. If you leave and go home and come - no,
7 you don't get it. So you keep our people just in a state of
8 terribleness I will call it.

9 So what I said, "No, you NGOs, if you really want to help
13:26:28 10 our people, you are going to help them back in the regions from
11 which they came", because Liberia - I mean Monrovia had become
12 one human mass of about a million to 1.5 million people in a city
13 historically that had about 3 or 400,000. And all around the
14 city are little refugee internally displaced slums. So I said,

13:26:58 15 "But wait a minute. Look, we want our people to return. At home
16 let them go back to their towns and villages. They will build
17 their little houses. Yes, they are mud houses but they are
18 comfortable in their little homes. But you cannot continue to
19 degrade them in these open fields covered with tarpaulin when our
13:27:19 20 people can go home and build their little mud houses. So this
21 thing about you saying they must be in these cluster environments
22 before they can get assistance, I have had it. If you are really
23 serious about helping our people you will have to follow them and
24 go to where they really need the help."

13:27:30 25 So we were encouraging our people to leave these - how can
26 you be in your country and internally displaced at a time of
27 peace? My God, it's not possible. Okay. And we are at peace,
28 and they are encouraging us to be internally displaced because of
29 their little food. So let our people go back to their towns and

1 villages and plant their little farms. So I'm saying that we're
2 going to close these shelters and we're going to help our people
3 to move back home.

4 MR GRIFFITHS: Would that be a convenient point,
5 Mr President?

6 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, I think that's an appropriate spot.
7 We'll break for lunch now and resume at 2.30.

8 [Lunch break taken at 1.28 p.m.]

9 [Upon resuming at 2.30 p.m.]

14:24:08 10 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, continue, please, Mr Griffiths.

11 MR GRIFFITHS: May it please your Honours:

12 Q. Mr Taylor, we were looking before we adjourned for lunch at
13 the document behind divider 8 in bundle 1 of 3, and can I invite
14 your attention, please, to page 5 of that document, which is the
15 penultimate page. Do you have it?

16 A. Yes, I do.

17 Q. Now we considered just before lunch item number 1 under
18 "Special activities for 1998". Item number 2 is
19 self-explanatory. Let's go, please, to item number 3, "Hosting
20 of a national conference on the future of Liberia (a five-day
21 convocation of eminent and influential Liberians from the private
22 and Public Sectors - government, political, corporate, religious,
23 legal, social," et cetera, "proposed for March 1998)."

24 Yes, what was the purpose behind that?

14:33:02 25 A. We are just coming from the war and the entire country was
26 engulfed in this war. There were hardly any neutral parties, I
27 can say. I was lucky to be visited by the Archbishop of the
28 Catholic Archdiocese in Liberia, Michael Kparkala Francis,
29 Michael as in normal Michael, Kparkala, K-P-A-R-K-A-L-A. And it

1 was - he had suggested that I look into this issue of bringing
2 together all segments of the Liberian society and asking them the
3 simple question, "Which way forward?" I liked that very much,
4 and I must give him credit. And I consulted members of the
14:34:43 5 cabinet and threw the idea around with other prominent Liberians,
6 and they liked it, and I think he should take credit for a very
7 good recommendation. And in fact we did plan it, and the biggest
8 - the question was: Which way forward, Liberia? Where do we
9 come from here? What do we do? We wanted to be united going
14:35:08 10 forward.

11 Q. Yes. Now also at item number 4 we see "Sesquicentennial
12 celebrations (Activities to commemorate the 150th observance of
13 Liberia's independence)"?

14 A. Uh-huh.

14:35:27 15 Q. Did that fall in 1998, Mr Taylor?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And so there were plans to commemorate that, were there?

18 A. That is correct.

19 Q. And we will come to it in due course, but what was the date
14:35:40 20 scheduled for that?

21 A. That is July 26th.

22 Q. And then we see "Economic stimulation initiatives" at 6,
23 "Decentralisation of government of Liberia," and under "current
24 issues" we see new fees, levies and charges being imposed by
14:36:05 25 various agencies and then "Police efforts to crack down on
26 criminals is commendable", yes?

27 A. Yes.

28 Q. And if we go over to the final page we see at (e)
29 "Reprimand for senior officials communicating with their

1 colleagues and on the radio", but we need not detain over that,
2 need we, Mr Taylor? Now, Mr Taylor, so that is the cabinet
3 meeting on Wednesday 14 January?

4 A. Yes.

14:36:52 5 Q. Let's put that away, shall we? And then can I ask that
6 MFI-28, the presidential papers, be placed before the witness
7 again please?

8 JUDGE SEBUTINDE: Mr Griffiths, I don't know; do you wish
9 this to be marked for identification?

14:37:35 10 MR GRIFFITHS: Oh, yes, I am grateful. Yes, the document
11 which we have just looked at, the "Third regular cabinet meeting
12 for 14 January 1998, summary of decisions", can I ask that to be
13 marked for identification MFI-30, please.

14 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, that document is marked MFI-30.

14:37:56 15 MR GRIFFITHS: I am grateful for the reminder:

16 Q. Can we have a look at page 97 of this document, please,
17 okay? Now, Mr Taylor, who do you see in the photograph on that
18 page?

19 A. That is me and the ambassador from Egypt.

14:38:32 20 Q. And this is dated 22 January 1998, yes?

21 A. That is correct.

22 Q. Now, below the photograph and its label we see "Statement
23 by the President of the Republic of Liberia on the occasion of
24 the presentation of the letters of credence by His Excellency
14:38:57 25 Farouk Ghoneim, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the
26 Republic of Liberia, January 22nd, 1998".

27 Do you see that?

28 A. Yes, I do.

29 Q. Now, the presentation of letters of credence, just for

1 those who don't understand, what does that imply?

2 A. Representatives of Presidents are sent to various nations
3 are called ambassadors. Actually, some people think that
4 ambassadors - but they are actually the representative of the
14:39:36 5 Head of State of government. This is the representative of Egypt
6 that has been sent officially accredited near Monrovia to this
7 government.

8 Q. Right. I am not going to delay by taking you through what
9 you said on that occasion, save for at page 98, please, the
14:40:06 10 penultimate paragraph in the right-hand column: "Even at the
11 height and critical period of our civil crisis in Liberia, the
12 government and brotherly people of Egypt did not only remain with
13 us for the most part of our hour of trouble, but also gave
14 unflinching support to all ECOWAS-sponsored peace initiatives
14:40:28 15 from Liberia brought before the OAU and the United Nations".

16 Is that right?

17 A. That is correct.

18 Q. Right, okay. Right. Taking matters sequentially then,
19 please, can we next go to page 229 of this same document. Now
14:41:04 20 what are we looking at at page 229, Mr Taylor?

21 A. That is the annual address of the - to the legislature.

22 Q. Okay. And is there a legal requisite for such an annual
23 address, Mr Taylor?

24 A. Yes, there is. There is.

14:41:30 25 Q. And what is the legal authority which requires this?

26 A. The constitution requires that.

27 Q. Now, let's ignore the introductory sentiments expressed on
28 the first page and go straight over to page 230, please, and let's
29 start at the first complete paragraph on that page:

1 "Five months and twenty five days ago, when we voiced the
2 sacred oath of the presidency, as you will recall, I pledged to
3 the Liberian people my honour and, indeed, my life, to bring our
4 people and our nation towards a prosperous future of human
14:42:20 5 dignity, with new challenges and new commitments, new trends and
6 renewed excellence. Since that time distinguished, ladies and
7 gentlemen, we have engaged in consolidating the peace and we have
8 embarked upon a concourse of global comity among the nations. In
9 our outreach, we have not neglected to honour the principles of
14:42:45 10 reciprocity and African solidarity, of self-determination and
11 non-interference of sovereign states".

12 And then we have this subheading "Re-entering the world
13 comity."

14 "Within the context of worldwide piece formation, as in
14:43:06 15 Somalia, the Republic of Congo and Bosnia, we have confidently
16 re-entered the halls of conciliation and conflict resolution at
17 ECOWAS, the United Nations, and the non-aligned countries
18 movement, to speak with wisdom and humility, with firmness and
19 felicity. The lone star was re-ignited when new diplomatic
14:43:29 20 relations were restored with the Arab Socialist People's Libyan
21 Arab Jamahiriya and the Republic of China. It was highlighted
22 through bilateral agreements with the Kingdom of Morocco and
23 again with the Republic of China. Furthermore, we are pleased to
24 inform you that following the presentation of his letters of
14:43:51 25 credence by his Excellency Farouk Ghoneim, Ambassador of the
26 Republic of Egypt only four days ago, several emissaries are
27 already scheduled to present their letters of credence, including
28 the United Kingdom, the Republic of France, the German Republic,
29 the Kingdom of Denmark, Canada and the Kingdom of Belgium".

1 Pause there. Mr Taylor, for completeness, if one examines
2 the other contents of the presidential papers one will find
3 photographs of all the representatives of those countries listed,
4 won't one?

14:44:28 5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Presenting their letters of credence. But let's not waste
7 time at this stage looking at that. And of course the
8 achievements you are listing in the bottom left-hand column, that
9 is, restoration of relations with Libya, Morocco, China and so
10 on, those all reflect the visits you made in November of 1997,
11 don't they?

12 A. That is correct.

13 Q. "This is an indication of the confidence which a growing
14 number of our traditional friends have demonstrated for our
14:45:12 15 thriving democracy".

16 Now this: "Across our border in our sisterly Republic of
17 Sierra Leone, where its citizens are embroiled in a civil
18 conflict, Liberia, having just emerged from our own civil crisis,
19 was selected to the Committee of Five and subsequently through
14:45:33 20 the Conakry peace plan, played a credible role in finding a
21 peaceful resolution in the Sierra Leonean crisis. Indeed, as a
22 member of the Committee of Five on Sierra Leone, we shall ensure
23 the proper peacekeeping mechanism attend the needs of Sierra
24 Leone. This will carry the consensus approbation of the
14:46:00 25 authority of Heads of State and government. Liberia has pledged
26 its support for the ECOWAS decision to restore the elected
27 President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to power in addition to the UN
28 security council's resolution to impose sanctions. While in
29 support of these sanctions, Liberia has made it clear, and wishes

1 to insist, that ECOMOG operations in Sierra Leone, and ECOWAS
2 capacity building activities in Liberia, be defined as distinctly
3 separate, and must remain separate. We have also emphasised that
4 Foday Sankoh, who is a part of the problem, be released,
14:46:46 5 permitted to enlist his views, and thereby assume his role as
6 part of the solution. We have, therefore, called for the release
7 of Mr Sankoh. We are also resolved that Liberian territory
8 cannot, and will not, be used for military operations, in
9 addition to our commitment to the support of a non-military
14:47:10 10 approach to solving the problems in that country".

11 Pause. Let's go back over the page, please, because I want
12 to examine this in sections. Okay, Mr Taylor?

13 A. Uh-huh.

14 Q. Now first of all, "are embroiled in a civil conflict", the
14:47:33 15 third line in that paragraph. Help us with this. By this time,
16 26 January 1998, what is actually happening on the ground in
17 Sierra Leone?

18 A. You do have the junta in power.

19 Q. Yes.

14:47:55 20 A. But you also have the counterinsurgency going on and --

21 Q. Led by?

22 A. Led by the Kamajors assisted by ECOMOG, so that is ongoing
23 also.

24 Q. Yes. And what about ECOMOG? Are they doing anything at
14:48:12 25 this stage?

26 A. Oh, yes.

27 Q. What are they doing?

28 A. There are strikes - bombing strikes here and there, yes.

29 Q. Against whom?

1 A. Against the junta.

2 Q. And is that remaining at a constant level, is it
3 increasing, is it decreasing? Can you help us?

4 A. It is increasing.

14:48:29 5 Q. It is increasing. So, let's put that together then. In
6 terms of the civil conflict you are talking about here, we are
7 talking about increasing ECOMOG air strikes?

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. From where?

14:48:43 10 A. From Liberia and Sierra Leone too.

11 Q. From Liberia, Roberts International Airfield?

12 A. That is correct.

13 Q. And Spriggs Payne?

14 A. That is correct.

14:48:51 15 Q. And also from Lungi?

16 A. That is correct.

17 Q. Striking targets within Sierra Leone?

18 A. That is correct.

19 Q. On top of that there is insurgency by the Kamajors?

14:49:02 20 A. That is correct.

21 Q. From where?

22 A. From Liberia.

23 Q. Sponsored by whom?

24 A. ECOMOG.

14:49:13 25 Q. "Having just emerged from our own civil crisis, was
26 selected to the Committee of Five". Now, that is taking us back
27 to August of 1997, yes?

28 A. That is correct, yes.

29 Q. And subsequently through the Conakry peace plan, October

1 20th 1997, yes?

2 A. That is correct.

3 Q. "Played a credible role in finding a peaceful solution in
4 the Sierra Leonean crisis." Okay. Now, "Liberia has pledged its
14:49:43 5 support for the ECOWAS decision to restore the elected President
6 Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to power", yes?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And were you committed to that?

9 A. Definitely.

14:49:55 10 Q. Now you appreciate, don't you, Mr Taylor, that bearing in
11 mind the terms of this indictment, for you to pledge support for
12 the ECOWAS decision to restore Tejan Kabbah to power means that
13 you would have to kick out of power the people you were
14 controlling. So, help us: Which was it to be?

14:50:19 15 A. We were controlling no-one in the first place. What was to
16 be was to restore Tejan Kabbah to power.

17 Q. Now, help us with this. We are now at 26 January 1998?

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. Had you at any stage met with Ahmad Tejan Kabbah?

14:50:42 20 A. Yes, yes.

21 Q. When?

22 A. Somewhere - it was about the very beginning of January of
23 1998 I visited - and I am sure he is listening to this, and if it
24 is not true he can come out and say so. I visited Tejan in
14:51:01 25 Conakry and met him and General Lansana Conte before the
26 intervention in Sierra Leone. I visited him in Conakry.

27 Q. Had you met him before that?

28 A. No, not really. We - except, I would probably say - no,
29 no, no. I had not met - I don't remember having met President

1 Kabbah before that particular time. No, not really.

2 Q. And help me, at whose request did that meeting with
3 President Tejan Kabbah take place in Conakry?

14:51:51

4 A. Well, there are two different instances. One is with
5 Jessie Jackson, but one is on my own --

6 Q. No, no, no, I am interested in the one you have just told
7 us about.

8 A. Oh, I initiated the trip.

9 Q. Why did you want to meet him?

14:52:03

10 A. Because remember now I am already on the Committee of Five.

11 Q. Uh-huh.

12 A. So I really want to talk to him to get his views and to see
13 what were some of his thoughts, okay, about the whole process.
14 So I went to Conakry.

14:52:20

15 Q. And of course we have heard evidence to the effect that he
16 had fled when - after the coup on 25 May 1997. He had fled to
17 Conakry, hadn't he?

18 A. Well, that is the evidence, but I met him in Conakry. As
19 to whether that was the original place he fled, I can't say. But
20 I met him in Conakry.

14:52:40

21 Q. Okay, yes. And, Mr Taylor, what did you discuss with him?

22 A. Well, you know, his desire to return, the agony of being
23 away from home in Guinea. In fact we sat outside in a little
24 round something like - we call it something like an outside
25 kitchen, but these are little round palaver - called palaver
26 huts, at the presidency. And we talked about it and his desire
27 to return home and we just shared the whole thing about being
28 away and ECOWAS's plan and how he was anxious to get back to
29 begin work.

1 Q. And what kind of mood was he in towards you, Mr Taylor?

2 A. Oh, I mean we spoke. I mean we talked normally. There was
3 no hostility towards me. No, not at all.

14:53:51

4 Q. Are you seriously telling us that there was no hostility
5 towards you by President Tejan Kabbah?

6 A. On my visit there, none whatsoever. None.

7 Q. I mean, Mr Taylor, didn't he say to you, "Charles, look, I
8 know you're the one supporting that AFRC in Sierra Leone. Come
9 on, come clean, Charles". Did he not say that to you?

14:54:11

10 A. Not at all, because he knew that it would not be true. He
11 did not and he is out there and I am sure, knowing Tejani, if we
12 did - if I didn't see him you would hear from him.

13 Q. Now, let's go on:

14 "While in support of the enforcement of these sanctions

14:54:36

15 Liberia has made it clear and wishes to insist that ECOMOG
16 operations in Sierra Leone and ECOWAS capacity building
17 activities in Liberia be defined as distinctly separate, and must
18 remain separate."

19 Why the emphasis on that?

14:54:52

20 A. I am trying to cut this link where ECOMOG is still involved
21 in peacekeeping in Sierra Leone and peacekeeping in Liberia. I
22 am trying to say, "We have peace here. It must not be
23 peacekeeping. It must be capacity building. You are now going
24 to Sierra Leone for peacekeeping. It is peacekeeping", because
14:55:16 25 the same forces that are in Liberia are operating in Sierra
26 Leone, so I really want to distinguish between the two
27 operations.

28 Q. Now, let's go back:

29 "We have also emphasised that Foday Sankoh, who is a part

1 of the problem, be released, permitted to enlist his views, and
2 thereby assume his role as part of the solution. We have,
3 therefore, called for the release of Mr Sankoh."

4 Let's pause there. Now, do you recall in the letter to
14:55:48 5 Sani Abacha dated 24 October 1997, MFI-20, you had mentioned in
6 that a desire to meet with Sankoh?

7 A. That is correct.

8 Q. Had you by the time of this address to the nation - had you
9 spoken to Sankoh?

14:56:11 10 A. No, not at all.

11 Q. Now, note what you say here: "Foday Sankoh is a part of
12 the problem". In what way?

13 A. Well, Foday Sankoh is the leader of the RUF.

14 Q. Yes?

14:56:29 15 A. He has got thousands of fighters and all before us on the
16 Committee of Five is the issue that these boys are saying that
17 they want - they are fighting because their leader is imprisoned.
18 He is arrested in Nigeria on charges of I think having a firearm.
19 Up until this time Abacha has not given us or any other person -
14:56:57 20 any other reason for holding Sankoh besides that he is being
21 held. So a few of us on that committee are saying, "Well, look,
22 if this man can be a part of the solution - since he's a part of
23 the problem let him be a part of the solution".

24 Q. Now, we know you had spoken to Abacha about Sankoh in
14:57:21 25 October. Had you spoken to him about him since?

26 A. Abacha and I talked, yes, several times about Sankoh and
27 the Sierra Leonean situation. Many times.

28 Q. But what was Abacha's home views on the topic?

29 A. Abacha, to the best of my recollection, believed that by

1 isolating Sankoh from the Sierra Leonean problem it could be
2 resolved. This was his own thinking about it; that let him just
3 stay away and they would lose the ability to good leadership and
4 then eventually they would just fade away. Some of us did not
14:58:08 5 think that logic was proper.

6 Q. Okay. Now, in light of the Prosecution's case let's have a
7 look at the next section:

8 "Reviving the nation: The rule of law. A wider world
9 economy beckons our fuller participation. Mindful of the
14:58:34 10 challenges of rising productivity and exploding technology
11 abroad, especially in the Asian economies, we have been
12 preoccupied with accessing the modern infrastructures of a
13 globalised economy and reinstating the basic infrastructures of
14 our devastated economy. Furthermore, we have been absorbed in
14:58:54 15 rebuilding and restaffing our institutions, in restoring civil
16 authority to rural and urban localities.

17 Keeping the peace at home has been our paramount pursuit.
18 And, in the welfare and interest of our people, the rule of law
19 must prevail. I am pleased to state in this regard that an
14:59:19 20 enabling environment is truly in the making. The curfew is being
21 curtailed, crime is being minimised and human rights are being
22 curtailed."

23 Is that what you were saying?

24 A. No, that's - no, no, no. When we talk about - I mean I
14:59:44 25 think this is a misprint. Abuse to human rights, not that human
26 rights are being curtailed.

27 Q. Well, if you look you correct yourself. "Crime is being
28 minimised", yes, do you see it?

29 A. Yes, okay

1 Q. "And human rights are being upheld", okay?

2 A. Uh-huh.

3 Q. So it wasn't an own goal after all:

4 "Clearly we must be grateful to our law enforcement

15:00:07 5 agencies who through diligence and true professionalism, have
6 diminished the fears and anxieties of our citizens. ECOMOG's
7 change of its mission, from peacekeeping to capacity building, is
8 expected to end and start on February 2nd. This capacity
9 building force will assist, restructure our army and help provide
15:00:29 10 security. Additionally, under bilateral arrangements, at least
11 three other West African countries, and as many as four, will
12 send troops to aid government in taking up the slack left as a
13 result of the total withdrawal of Nigerian troops from Liberia,
14 as I have been informed in line with new pressing duties in
15:00:52 15 Sierra Leone."

16 Now, "As I have been informed in line with new pressing
17 duties in Sierra Leone", what is that referring to?

18 A. That is a buzz word for the attack.

19 Q. "I wish to assure our citizens that this adjustment should
15:01:13 20 cause no alarm as their security will not be compromised in any
21 way. There should be no fear, as government will vigilantly
22 ensure the safety and security of the state.

23 In this connection we are faced with the just
24 responsibility of providing assistance to former combatants
15:01:35 25 through the repair of schools, clinics, and the provision of
26 jobs, in order that they will be gainfully employed.
27 Ex-combatants from all former factions remain a serious concern
28 of this government, and legislation will be introduced for the
29 creation of a national veterans administrations agency to attend

1 to the needs of our injured and uninjured young men and women
2 nationally. This administration is going to be working hard to
3 solve the problem of getting our ex-combatants readjusted."

4 And then it goes on to deal with the Dokie incident which I
15:02:22 5 am not interested in, others may be. Let's come on, however, in
6 light of evidence called by the Prosecution, to page 232 under
7 the heading "The fourth estate". "Under the canopy of law we
8 have encouraged the uninhibited expressions of a free press."
9 Had you, Mr Taylor?

15:02:51 10 A. Oh, yes.

11 Q. That's not what Mr Hassan Bility has said about it?

12 A. Well, he's wrong. He's dead wrong and we have the evidence
13 - documentary evidence here that will prove that during my
14 administration was when most of the press got free. We had
15:03:08 15 repealed two draconian laws that had been passed by the Doe era,
16 Decree 88A that will mean something a little later as we go into
17 this trial. We had done everything to open up the press.
18 Everything.

19 Q. "Indeed, since August last more than ten independent radio
15:03:34 20 stations, and an even higher number of newspapers, have been in
21 operation. Mindful of our obligation to sustain a tension-free
22 atmosphere under the law, we have had to suspend the
23 participation of one or two members of the fourth estate."

24 Pause there, Mr Taylor. So, what does that mean, "We have
15:04:01 25 had to suspend the participation of one or two members of the
26 fourth estate"?

27 A. Yes, you are coming out of a war. The wounds are still
28 very, very deep. There were - I don't quite remember who these
29 individuals were, but anywhere on the radio there were statements

1 that could tend to inflame and renew this wound of war we would
2 not permit it. We were just too new and fragile and if you did
3 not cease and desist from trying to re-ignite the war we will
4 suspend your activities and then you can see - suspend and
15:04:56 5 probably start it up once you give a commitment to working for
6 peace.

7 It had nothing to do with the free expression of an
8 individual. It had to do with - let's take an example. If you
9 get on a radio station and begin to spew out all of these - spew
15:05:19 10 out venom about what happened and what you intend to do and, I
11 mean, you cause other people to get upset and you don't need that
12 coming fresh out of a war. You need to put all of the hot
13 rhetoric down.

14 Q. "However, being a compassionate government, we have
15:05:46 15 reinstated all of those members, following apologies from their
16 respective managements. We hope that all present and future
17 members of this noble profession will be guided by their ethnics
18 and sense of social responsibility to the public. Meanwhile, it
19 remains our determination that no one should exceed the legal
15:06:09 20 parameters of this nation. It is important that we be mindful
21 that the safety of the public is as important as the right to
22 public gross inaccuracies that could endanger the peace.

23 In order to buttress the full bulwark of the law, we were
24 pleased to establish the first national commissions on
15:06:33 25 reconciliation and human rights, respectively, to which we
26 appointed the Honourable Alhaji GV Kromah" - remind us, who is
27 he?

28 A. This is the former leader then of ULIMO-K.

29 Q. "And His Honour former Acting Chief Justice Hall W Badio,

1 as chairman respectively", yes?

2 A. That is correct. And may I just point out that Kromah did
3 not come to follow up on it, but he was appointed.

4 Q. I am not really going to dwell over long on the remainder,
15:07:22 5 but if we just flick over to page 234 I can just indicate
6 something. You notice under "Priority programmes" there --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. That is just reiterating that list of priorities at the end
9 of the cabinet decisions paper that we looked at earlier, isn't
15:07:43 10 it?

11 A. That is correct.

12 Q. And if we can just go right to the end now, please, to page
13 237, and I just want to mention one passage on the left-hand side
14 about halfway down that long paragraph:

15:08:24 15 "My spiritual assignment is now to allow unification to
16 work, yea, to blossom, so that the Krahn and Bassas, the Grebos
17 and Lomas, the Krus and Mandingos - so that all of our people
18 will bloom on, a beautiful bouquet of many different but blended
19 flowers. The fragrance of our oneness must prevail, so that six
15:08:53 20 months hence, on the celebration of our sesquicentennial, church
21 bells shall ring throughout our land, resounding from hills and
22 valleys", yes?

23 A. That is correct.

24 Q. So that, Mr Taylor, is you setting out the roadmap for
15:09:12 25 Liberia for 1998, would you agree?

26 A. And I would say beyond that too, yes.

27 Q. Yes. Now we are still, Mr Taylor, looking at what is
28 happening with you and with Liberia in the early part of 1998.

29 Can I now invite your attention, please, to another little matter

1 that was taking place. Let's go to page 149 of this same
2 presidential papers. We are down to now, aren't we - we see here
3 "President Taylor gowned and crowned" - what?

4 A. Okatakyie.

15:10:25 5 Q. Okatakyie. What is one of those when it is at home?

6 A. Okatakyie is a title of kingship from a very powerful
7 kingdom in Ghana. Just for the records, the Ashanti kingdom is
8 not the only kingdom as known in Ghana. You have the head of the
9 Ashanti Kingdom is called the Ashanti hene, but this is - the

15:11:02 10 Okatakyie is from a different tribal group, which also means
11 king.

12 Q. Right. And I have directed your attention to this
13 primarily because of the date. So we are down to January 31st
14 1998, yes?

15:11:25 15 A. That is correct.

16 Q. Now, Mr Taylor, before we proceed now into that eventful
17 month, February, is there anything else that you want to tell us
18 about January 1998?

19 A. No, nothing special except, you know, this is just after my
15:11:45 20 birthday, the 28th, that is all.

21 MR GRIFFITHS: Could I have a moment, please, Mr President?

22 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, of course.

23 MR GRIFFITHS: Can we put that away for the minute now,
24 please, because I now want us to move into February, Mr Taylor,
15:12:46 25 okay?

26 A. Yes.

27 Q. Now, Mr Taylor, can I remind us all as we move into this
28 fateful month that it is a judicially noted fact - and I refer to
29 CMS370 of 7 December 1997. It is a judicially noted fact that

1 ECOMOG ousted the junta on or about 14 February 1998. So,
2 Mr Taylor, at the beginning of February what is happening in
3 Sierra Leone? Give us a word portrait of the situation?

4 A. Well, for - the month of February is a very huge month for
15:13:44 5 the crisis in Sierra Leone. By the beginning - the very
6 beginning of February of 1998 we have operations to remove the
7 junta ongoing. It is at a very high level. In fact, if I
8 remember very, very clearly as we look at the judicially noted
9 date that could be very well - because I know something happened
15:14:23 10 on that day. By the --

11 PRESIDING JUDGE: While we are on the judicially noted
12 fact, was that CMS reference correct that you gave us,
13 Mr Griffiths?

14 MR GRIFFITHS: I was - I am told it is CMS370.

15:14:41 15 PRESIDING JUDGE: You say of 7 December 1997, and yet the
16 fact is in the future to that.

17 MR GRIFFITHS: 2007.

18 PRESIDING JUDGE: 2007.

19 MR GRIFFITHS: 2007, sorry:

15:15:05 20 Q. So, Mr Taylor, I am sorry, my fault entirely for throwing
21 in that gremlin. Let's start again.

22 A. Well, we can see that the operations are ongoing by the
23 very beginning - I will say by late January/early February,
24 actually, the attack is ongoing. Because I can remember about 5
15:15:33 25 January or thereabouts, the first week in January, the Committee
26 of Five leave immediately to go to New York. My foreign minister
27 went to explain to the Security Council this ongoing attack in
28 Freetown. Now, remember I had mentioned that we were sure that
29 the British would not permit this, and so there are calls all

1 over the place asking, "What is going on? What is going on?" So
2 the committee has to rush to New York by the first week in
3 February to explain this attack that is ongoing in Sierra Leone.

4 Q. Explain to whom?

15:16:16 5 A. The Security Council. They have to go to meet the Security
6 Council to explain what is going on in Freetown at the particular
7 time.

8 Q. Pause, Mr Taylor, because this is vital - we are in a vital
9 period now. We need as much assistance as we can get. Had the
15:16:34 10 foreign ministers been sent to New York with any particular
11 mandate?

12 A. To explain to the council the questions that were coming
13 from the members: "What is happening in Freetown? We hear and
14 see all these bombings, and there appears to be a major combat.
15:16:53 15 What is it?" And so we run now to explain to the council.

16 Q. And that is what I want to get at. What is explained to
17 the Security Council?

18 A. That efforts are underway now that - we received reports
19 from the ministers that, if I recall very well, there was
15:17:17 20 supposed to have been an attack of the junta on ECOMOG forces in
21 or around Lome. This is what we went to explain that had
22 provoked this movement now earlier than anticipated, okay, to
23 remove the junta, and that this combat is because the junta had
24 attacked ECOMOG positions, and now ECOMOG is acting to remove
15:17:44 25 them. This is the explanation given the first week, and we need
26 to find that document. The first week in February, that is the
27 report given to the Security Council by the Committee of Five
28 explaining the military operations ongoing in Freetown.

29 Q. And when you say the Committee of Five, is it the Heads of

1 State, or the foreign ministers?

2 A. The foreign ministers. The foreign ministers go to the
3 Security Council.

4 Q. Help us, Mr Taylor. Prior to the foreign ministers being
15:18:20 5 dispatched to New York to address the Security Council, had the
6 Heads of State been in communication with each other?

7 A. Oh, definitely. We knew what was going on now. We knew.
8 We all of us knew that this was the operation now starting,
9 because in fact - remember I hinted that there were problems at
15:18:39 10 that final meeting in Guinea in 19 --

11 Q. In December?

12 A. In December where we are not two - when I said
13 two-and-a-half countries. Well, a decision had practically been
14 reached that people were just fed up and that the junta would be
15:18:59 15 removed and that they would no longer wait for the April date,
16 because some of the strong members in the region - and I want to
17 say that I concur. I am a part of that decision - were concerned
18 about the shifting positions of members of the international
19 community, especially Britain, and this Sierra Leone thing is
15:19:27 20 mostly Great Britain. America supported it because of Britain.

21 This whole whether there are delays is Britain. Britain, threw
22 curve balls and all kinds of snares in the way, and we were all
23 fed up. When we talk about this, Britain will bring another
24 position. We tried to get this - everything was being done, and
15:19:49 25 we will find out later where we were so upset that at the OAU
26 summit that comes later in February, that is revealed to the OAU
27 summit, okay, about what ECOWAS's position is on this matter,
28 that because of the shifting positions we had had it and that
29 something would be done about it. So we went to brief the

1 Security Council that because of this attack, that the operation
2 was ongoing to remove the junta. That is the first week in
3 February.

4 Q. What was the response of the Security Council to that?

15:20:28 5 A. Well, again the members there, especially Britain, they
6 were convinced that we did not have the authorisation - I am
7 saying "we" now because all of us - did not have the
8 authorisation under Chapter 7 to carry out this use of force.

9 Q. Now, Mr Taylor, by this time, the beginning of February,
10 are you supporting the use of force?

11 A. By this time I have no choice. We are all - we are in the
12 boat. We have taken that decision now. That is what is ongoing.
13 My foreign minister is present with that Committee of Five in New
14 York.

15:21:09 15 Q. Now taking things slowly, what is the next step after that
16 mission to New York?

17 A. That mission goes to New York. It returns, and about a
18 week or two later go immediately Addis Ababa.

19 Q. What for?

15:21:31 20 A. There is a foreign ministers meeting of the Organisation of
21 the African Unity at that time. That is about the last week in
22 February. By this time the operation concludes, because on 14
23 February, while that operation is concluding, two helicopters -
24 two of the military helicopters used by the junta fly into
15:22:03 25 Monrovia and land at Spriggs Payne Airport. So I know that the
26 military operation ended at about the 13/14 February. So this
27 delegation now goes on Addis Ababa and, I say on the margin of
28 those meetings, hold consultations, brief the OAU about the
29 successful operation, and decide on a date for the return of

1 Tejan Kabbah to Freetown.

2 Q. Right. Now, taking things slowly, explain to us what
3 happened with those two helicopters coming to Monrovia?

15:22:53

4 A. The two helicopters flew into Monrovia and they contained
5 some Sierra Leoneans, but the most prominent on that - on those
6 choppers was a gentleman, I still remember his name, I think
7 Victor King. I think he was head of the air force. He was the
8 most prominent member of the junta that was on the plane.

15:23:22

9 Now, the planes land at Spriggs Payne Airport and ECOMOG is
10 there and ECOMOG seize the occupants and the plane and the
11 Government of Liberia is left sitting there. So I sent for the
12 forces commander to find out, to report, because they are in
13 charge of security, what were these two helicopters. He

15:23:53

14 explained who was on it and whatnot. I said, "Okay, I sent my
15 defence minister to" - I said to him, "Well, my defence minister
16 will meet with you so we can take charge of these people and the
17 aircrafts until this matter can be resolved as to what will
18 happen to these people and what will happen to the aircrafts".

15:24:16

19 He said okay, that he would go and inform what he termed his
20 superiors and let me know.

15:24:36

21 So he goes and then later on I am informed that he will be
22 keeping the planes and the people. This is - this brought a
23 major problem. I picked up the phone and called Abacha and told
24 him that I was not going to stand for that, that the issues of
25 sovereignty within the territorial confines of Liberia were not a
26 matter for debate and that those planes and the people should be
27 handed over to the Government of Liberia.

28 Q. And what happened?

29 A. A compromise was worked out and we returned the planes and

1 the people, but not before a long discussion. The planes and
2 people were in Liberia for at least a couple of weeks or more.

3 Q. And what happened to the people who were on the plane when
4 they got back to Sierra Leone?

15:25:14 5 A. Well, one of the things that I got to find out later, and I
6 was very upset by it because of a historical fact, I had been
7 concerned about the people on the plane not just being sent back
8 in that kind of manner, that something should be worked out
9 regarding what would happen to them because once they reached the
15:25:47 10 territorial confines of Liberia it was important that if they had
11 to be sent back to Sierra Leone they should be guided - that we
12 all should be guided by some legal principles and I wanted the
13 assurance that nothing would happen to them, that they would not
14 be summarily executed and that if anything they would be properly
15:26:08 15 charged because of the following reasons:

16 Number one, once those people entered Liberian territorial
17 confines and expressed their desire to stay in Liberia - number
18 one we owed them that protection. But number two, even if they
19 had to go they had to go under some legal arrangements because by
15:26:34 20 that time there was no extradition treaty between Sierra Leone
21 and Liberia. That treaty had been broken because of another
22 conflict in Sierra Leone some years before by one of my
23 predecessors and that reference goes to another coup.

24 There was a coup attempt in Sierra Leone where many of the
15:26:57 25 individuals fled to Liberia, including Hinga Norman and others,
26 and I think one of the leaders of that coup, General Lansana, was
27 asked to be sent back and promised that nothing would happen to
28 him. He was sent back and he was executed. And then my
29 predecessor President Tubman broke off that arrangement with

1 Sierra Leone on extradition.

2 I, knowing that fact, insisted that I wanted some
3 guarantees that those people would be given a fair trial and if
4 anything happened nothing would happen to them.

15:27:30 5 Well, I got to find out later that Victor King was executed
6 and I was really infuriated and I told Tejani very seriously how
7 upset I was that they could have promised that nothing would
8 happen to these people and they ended up getting executed and
9 that I was very, very upset.

15:28:01 10 Q. So that's that incident, Mr Taylor, but I still want some
11 more help from you in this situation, please. So the sequence
12 you have told us about to date are the visit of Committee of Five
13 foreign ministers to New York. Is that correct?

14 A. That is correct.

15:28:24 15 Q. Further meeting of foreign ministers in Addis Ababa?

16 A. That is correct.

17 Q. And help us, Mr Taylor, do we have any record of these
18 events?

19 A. Oh, definitely, but then after the meeting in Addis Ababa
15:28:49 20 the Committee of Five go back to the Security Council, the
21 Committee of Five of foreign ministers, to inform them of the
22 meeting in Addis and a decision, like I said, to return President
23 Kabbah to Freetown on - I mean in the month of March. A date was
24 set in Addis for the return of President Kabbah to Freetown. The
15:29:17 25 Security Council was briefed.

26 During this particular period we have records. The
27 Nigerian embassy in February - in fact they publish regular
28 documents - publish a diplomatic pamphlet that details all of the
29 activities of ECOWAS during that particular period. They also in

1 that will also - you know Nigeria is considered the powerhouse of
2 West Africa. They would also show development and other projects
3 in their own country, their contribution to the West African
4 sub-region. This is a document that is prepared by the Nigerian
15:30:06 5 embassy and then distributed at their diplomatic missions and
6 gave it directly, you know, to Presidents and governments as to
7 what - I was given a copy of the February edition of that that
8 explained all of the activities of the Committee of Five. It
9 talks about the meeting in Addis Ababa, it talks about our
15:30:32 10 briefings to the Security Council and it talks about, like I
11 said, development projects in Nigeria, what they are doing. This
12 is a document in February that summed up that whole period that
13 was brought to me by the ambassador. We had frequent meetings.

14 Q. Which ambassador?

15:30:52 15 A. Of Nigeria accredited to Monrovia.

16 Q. Accredited to Monrovia?

17 A. That is correct. To Liberia, yes.

18 Q. And what happened to that document afterwards, Mr Taylor?

19 A. That was a very important document. I kept it. I read it,
15:31:04 20 studied it and kept it in my archives and made it available.

21 These were ongoing documents. They would always publish them.

22 MR GRIFFITHS: I wonder if the witness could be shown,
23 please, the document behind divider 9 in bundle number 1 of 3.

24 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, Ms Hollis?

15:31:49 25 MS HOLLIS: Mr President, we have no foundational issues
26 with this document, but this is one of the documents we indicated
27 we would not be ready to deal with until toward the end of the
28 week or next week.

29 PRESIDING JUDGE: I see. Yes, what do you say to that,

1 Mr Griffiths?

2 MR GRIFFITHS: It's a very slim document, Mr President, and
3 you know we need to bear in mind the Prosecution were given a
4 complete set of all of the exhibits in our possession long before
15:32:23 5 they were actually served on the motion to the Court, so they
6 have had these documents for some weeks now.

7 We also need to bear in mind secondly that the Prosecution
8 will have in due course ample time to cross-examine on this
9 document, bearing in mind we are unlikely to finish in chief for
15:32:47 10 several weeks. So we are talking about their cross-examination
11 commencing at the earliest three weeks hence.

12 Surely in order to preserve the chronology of events there
13 is no prejudice to be suffered by the Prosecution if we make
14 reference to a document of this limited size at this stage.

15:33:16 15 Otherwise we have this situation where we will have to come back
16 to this particular aspect of the chronology at a much later date
17 out of time and so consequently you judges won't have the benefit
18 of looking at these events in the sequential order we have
19 endeavoured to deal with them throughout. So that would be our
15:33:37 20 submissions.

21 MS HOLLIS: May I put something of a chronology on the
22 record?

23 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, go ahead, Ms Hollis.

24 MS HOLLIS: First of all, we have been asking since May to
15:33:50 25 have copies of the documents they were going to use and we
26 haven't been given them. We were given five or six binders on 16
27 July and then the next week we were given two more binders. We
28 were told last week of several hundred pages of documents that
29 would be used this week.

1 Now those binders we were given were hundreds and hundreds
2 and hundreds of pages and we weren't given an order. We looked
3 at hundreds of pages to ensure that we could accommodate the
4 Defence to the greatest extent possible this week and I am
15:34:29 5 talking about looking at hundreds of pages as of when we were
6 given notice last week. This is one of the documents we haven't
7 been able to look at.

8 I don't think the Prosecution is being unreasonable. This
9 is not a situation of our making and we have acted in very good
15:34:43 10 faith to try to accommodate the needs of the Court, but there are
11 some things that we gave notice we couldn't do and looking at
12 this document was one of them, because instead we looked at other
13 shorter documents.

14 MR GRIFFITHS: [Microphone not activated].

15:35:04 15 PRESIDING JUDGE: That is all right. Normally I wouldn't
16 have let Ms Hollis speak because she was the one who raised the
17 objection, but I thought it was important to get that chronology,
18 but, yes, in fairness I will hear from you, Mr Griffiths.

19 MR GRIFFITHS: It is only to indicate this, Mr President:
15:35:23 20 That of this document we are only concerned with the first two
21 topics listed in the index. Despite being Jamaican I am not even
22 going to refer to the match between the Super Eagles and the
23 Reggae Boys of Jamaica, even though it's mentioned.

24 PRESIDING JUDGE: Look, we are going to confer on this, but
15:35:50 25 I do note the very reasonable response the Prosecution gave to
26 your notice - to your motion to file out of time, and possibly if
27 they had pressed the issue then you might not have been able to
28 get any of these documents in this week. But in any event, we
29 will confer.

1 [Trial Chamber conferred]

2 PRESIDING JUDGE: Ms Hollis, we are going to give you the
3 time you need to deal with that document. How long would you
4 need?

15:38:59 5 MS HOLLIS: I will be prepared first thing tomorrow
6 morning. I will look at it this afternoon after we get out of
7 court.

8 PRESIDING JUDGE: All right. Thank you. Well, there you
9 are, Mr Griffiths.

15:39:11 10 MR GRIFFITHS: Very well:

11 Q. Mr Taylor --

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. -- can we have a look again, please, at the presidential
14 papers. I just want to use this opportunity then, Mr Taylor,

15:40:13 15 just to catch up on one or two incidents, okay, during February
16 1998 so we get a clearer picture of what you were up to.

17 A. Yes. Did you want me to tell you what I was up to?

18 Q. No, no, no, hold on. One second. My fault. Let's keep
19 the presidential papers there.

15:40:59 20 MR GRIFFITHS: Could I just have a moment, please,
21 Mr President?

22 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes.

23 MR GRIFFITHS: Okay:

24 Q. Now, in February of 1998, Mr Taylor, can you recall if
15:41:42 25 there was an Indian Ambassador to Liberia?

26 A. Yes, in February of 1998 I begin, also at home, this long
27 task of beginning to receive the letters of credence from foreign
28 ambassadors, including India and many others.

29 Q. Now can we look in that same bundle behind divider 32,

1 please. This is Defence photo 12. What is this, Mr Taylor?

2 A. This is receiving the letters of credence from the Indian
3 Ambassador accredited near Monrovia at the Executive Mansion.

4 MR GRIFFITHS: Right. Ah, my apologies. Yes, the public
15:43:14 5 were not given an opportunity of seeing that, and so I wonder if
6 we could just pause for a moment. Divider 32:

7 Q. Yes, Mr Taylor, so that is now - and this is for the
8 benefit of the public.

9 A. That is the Ambassador of India accredited near Monrovia.

15:43:56 10 Q. And what is he doing?

11 A. Presenting his letters of credence.

12 Q. Now, this ceremony of presenting your letters of credence,
13 what does it actually involve?

14 A. In Liberia - it varies from country to country. Because
15:44:15 15 the ambassador represents the Head of State, in Liberia he
16 inspects an honour guard, he is given - and then he comes in
17 where present members of the cabinet and he brings in his staff
18 and presents a document from his government informing the
19 Liberian government, the Liberian President, that he represents
15:44:51 20 his government in Liberia at the diplomatic level. This is the
21 formal part of the programme, because unless this formal
22 programme is done - because he receives - I mean, he presents a
23 letter and he gets a document of acceptance also. That is that
24 formal diplomatic note. There is that dual situation: He
15:45:22 25 presents a letter, but he receives a document. That establishes
26 the formal diplomatic link. Unless this is done, he is not still
27 entitled to all of the trappings of diplomacy. That is all of
28 the - under the various international Conventions.

29 Q. So how long does that whole process take?

1 A. In Liberia it could take as long as two hours, a maximum
2 three, no more.

3 Q. Okay. Right. Now, the next one I want to show you, can we
4 have a look at page 102 to 103 of the presidential papers now,
15:46:14 5 please. Now, Mr Taylor, what do we have here at page 102?

6 A. That is the - receiving also the letters of credence from
7 the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany.

8 Q. And also I am interested in the date. What date is this?

9 A. This is on February 3, 1998.

15:47:15 10 Q. Yes, and can we go to - can we go to page 104, please.
11 What is that?

12 A. That is receiving the letters of credence from Ambassador
13 Agyemfra of Ghana.

14 Q. When?

15:47:53 15 A. On 16 February 1998.

16 Q. And can we go back to page 95, please. What is that,
17 Mr Taylor?

18 A. That is receiving the letters - this is the Ambassador of
19 the Kingdom of Denmark. This is in February - on February 5
15:49:07 20 1998.

21 Q. And go back to page 93, please. What is that?

22 A. This is from letters of credence of Ambassador Chang from
23 the Republic of China on 20 February 1998.

24 Q. Back to page 91, please. What is that?

15:49:45 25 A. The Ambassador of Canada on 17 February 1998.

26 Q. Page 89, please?

27 A. This is the Ambassador from the Kingdom of Belgium on
28 February 19 1998.

29 Q. Right. So, listen, let's just pause and take some stock

- 1 here. Page 89, February 1998, Kingdom of Belgium, yes?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 Q. Page 91, 17 February, Canada; yes?
- 4 A. Yes.
- 15:50:39 5 Q. Page 93, 20 February, China; yes?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 Q. Page 95, 5 February, Denmark; agreed?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 Q. We have already dealt with Egypt at page 97, haven't we?
- 15:51:01 10 A. That is correct.
- 11 Q. Page 100 now, please. What is this, Mr Taylor?
- 12 A. This is the Ambassador from the Republic of France.
- 13 Q. Date?
- 14 A. 3 February 1998.
- 15:51:35 15 Q. Remind ourselves: Page 102 is Germany, yes, on 3 February,
- 16 yes?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. Page 104 is Ghana on February 16th, yes?
- 19 A. Yes.
- 15:51:52 20 Q. Let's go to page 106. What is that, Mr Taylor?
- 21 A. That is the Ambassador from Greece on February 5. It is
- 22 good to note here that you may see two ambassadors received on
- 23 the same date. That is just - but they would be at different
- 24 hours.
- 15:52:39 25 Q. Right. And the final one I think I want to deal with at
- 26 this stage, yes - no, not the final one. Could we go to page
- 27 115, please. What do we have there, Mr Taylor?
- 28 A. That is the Ambassador from Spain.
- 29 Q. Date?

1 A. 19 February 1998.

2 Q. And then let's now go to page 119. Top photograph. What
3 is happening there?

15:53:53

4 A. That is the Ambassador from Great Britain on 13 February
5 1998.

6 Q. Now what we see there then, Mr Taylor, is that throughout
7 February you were busy on several dates receiving letters of
8 credence from various European, North American and West African
9 countries?

15:54:19

10 A. That is correct.

11 Q. And whilst we are on that, if we just pop to page 121, the
12 bottom photograph, what are you doing there?

13 A. This is the foreign minister of the Republic of China being
14 honoured at the Executive Mansion in February also.

15:55:03

15 Q. Right. And we note the date, 18th to 19th, 1998?

16 A. That is correct.

17 Q. So what was happening over those two days?

15:55:29

18 A. This is the foreign minister visiting. This is also this
19 commission. We talked about earlier in my testimony a joint
20 commission that had been spoken about when I visited the Republic
21 of China. He has come down to talk about the operations of the
22 joint commission and so that's why it's extended over two days.
23 At the end of the discussions he is granted this special honour
24 by being decorated.

15:55:50

25 Q. Okay. So help us, Mr Taylor, having gone through all those
26 official functions, acceptance of letters of credence during that
27 period, how busy were you in February 1998?

28 A. Extremely busy. Extremely busy.

29 Q. Now can we go to page 238, please. Have you got it?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Valentine's Day fell on a Saturday in 1998 and on that day
3 what happened, Mr Taylor?

4 A. Well, that's the situation involving the movement of jet
15:57:18 5 fighter bombers over Monrovia.

6 Q. Now we see the heading "Nationwide Address on the Occasion
7 of the Crisis Between ECOMOG and the Government of Liberia Over
8 the Helicopter Gun-ship Incident and the Flying of Alpha Jet
9 Bombers Over the City of Monrovia. Delivered By His Excellency
10 Dankpannah Dr Charles Ghankay Taylor, President of the Republic
11 of Liberia in the Parlours of the Executive Mansion on Saturday,
12 February 14, 1998", yes?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Let's have a look at this, shall we:

15:58:08 15 "We have been blessed in this nation. Yesterday was Friday
16 the 13th. Most people believe that that day is a very bad day.
17 With all seriousness I played basketball on yesterday."

18 I thought you were always busy?

19 A. Well, I used it on this particular day to really reduce the
15:58:28 20 stress that Nigeria was trying to put on me. I just went and
21 just tried to play some basketball and sweat it out.

22 Q. Okay, Mr Taylor, I am not being totally serious:

23 "I want to assure the nation that I am in good health.

24 Having said that, my fellow citizens, since our coming into
15:58:51 25 this high office, we have, through the grace of Almighty God,
26 seen the great works of his hand, coming in with virtually no
27 money in the coffers of this nation. We have been able to pay
28 all salary arrears. These salary arrears go back over the past
29 ten years. We have been able to bring together a united people

1 that once fought - are now members of the cabinet and are taking
2 their rightful place in society. Even people that we have
3 disagreed with, we are now in agreement and are working
4 together."

15:59:28 5 And then you go on to deal with other matters regarding the
6 World Bank and so on. Then let's go over the page, please, the
7 second paragraph:

8 "Fellow citizens, we have observed over the past few months
9 disagreements in the diplomatic and political arenas. I am not a
15:59:54 10 lawyer, but sometimes you may have different interpretation to
11 the law, and I guess different individuals have their way of
12 interpreting what they believe.

13 But we believe that Liberians are a gracious and generous
14 people. Our West African brothers have helped this country
16:00:14 15 tremendously. We continue to be grateful. This President and
16 this government is grateful. It is time to assist Liberia to
17 sustain the peace. It is time to put Liberia and Liberians
18 first; making sure that we develop through the years.

19 There is this general agreement on ECOWAS's level of
16:00:37 20 involvement that peacekeeping in Liberia moves on to capacity
21 building. This is not just what I say, but rather what the
22 leadership has said. This is what is contained in documents that
23 we have all agreed upon. Last week we had the delegation from
24 ECOWAS to talk about the protocols for ECOMOG's extended stay in
16:01:00 25 Liberia".

26 Was there such a delegation, Mr Taylor?

27 A. Yes.

28 Q. And did you have to deal with them?

29 A. For a short time, yes.

1 Q. But in any event all of this is happening up to the climax
2 to the conflict in Freetown, isn't it?

3 A. That is correct.

4 Q. "We expect the delegation back to further negotiate what
16:01:31 5 should be done. While this is going on, it is important that at
6 the Heads of State level that we exchange views on all of our
7 disagreements and normally in these arrangements the military
8 gives way to the political situation and wait for instructions.

9 Fellow citizens, we have seen that through misinformation
16:01:55 10 and innuendos, there appears to be the attitude that Liberians
11 have become so ungrateful that, when we talk about our rights and
12 our sovereignty, that we are trying to put others down. I want
13 to make it very clear that the individual, the common enlisted
14 men in ECOMOG, has done an excellent job.

16:02:20 15 The officers too, all of them have laid down their lives
16 and have suffered. This government and the Liberian people have
17 nothing against the individual soldier, or the name ECOMOG.
18 After all, ECOMOG is a West African child. It is a West African
19 creation. We must all hold it together and put it on the right
16:02:46 20 course.

21 On February 13th, 1998, two helicopters flew into the
22 sovereign Republic of Liberia. Those helicopters landed at the
23 James Spriggs Payne Airport in Monrovia. Our security, that is
24 the few that could scramble to the airport, tried to intervene,
16:03:09 25 but armour personnel carriers from the ECOMOG base came in and
26 took charge and told the joint security personnel involved to
27 leave and that they would take over. Well, granted it may have
28 been a very noble act, we expected that as a government, upon
29 doing that, that the jurisdiction of that matter would have been

1 surrendered to the Liberian government.

2 At sometimes you cannot always expect that this position
3 would be understood. So the government took upon itself through
4 instructions from me to the minister of national defence, to
16:03:49 5 request that those individuals, as well as the two helicopters,
6 be turned over to the Liberian government. We subsequently
7 received a letter from the ECOMOG forces commander stating that
8 upon the completion of investigation, with no time frame
9 involved, that the individuals will be turned over. This

16:04:16 10 continued for some time and I personally tried to intervene, but
11 to no avail. We realised it was clear that the leadership of
12 ECOMOG in Liberia felt that they would do it their way and would
13 not adhere to the interest of the Liberian people and government.

14 We then involved ourselves in diplomatic manoeuvres and
16:04:42 15 expressions of the grave concern. We summoned members of the
16 diplomatic community to brief them. And, after all else failed,
17 we decided to take it a little further.

18 While sitting in my office here at the mansion, to be
19 precise from about 1.45 p.m. to 3.27 p.m., jet fighter bombers
16:05:07 20 not only flew over Monrovia with supersonic booms, but made at
21 least nine passes very close to the Executive Mansion. And on my
22 way home to play some basketball, because I felt that was the
23 best thing to do to relax me in face of acts of provocation, jet
24 fighter bombers came some 500 feet above the ground and flew
16:05:32 25 directly over my convoy."

26 Did that all happen, Mr Taylor?

27 A. Every bit of it.

28 Q. Now, Mr Taylor, who was doing this?

29 A. The Nigerian air force. The fellows on the ground I think

1 had not understood and without, you know, delaying you know that
2 this had been a source of contention over many months from my
3 letter to Abacha trying to get these to - getting these guys from
4 still believing that they were there to run the country as they
16:06:08 5 did before the elections, but it is very difficult and quite
6 frankly my good friend Abacha I think knew better and he could
7 have stopped it, but I think he played around a little bit, you
8 know, some little games too. But I just tried to keep my head
9 together because, like I said, we were not armed, they were still
16:06:32 10 in their numbers in Liberia and trying to misbehave. So --

11 Q. How did you interpret this action of jets flying over the
12 Executive Mansion and buzzing your convoy?

13 A. Well, aren't those acts of deliberate provocation? They
14 are. I think what these guys were trying to do was to draw us
16:06:55 15 into some conflict, because don't forget here they are aware of
16 the discussions ongoing with their government about some of their
17 behaviour. They are fully aware. Some of them in fact believe -
18 and there is no truth to this - that Liberians had all of a
19 sudden become ungrateful and we tried to explain to them.

16:07:28 20 So when you see me almost like a broken record here
21 repeating Liberia recognises what you have done, you are good
22 soldiers, we are trying to tell them that it has got nothing to
23 do with you. These are technical matters that go beyond you and
24 so don't feel bad about it. But I think they were trying to draw
16:07:47 25 me unnecessarily into a crisis that I just went and then tried to
26 find a way to relax and I kept my head together.

27 Q. "I will say to you, fellow citizens, that I know the
28 Nigerian Head of State President Abacha is a very good friend of
29 mine. I do not believe that General Sani Abacha, Head of State

1 and commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal
2 Republic of Nigeria would order any such action against the
3 friendly people of Liberia. I do not believe it was of his
4 making, unless otherwise, I believe these were actions of
16:08:29 5 provocation to cause a blood bath in Liberia, which we do not
6 need.

7 I do not think it is proper to engage in such actions over
8 the capital without my knowledge and/or consent, or to try to say
9 'You either shut up or we will act,' which is subject to one's
16:08:46 10 interpretation. But, I was privileged to learn subsequently that
11 the commanders said that the boys (Alpha Jet bombers) were
12 practising. It appears that some new pilots are in training and
13 they needed some space, but in the future if I were told I would
14 advise what air space to use for such practises. I think it
16:09:09 15 would be the right way to go about it. The Executive Mansion and
16 the capital of the Republic of Liberia are not very good
17 locations for practises, and we hope that some exterior air space
18 could be used for practises".

19 Mr Taylor, was that being said with your tongue firmly
16:09:29 20 jammed in your cheek?

21 A. I am sorry, your Honours. I am sorry for smiling. It is
22 serious. You have to understand here, counsel, I didn't study
23 psychology, but there is a lot of that tied up into my statement.
24 I know that Abacha wouldn't do this and we found a way out.
16:09:51 25 Finally they said to me that: Oh, this was a terrible mistake.
26 Some new boys had come. But they might say it, but I knew, well,
27 that it was not as had been said, but at least we were able to
28 avert what I think would have been a bloodbath, because these
29 guys were beginning to believe that we were so ungrateful and

1 they would have done something and said "Well, we will do it,"
2 and then leave. So we took this as it came, and I think this is
3 one of the things that leaders have to do from time to time. You
4 just have to keep a sound mind in dealing with some of these
16:10:36 5 crises that come to you.

6 Q. But let's continue:

7 "We understand there is a war going on and pilots need to
8 practise, but we would hope that the capital of Liberia will not
9 be used for practise because sometimes one may make a mistake,
16:10:53 10 and one bomb dropping off the plane or the plane crashing into an
11 area could cause a lot of damage to our people.

12 But, subsequently, to that last night, tanks were deployed
13 in Careysburg and all around the city".

14 Had they?

16:11:10 15 A. Yes. The same people who say that they were practising,
16 they had deployed tanks at strategic locations without any
17 permission to do so. So you know that there were some angry
18 people and, you know, quite frankly, you always have to be
19 careful. We know what militaries are capable of doing, and there
16:11:33 20 can be some terrible officers from time to time in some of these
21 developing countries. So we are using a little bit of wit here
22 by saying "Well, okay, we understand that you can practise, but
23 what are these tanks doing out here? Are they out to practise
24 too?" so I think we are just trying to keep it low, that is all.

16:12:03 25 Q. Go over the page, please. Let's pick it up at the second
26 paragraph:

27 "Even on yesterday while that was going on we got some
28 cooperation. Roberts International Airport, as though taken
29 over, the runway was blocked by several tanks. I called and

1 instructed the force commander to intervene, and luckily he did,
2 and the tanks were moved from the runway. It appeared that he
3 may not have known about it. But, we were able to see
4 international flights come in yesterday afternoon into our
16:12:37 5 airport".

6 Pause. Had the airport been reopened to commercial flights
7 by this stage?

8 A. Remember I said not totally. There were planes coming in,
9 but in order to meet all of these international from - these

16:12:54 10 international agreements and treaties, there are certain
11 guidelines that must be fully met at the airport. By this time
12 we had not reached to that particular point. Don't forget, the
13 board is being briefed for a meeting, so we haven't reached to
14 that point yet. But there are flights coming and going from time

16:13:13 15 to time.

16 Q. Well, Mr Taylor, just leaving the document for a moment,
17 let's just pause for a minute and think about this. This was
18 quite a serious incident, wasn't it?

19 A. Oh, definitely. Very serious.

16:13:31 20 Q. And just look at the timing of it. This is 13 and 14
21 February, yes?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Just when the intervention in Freetown is meeting - is
24 reaching its peak, yes?

16:13:47 25 A. That is correct, yes.

26 Q. At almost the precise moment we have ECOMOG forces in
27 Liberia behaving in this way, yes? Was it prompted by anything?

28 A. Not that I know of. Not that I know of. All we know is
29 that two helicopters come flying in and they were piloted by, I

1 think, Russians and this Sierra Leonean that we had no contact
2 with, and at our insistence on the - which was right from a legal
3 perspective that the occupants in the helicopters be turned
4 over - I know of nothing else that could have provoked these
16:14:43 5 actions. And, like I say, I spoke to Abacha, and he said that
6 those responsible for flying those planes over Monrovia would be
7 disciplined and that he understood that these were new pilots,
8 and I just took it at that.

9 Q. Now, just below that we see this:

16:15:03 10 "Fellow citizens, the issue here is whether Liberia has the
11 right to exercise her sovereign right and to safeguard her
12 territorial integrity. The answer to that is yes. ECOWAS
13 agrees, the OAU agrees, and the UN and the rest of the
14 international community agrees. International norms say that any
16:15:25 15 boat, any aircraft or land vehicle arriving on the shores, or the
16 land, or the territory of Liberia, becomes, in the first
17 instance, the responsibility of the government of Liberia.

18 We take our responsibility very serious, fellow citizens,
19 and, I can say that we do not intend at any cost to let, or aid
16:15:51 20 or permit our sovereignty to become a question or an issue. It
21 exists, period.

22 Now, we have not received the people (Occupants of the
23 Sierra Leonean helicopter). We are still demanding that the
24 people and aircraft be turned over to this government. But while
16:16:13 25 that is going on, we have used diplomatic and non-violent means
26 to achieve our objective. What is our objective? That we work
27 along with our West African brothers hand in hand, shoulder to
28 shoulder, but that they show respect for the sovereign government
29 and people of Liberia. That is our objective.

1 Our objective is not one of war or destruction against our
2 people. Our objective is not one of humiliation or disgrace for
3 our West African brothers that have helped us so well. Our
4 objective is plainly that Liberia, this sovereign Republic, be
16:16:50 5 given its due respect.

6 Last night, I spoke to the UN Secretary-General, Kofi
7 Annan, and contacted several leaders in the sub-region. Liberia
8 has lodged official complaints to ECOWAS, OAU and the UN.

9 We will be dispatching our foreign minister to seek a
16:17:12 10 diplomatic solution to this crisis and we are pursuing it at the
11 United Nations. As a member of the ECOWAS, OAU and the UN, under
12 international law we feel that our sovereignty and territorial
13 integrity have been violated, and we do not intend to use any
14 hostile means to address this situation. We want to express that
16:17:36 15 we reserve the right to self-defence and we hope that our
16 brothers are not looking at destruction, but rather putting the
17 pieces back together for what they all have helped to build".

18 Mr Taylor, I want to ask you only about one other passage.
19 Page 242, please, column on the right second paragraph:

16:18:14 20 "We have since understood that certain elements surrounding
21 Minister Roosevelt Johnson have been armed over the past few
22 days. This is very grave and serious, and it is a violation of
23 everything we stand for in ECOWAS, and we are complaining to
24 ECOWAS, and if this is true, we consider it as a deliberate
16:18:35 25 attempt to destabilise this peaceful government. We can treat
26 this as hearsay, and I hope it is hearsay, but I still want to
27 see my minister and to know what the problem is because we are
28 prepared to help".

29 What is that about?

1 A. Roosevelt Johnson had sought permission to travel to Ghana
2 for health purposes. He is given that permission to travel, and
3 don't forget he is a minister in the government. But he comes
4 back into the country surreptitiously. I don't even know when
16:19:19 5 the man gets in. He is received at the airport, put in ECOMOG
6 tanks, he is being protected by ECOMOG, and they are all with
7 him. I am wondering: Well, is my minister kidnapped, or what is
8 the problem? Are they trying to use him for some purpose? I
9 don't know. So I raise this issue immediately, because we are
16:19:41 10 beginning to sense that something is wrong and that somebody is
11 trying to make trouble for the government. But again we keep
12 cool heads and - but it eventually boils over in a second problem
13 with the very Roosevelt Johnson. Remember there is one in 1996.

14 Q. April?

16:20:07 15 A. April. Now, we are about to enter another phase as
16 President now with Roosevelt Johnson that has installed himself
17 as a government to itself right in the City of Monrovia not too
18 far from the Executive Mansion, the residence of the President.
19 So Roosevelt Johnson, my minister, is now being used by certain
16:20:31 20 elements within ECOMOG probably to destabilise the government.

21 Q. My error, there was one other passage I wanted us to look
22 at on page 242. Left-hand column, second paragraph:

23 "We have just received Reverend Jessie Jackson, a Special
24 Envoy of President Clinton. For the first time Time Magazine is
16:20:57 25 saying positive things about this government. We are expecting a
26 major delegation from major western governments to visit us. We
27 have organised a donor conference in April to assist with the
28 reconstruction of this country. So it shows, fellow citizens,
29 that we are not interested in violence against our people any

1 more".

2 Mr Taylor, let us pause. Let's try and add all of this up,
3 please. In February you are receiving all these new ambassadors.
4 On top of that, on the 13th and 14th we have this incident with
16:21:38 5 the two helicopters from Sierra Leone, tanks deployed at Roberts
6 International Airfield and around Careysburg, yes?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. We have got Jessie Jackson entering the country, yes?

9 A. Yes.

16:21:51 10 Q. We have also got this incident with Roosevelt Johnson?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. At this time, at the time of the ECOMOG intervention, how
13 busy are you?

14 A. I am very busy, troubled and disturbed. Very busy.

16:22:14 15 Q. Now, let us bear in mind this. You had been now President
16 for some, what?

17 A. Seven/eight months.

18 Q. Yes. During that time you have assured us you had had no
19 contact with the AFRC?

16:22:35 20 A. None whatsoever. That is true.

21 Q. There had been two attempts by them to contact you back in
22 the autumn of 1997, but they had been rebuffed?

23 A. That is correct.

24 Q. Thereafter you had, on the face of it, supported a decision
16:23:02 25 by ECOWAS to use force to reinstate Tejan Kabbah?

26 A. That is correct.

27 Q. Indeed, you had gone so far as to meet him in January of
28 1998?

29 A. That is correct.

1 Q. In Conakry?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And by the time that the intervention itself takes place,
4 as you have indicated, you are extremely busy. Now help us,

16:23:28 5 Mr Taylor. Did you have any reason after 14 February 1998 to get
6 in touch with the junta?

7 A. No, there was no longer a junta. There is no reason.

8 Q. Help us. What would you, President Charles Taylor of
9 Liberia, have gained, having rebuffed the junta for all these
16:24:02 10 months, from getting in touch with them at this stage?

11 A. Absolutely nothing to gain by contacting them. Nothing.
12 Everything to lose.

13 Q. What did you have to lose by getting in touch with them?

14 A. Everything. That is this hard fought position of becoming
16:24:28 15 President and the aspirations of our people, their desire to go
16 in to school and getting their lives back together. We have all
17 been - everything that you have dreamed about to do for your
18 people from a little - from a young man, these positions - well,
19 maybe some people think - that people that become Presidents
16:24:55 20 don't just get up one morning and say, "I guess I want to try
21 it".

22 It's something that starts at a very early age, a
23 determination to doing something for your people. You see
24 society, you grow up and you want to do something. You prepare
16:25:10 25 yourself all your life to do it. And you just can't let
26 something foolish destroy it.

27 So by trying to isolate oneself from ECOWAS and the OAU,
28 and by that isolating yourself from even the United Nations, what
29 do you gain? You lose everything. Where do you - where does a

1 little country go when the regional organisation you are opposed
2 to, you are opposed to the organisation of the whole continent
3 because I am saying "opposed to" because everyone is on line, we
4 have all agreed, the United Nations, the global organisation,
16:25:54 5 where does a little country go? So I mean except somebody
6 believes, and I will really feel insulted - say if somebody
7 believed that maybe every African President is uneducated and
8 stupid and ignorant and cannot reason, that surely is not the
9 case that this particular person sitting here at least God has
16:26:20 10 blessed me that at least I have some sense of direction, that I
11 would just be elected as President, I will be a part of all these
12 international organisations, signatory to all major international
13 treaties and agreements and stupidly isolate myself and support a
14 so-called junta or whatever they call it in Sierra Leone.

16:26:49 15 Q. Mr Taylor, can I ask you to pause for a moment because I
16 note the hour and there is something I need to remind you of.
17 Paragraph 5 of the indictment you face reads as follows:

18 "Members of the Revolutionary United Front, Armed Forces
19 Revolutionary Council, AFRC, AFRC/RUF junta or alliance, and/or
16:27:15 20 Liberian fighters, including members and ex-members of the NPFL,
21 assisted and encouraged by acting in concert with, under the
22 direction and/or control of and/or subordinate to the accused" -
23 that's you.

24 So help us. What was in it for you to get involved with
16:27:38 25 the AFRC junta after 14 February 1998? Help us, what were you
26 going to gain?

27 A. Absolutely nothing. Total destruction. That's what I
28 would have gotten. Nothing to gain. Everything to lose.

29 MR GRIFFITHS: Would that be a convenient point,

1 Mr President?

2 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, I think that would be a convenient
3 point, Mr Griffiths. We will adjourn until 9.30 in the morning
4 and, Mr Taylor, please don't discuss your evidence with any other
16:28:11 5 person.

6 MR GRIFFITHS: Mr President, I'm sorry, could I mark for
7 identification that photograph, DP12. It would become MFI-31,
8 the ambassador of India presenting his letters of credence.

9 PRESIDING JUDGE: Yes, the photograph bearing the Defence
16:28:32 10 marking DP12 is now marked for identification MFI-31.

11 Yes, we will adjourn now. Thank you.

12 [Whereupon the hearing adjourned at 4.28 p.m.
13 to be reconvened on Thursday, 30 July 2009 at
14 9.30 a.m.]

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I N D E X

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