2098

SECRET

10 DOWNING STREET

THIS FILE MUST NOT GO OUTSIDE 10 DOWNING ST

FILE TITLE:	SERIES
RELATIONS	LIBERIA
	PART: 1
PART BEGINS: 31 JULY 1997 ~~31 MAY 1997~~	PART ENDS: 27 ~~FEB~~ 2001
	CAB ONE:

LABOUR ADMINISTRATION

Part closed

PREM 49/2098

SECRET

TSO.PLO.2/97.PAASOO6914

PREM49-2098_0001.jpg

PART

CLOSED

DATE CLOSED	7 JUNE 2001

Series : **LIBERIA**

File Title : **Relations**

Part : **1**

Date	From	To	Subject	Class	Secret
03/07/1997	FCO	FA/APS	Liberia	C	0
12/08/1999	Cab Off	FA/APS	Kidnapping in Liberia: Thursday 12 August	S	1960
13/08/1999	Cab Off	FA/APS	Kidnapping in Liberia: Friday 13 August	S	1966
25/08/1999	FCO	FA/APS	Kidanap cases: Update	C	0
12/06/2000	Cab Off	FCO	Taylor strategy	C	0
10/07/2000	FA/APS	FCO	Liberia	C	0
11/07/2000	FCO	FA/APS	Liberia	C	0
14/07/2000	FCO	FA/APS	Liberia	C	0
22/08/2000	FCO	FA/APS	Liberia	S	1923
25/08/2000	FCO	FA/APS	Release of channel 4 journalists possible message of thanks to Obas	C	0
27/02/2001	FCO	FA/APS	Liberia: Sanctions	R	0

PREM49-2098_0003.jpg

RESTRICTED

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

From The Secretary of State

27 February 2001

Dear Anna,

Liberia: Sanctions

We spoke this morning about the difficulties in negotiating the draft UNSCR on Liberia sanctions. The Resolution has been under negotiation for over a month. The situation has been complicated by ECOWAS pressure for a two month delay in adoption of the Resolution to give Taylor time to comply with the Council's demands. The ring leaders appear to be Mali and Nigeria. NAM members of the Security Council are not willing to vote in favour of the Resolution in the face of ECOWAS opposition. We do not, therefore, have the votes we need unless ECOWAS change their stance.

The key ECOWAS players are Obasanjo and President Konare of Mali, the Chair of ECOWAS. We and the Americans have now been assured by Obasanjo that he supports immediate adoption of the Resolution. The message appears to be slow in filtering through to the Nigerian Permanent Representative in New York, but we are working on this.

ECOWAS Heads of State are expected to discuss this issue on 3 March, and various manoeuvrings can be expected before then. It would be helpful if the Prime Minister could write to President Konare before that meeting about the importance of the immediate adoption of the Resolution. I enclose a draft letter which could be delivered by our Ambassador in Dakar, who is also accredited to Bamako.

Yours ever,

Patrick

(Patrick Davies)
Private Secretary

Ms Anna Wechsberg
10 Downing Street

RESTRICTED

PREM49-2098_0004.jpg

DRAFT LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT KONARE OF MALI

President Alpha Oumar Konare
Bamako
Mali

The British Government is doing all it can to support ECOWAS and UN efforts to restore long-term peace and stability in Sierra Leone. I am especially concerned about the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the sub-region, and the humanitarian effects on the large numbers of refugees and displaced persons in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. I welcome the positive role you have played in trying to end the conflict in the region.

The report by the independent Panel of Experts set up by the UN Security Council to look into violations of the UN arms embargo on Sierra Leone and the link between the diamonds and arms trades produced clear evidence that President Taylor and his associates have been instrumental in the theft of Sierra Leone's natural resources, and have supplied arms and safe havens to the RUF rebels. The UK has responded by co-sponsoring, with the United States, a United Nations Security Council Resolution which would impose a package of sanctions on Liberia.

The measures now before the Security Council (a new arms embargo, a travel ban on senior leaders and a diamond embargo) have been designed to have minimal impact on the ordinary

people of Liberia. In the light of ECOWAS concerns, we have agreed to build into the resolution a two-month delay before sanctions come into force. During these two months, President Taylor will have the opportunity to demonstrate that he has halted completely his support for the RUF. If he does not do so, sanctions should come into force automatically. The Governments of both Guinea and Sierra Leone have stated their support for this approach and for the immediate adoption of the resolution. President Obasanjo has told us that he too supports immediate adoption. But I understand that your mission is opposing this in New York.

I am sure you will agree that President Taylor will not end his support for the RUF unless he receives a strong and clear message from the international community. He will not get such a signal unless the resolution is adopted quickly. Conversely, a further delay in Security Council action will be taken by him as a clear sign that the international community does not have the will to call him to account for his support for the RUF in violation of UN sanctions. This could have a disastrous impact on the regional stability.

The Security Council is now close to agreement on the text of the draft resolution. I hope that you will be able to instruct your Mission in New York to support immediate action on the resolution, so that we can continue to work together to end this horrendous regional conflict.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

25 August 2000

As faxed
In case not seen yet
Rec 26/8.

Dear Anna

Liberia: Release of Channel 4 Journalists:
Possible Message from Prime Minister to President Obasanjo

As you will be aware, the Channel 4 journalists detained in Liberia have been released and will be returning to the UK over the weekend.

President Obasanjo of Nigeria has been extremely helpful in interceding with President Taylor to secure the journalists' release. He raised their case in person in Monrovia on 22 August and telephoned Taylor twice from London on 23 and 24 August, following the Deputy Prime Minister's G77 breakfast.

If you agree we should like to send a message from the Prime Minister thanking President Obasanjo for his action and looking forward to his forthcoming visit. A suggested draft is as follows:

"I should like to add my thanks to those of John Prescott and Peter Hain for all your help in securing the release of the Channel 4 journalists from their detention in Liberia.

I look forward to seeing you soon, at Chequers on 11 September if not before.

Best wishes"

In order to save time, I suggest that the message be transmitted as an unsigned text.

I am copying this letter to Peter Unwin (DETR).

Yours ever
Andrew Patrick

(Andrew Patrick)
Private Secretary

Anna Wechsberg
10 Downing Street

Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

London SW1A 2AH

25 August 2000

AW
c: JS
AC.

Dear Anna

Liberia: Release of Channel 4 Journalists:
Possible Message from Prime Minister to President Obasanjo

As you will be aware, the Channel 4 journalists detained in Liberia have been released and will be returning to the UK over the weekend.

President Obasanjo of Nigeria has been extremely helpful in interceding with President Taylor to secure the journalists' release. He raised their case in person in Monrovia on 22 August and telephoned Taylor twice from London on 23 and 24 August, following the Deputy Prime Minister's G77 breakfast.

If you agree we should like to send a message from the Prime Minister thanking President Obasanjo for his action and looking forward to his forthcoming visit. A suggested draft is as follows:

"I should like to add my thanks to those of John Prescott and Peter Hain for all your help in securing the release of the Channel 4 journalists from their detention in Liberia.

I look forward to seeing you soon, at Chequers on 11 September if not before.

Best wishes"

In order to save time, I suggest that the message be transmitted as an unsigned text.

I am copying this letter to Peter Unwin (DETR).

Yours ever
Andrew Patrick

(Andrew Patrick)
Private Secretary

Anna Wechsberg
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

MATRIX

cc CO/S
FA/PS
AC/Press

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

14 July 2000

Dear Anna

Liberia

You requested clarification on the breakdown of the number of British nationals in Liberia.

The earlier assessment which triggered the Prime Minister's request for advice on whether we should take action/evacuate British nationals in Liberia, noted that there were four NGOs and 76 other British nationals in Liberia. This was incorrect. There are approximately 49 British nationals who are working for NGOs (or dependants of NGO personnel). The remainder, around 27, are mostly long-term residents associated with local businesses who are are unlikely to be swayed by our Travel Advice.

... I attach, for your information, the latest list of British nationals and other entitled personnel that have registered with our Honorary Consul in Liberia.

The numbers given are as precise as possible. However, British nationals usually remember to register on arrival in Liberia, but may fail to let the Honorary Consul know when they are leaving.

Yours ever
Andrew Patrick

(Andrew Patrick)
Private Secretary

Ms Anna Wechsberg
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

SKP 15/7/00

PREM49-2098_0009.jpg

Temporarily Retained

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Temporarily Retained

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

CONFIDENTIAL

Top - AW
cc JS
JPO
AC
JB
GS

MATRIX

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

124054

11 July 2000

Dear Anna

Liberia

Your letter of 10 July requested advice on whether we need to take action/evacuate British nationals in Liberia. We are aware of the pressures facing Taylor and the possibility that he might, as a result, try to take action against the UK in general and British nationals in particular. We have reviewed our assessment of the situation with Whitehall colleagues. We have concluded that it is not necessary, at this stage, to evacuate British nationals in Liberia. President Taylor is clearly unpredictable, but we continue to judge that he is unlikely to risk further his international reputation by taking direct action against British nationals.

In the light of increased international pressure on Taylor, we will be changing the FCO Travel Advice to advise against all travel to Liberia except on strictly essential business in Monrovia. I attach a copy of the amended travel advice.

We will ask our Honorary Consul in Monrovia to ensure that all British nationals resident in Liberia are aware of this advice and of the need to be extra vigilant at this time of heightened anti-British feeling in Liberia.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours ever

Andrew Patrick

(Andrew Patrick)
Private Secretary

Ms Anna Wechsberg
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

PREM49-2098_0012.jpg

D R A F T

UNCL[redacted]IED

FM FCO

TO ROUTINE ABIDJAN

TELNO

OF 110925Z JULY 00

AND TO ROUTINE AFRICAN TRAVEL ADVICE

SUBJECT: TRAVEL ADVICE: LIBERIA: 11.07.00

1. We advise against travel to Liberia except on strictly essential business to Monrovia.

2. In the light of continuing rebel attacks on the UN peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone, there is a heightened risk that UK citizens or organisations could become targets for RUF sympathisers in Liberia, including in Monrovia.

3. We advise against all travel to the North West of Liberia and particularly the border regions with Guinea and Sierra Leone where the situation remains unstable.

4. Outbreaks of lawlessness are unpredictable and can occur at any time. British nationals may not be the direct target of civil unrest, but could quickly find themselves caught up in the consequences, especially in Monrovia. Those who must travel to Monrovia should exercise caution at all times, especially at night.

5. There is no British Embassy in Liberia. The British Honorary Consul in Monrovia is Mr Brian Brewer, tel: 231 226516 or 226273.

COOK

YYYY

MAIN 6

SINGLE COPIES

CONSULAR D

NEWS D//MR JOHNSON

RESIDENT CLERK

AD(E)

CTPD

AMSED//HD

PC MW

PC PS

PS

PS MR HAIN

PS PUS

DIR PUBLIC SER

BRICO

NNNN

RESTRICTED

FILE

Electronically filed in DCO area

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

10 July 2000

Dear Andrew

LIBERIA

In the light of the FT article today on Charles Taylor's involvement in Sierra Leone, the Prime Minister would be grateful for quick advice on whether we need to take action to protect/evacuate British citizens in Liberia. I think the earlier assessment was that Taylor was unlikely to act against Britons, mindful of his reputation, but it would be helpful to know whether people think this still stands. I would be grateful for a note, if possible later today.

I am copying this to Nicky Moffat (MOD), Chris Austin (DFID) and Sebastian Wood, John Day and Tom McKane (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

Anna Wechsberg

ANNA WECHSBERG

Andrew Patrick
FCO

RESTRICTED

NS

PREM49-2098_0015.jpg

CONFIDENTIAL

AW
cc: JS

CABINET OFFICE
70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS Telephone 020 7270 0050
Tom McKane
Defence and Overseas Secretariat

TO6197 12 June 2000

James Bevan
Head of African Department (Equatorial)
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Room 012
Downing Street East

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4)
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Dear James.

TAYLOR

At our meeting earlier today to discuss the Taylor strategy Stephen Pattison described the two stage approach to dealing with "Liberian" diamonds: Liberian diamonds would not be embargoed under the terms of the forthcoming UNSCR but could be covered at the review point in September if Taylor had not responded to pressure in the meantime. Part of that pressure would arise from the public hearing which the UN would be expected to organise before the end of July. We would also ask the US and other key players to make it clear to Taylor that the International Community was on his case.

2. Another part of our Taylor strategy would be worked on at the GAC today where steps would be taken to initiate proceedings under Article 366A.

3. We agreed that the following issues should be followed up:

a. The banning of air links. This could prove useful in stemming the supply of illegal arms and UND will look at the scope for introducing a measure at the September review point.

c. Revenue from ship registration. UND will explore whether and how we might act to cut off this source of revenue.

PREM49-2098_0016.jpg

e. UND and DIFD will identify a team of experts who can visit Sierra Leone to advise the Government on setting up a certification regime for diamonds. This might involve UN officials and representatives of the diamond industry's High Council. This needs to be done within the next two weeks.

4. I am copying this to Simon Webb (MOD), Stephen Pattison (UND), Jonathan Lingham (DIFD), and Jane Hamilton-Eddy (Assessments Staff).

Yours.

TOM McKANE

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

PREM49-2098_0017.jpg

File

10 DOWNING STREET

This will give the Warren-Crash s.th. to chew on.

I'm not opposed to TB sending it. But it needs to be part of a strategy. We need to know now what we wd do if (as is v. likely) Taylor takes no notice of this (or just covers his tracks more).

One possibility: show this to the Americans as a basis for a joint letter. The US will bridle, but the possibility of a letter will have a ripple effect & may generate other ideas.

JL

File note

spoke to James Bevan. He will discuss further with the US & then come back to us formally. - AC 5/6

John

to see with attached. This is James Bevan's suggestion for a letter from the PM to Taylor. The message is right, but I'm not convinced the PM should write. And in any event we should get the US to deliver a parallel message. What do you think?

Amy 15/6

POSSIBLE HIGH LEVEL MESSAGE TO CHARLES TAYLOR

We are following closely developments in Liberia, Sierra Leone and the region.

We want to see a Liberia which is strong, successful and at peace with itself and its neighbours. We want to see a Liberia which is a respected member of the international community. And we want to see a democratic, prosperous and stable Sierra Leone.

But your present actions in Sierra Leone are threatening all that. We know that you are actively supporting the RUF military campaign there; that you are meeting with their leaders and directing their strategy; that you are providing the RUF with weapons and other military support; that you are allowing them to operate against Sierra Leone from Liberian territory; and that you are profitting from the illegal exploitation of Sierra Leonean diamonds.

We and the rest of the international community will not tolerate this. The European Union has already suspended aid to Liberia as a result of your recent activity in Sierra Leone. The United Nations Security Council, with our support, is now putting in place international measures designed to stop the illegal exploitation of Sierra Leone's diamonds; to expose publicly the links between illegal diamond exploitation and gun-running, and identify those responsible; and to tighten implementation of the Sierra Leone arms embargo.

We do not intend to stop there. We and our international partners are also preparing a substantial package of further measures which can be applied to Liberia if Liberia continues to undermine peace in Sierra Leone. We will not speculate on what those measures will be. But

they will be tough. And it would not be in your interests to see them implemented.

We urge you to reflect on this. We hope that you will now end all Liberian support for the RUF; tell their leaders that they should release any remaining detainees, lay down their arms and enter the disarmament process in Sierra Leone; stop the illegal exploitation of Sierra Leone's diamonds and the transit of arms through Liberia; and join us in working actively for lasting peace in Sierra Leone.

If you do this, the international community will be prepared to work with you in the future. If you do not, the international community will have no alternative but to work against you. We urge you to choose the right path for Liberia.

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DEPARTMENT/SERIES PREM 49 PIECE/ITEM 2098 (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: Letter dated 22 August 2000	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	13/07/22
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	
MISSING AT TRANSFER	
NUMBER NOT USED	
MISSING (TNA USE ONLY)	
DOCUMENT PUT IN PLACE (TNA USE ONLY)	

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DEPARTMENT/SERIES PREM 49 PIECE/ITEM 2098 (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: Letter dated 25 August 1999	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	M Bonjea 4/8/2022
MISSING AT TRANSFER	
NUMBER NOT USED	
MISSING (TNA USE ONLY)	
DOCUMENT PUT IN PLACE (TNA USE ONLY)	

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DEPARTMENT/SERIES PREM 49 PIECE/ITEM 2098 (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: Minute dated 13 August 1999	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	M Bonfiglio 4/8/2022
MISSING AT TRANSFER	
NUMBER NOT USED	
MISSING (TNA USE ONLY)	
DOCUMENT PUT IN PLACE (TNA USE ONLY)	

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

DEPARTMENT/SERIES PREM 49 PIECE/ITEM 2098 (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: Minute dated 12 August 1999	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	M Bonjo 4/8/2022
MISSING AT TRANSFER	
NUMBER NOT USED	
MISSING (TNA USE ONLY)	
DOCUMENT PUT IN PLACE (TNA USE ONLY)	

? ~~those name is it in.~~

file - told FCO could issue in Prime Minister's name.

PRB 1/8

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

31 July 1997

Dear Philip.

Liberia

Charles Taylor swept to victory in the Presidential elections in Liberia on 19 July 1997, which observers have judged to be free and fair. He gained some 75% of the votes cast. However, he has been responsible for much of the violence in Liberia over the past seven years of the civil war which he started.

He will be inaugurated on 2 August. We were not inclined to send any message of congratulation, and had thought that EU partners and the US were taking the same line. But President Chirac has now sent a message and it is likely that President Clinton will too. The Italians may follow suit.

We wish to stay in the pack but shall probably not know until the last minute how many of our partners have decided to send messages. We propose to leave final discretion on whether a message would be appropriate to our Ambassador to Liberia, who will represent us at the inauguration. If she considers that a message is appropriate we suggest something along the following lines, concentrating on the democratic process and on the tasks ahead.

"On behalf of the people of the United Kingdom, I congratulate the people of Liberia on the successful conduct of their democratic elections on 19 July. Through their vote they have demonstrated an overwhelming wish for peace and democracy.

The last seven years have been difficult for Liberia. I hope that her people can now move on to a period of stability and development under her new, democratically elected government. I hope too that that government will be sufficiently broad-based to reflect the requirements of all the people of Liberia. There is a great deal of work to be done."

PREM49-2098_0025.jpg

Is this acceptable (ie procedure and text)?

Yours ever,
Dominick

(Dominick Chilcott)
Private Secretary

Philip Barton Esq OBE
10 Downing Street

SECRET

SECRET