

By Sam Rubinfeld

From [The Wall Street Journal](#) | Original Article

Nigeria will file bribery charges against former U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney and officials from five foreign companies, including Halliburton Co., a prosecutor at the country's anti-graft agency [told](#) Bloomberg News.



Tom Pennington/Getty ImagesFormer U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney will be charged by a Nigerian anti-graft agency, a prosecutor said.

The indictments will be handed up within three days, said Godwin Obla, prosecuting counsel at the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, speaking Wednesday. An arrest warrant for Cheney will be transmitted through Interpol, he said.

Cheney was the chief executive of Halliburton from 1995 to 2000, when he left to become then-Gov. George W. Bush's running presidential mate, eventually winning the election.

"As the [former] CEO of Halliburton, he has the responsibility for acts that occurred during that period," Obla later [told](#) AFP.

Terrence O'Donnell, Cheney's lawyer, said in a statement the matter involved activity from "well over a decade ago" and "any suggestion of misconduct on his part made now, years later, is entirely baseless."

"The Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission investigated that joint venture extensively and found no suggestion of any impropriety by Dick Cheney in his role of CEO of Halliburton," O'Donnell, of Williams & Connolly LLP, said.

Obla told Bloomberg that charges will be filed against current and former chief executive officers of Halliburton and its former unit KBR Inc., Technip SA, Eni SpA and Saipem Construction Co., a unit of Eni. He didn't identify the former officials whom he said held office when the alleged bribes were paid.

The alleged \$180 million of bribes were connected to \$6 billion in contracts with Nigeria LNG Ltd., whose largest shareholder is the state-owned petroleum company, to build liquefied natural gas facilities on Bonny Island, off the country's southern coast. Technip, Snamprogetti SpA and KBR, along with Japan-based JGC Corp., formed a joint venture called TSJK to bid for the contracts.

Gianni Di Giovanni, an Eni spokesman, said the company "confirms its availability to co-operate with the local authorities in the ongoing investigations, as it has done in the past with Italian and U.S. authorities" in an emailed statement. KBR had no comment.

Halliburton said in an email that the company has "never in any way been part of the LNG project" and "none of the Halliburton employees have ever had any connection to or participation in that project."

Christophe Bélorgeot, a spokesman for Technip, didn't respond to requests for comment.

The companies are part of an ongoing investigation by the Nigerian government, which [arreste](#)

[d](#)
people at Halliburton's offices on Saturday,
[freeing](#)
them by Monday.

In the U.S., KBR and Halliburton [agreed to pay](#) \$579 million to the Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission in February 2009 for violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, a 1977 law that bans bribery of foreign officials to obtain or retain business, in Nigeria from 1994 to 2004. In the same scandal, Technip [agreed to pay](#) \$338 million in late June 2010, and 10 days later Snamprogetti—formerly a unit of Eni and later a unit of Saipem—[agreed to pay](#) \$365 million.

Taken together, the companies have paid \$1.28 billion to U.S. regulators.

Separately, The Guardian reported that the U.K. will [extradite](#) a former KBR sales manager to the U.S. to stand trial for Nigerian bribery. Wojciech Chodan, 72, allegedly helped to funnel bribes of \$132 million to secure contracts.

Chodan, who worked for London-based MW Kellogg, which was controlled by Halliburton, allegedly took part in covert meetings to devise the bribery plot and conspired to ensure \$132 million was sent via bank accounts in Switzerland, Monaco and New York to high-ranking Nigerians. Prosecutors said he could face 55 years in prison.

He had fought his extradition, saying it is “unjust and oppressive” to “haul him out of his domestic bliss,” but The Guardian reports he abruptly gave up the fight. Chodan has said previously that the alleged misconduct wasn't connected to the U.S.