

NEWSSTAND

UK: Extradition to the US in the spotlight again

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The strained relationship between the US and the UK in relation to extradition has again been put under the spotlight recently in relation to an alleged international bribery scam.

At a recent hearing in the Westminster Magistrates Court US Prosecutors sought the extradition of the London Lawyer Jeffrey Tessler. He is alleged to have helped to organise payment of bribes in excess of \$130m to various Nigerian politicians in relation to various construction projects in Nigeria in the value of some \$6 billion. Although the prosecutors argued that there were "compelling reasons" to extradite Tessler, Tessler's own lawyer Hugo Keith QC responded that there was little connection between his client and the US and argued that little if any of the alleged bribery actually took place in the US, and in any event a fair trial in the US would no longer be possible due to how much time had elapsed as some of the alleged corruption dates back to 1994.

District Judge Caroline Tubbs recently gave her decision to allow the extradition to go ahead. Although Mr Tessler's legal team have said an appeal will be lodged this decision will provide further fuel to those who argue that there is far greater extradition from the UK to the US than there is from the US to the UK.