

Libya's Qaddafi Is Brought Back Into the British Royal Family

by Dean Andromidas and Hussein Askary

Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi is being brought back into the bosom of Her Majesty's Britannic Empire. This is the fact behind the hoked up controversy over the British government's release of Abdel Baset Ali al-Megrahi, the Libyan who was falsely convicted for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. While there may be good reason for the current tension between Great Britain and the United States, it should have nothing to do with "broken promises" over the release of an innocent man who is now on his deathbed. The tension should be over the fact that the British are moving to consolidate their control over Libya, so as to further their geostrategic designs against Europe, Africa, and the United States. This is not to ignore the fact that the British government continues to refuse to conduct a competent investigation of the bombing of an American airliner, one of the worst in history.

The ongoing collapse of the Anglo-Dutch monetary system is the driving force behind the British empire's determination to gain control of international reserves of oil and other natural resources. The African continent, in particular, has been slated for war and genocide for centuries, for exactly this purpose, by the British, including in the post-"independence" period. Libya has become central to this policy. It has the largest known oil reserves in Africa, and a tiny population of 6 million, compared to Nigeria, with the second-largest reserve, and 131 million people. Libya's massive foreign exchange earnings can be conveniently recycled through the City of London, the power center of the global empire. The fact that the major consumers of Libya's oil are the continental Europeans, including Italy (35%) Germany (14%), France (9%), and Spain (8%), creates an ideal pressure point against the continent.

Libya is the keystone of North Africa and the Sahel, and all its neighbors are important sources of hydrocar-

bons and other resources—especially Algeria, Niger, Chad, and Sudan, all of which have been targeted by separatist and terrorist groups. Libya, in some cases, has supplied financial and logistical support for this British-controlled terrorism.

The Anglo-Libyan rapprochement is rapidly taking the form of an alliance, with Libya lending support to British designs against Africa, especially the breakup of Sudan. Already Qaddafi, while hosting the African Union summit in Tripoli on Aug. 31, met with Khalil Ibrahim, the leader of the British-backed separatist Darfur Justice and Equality Movement. At the end of the meeting, Qaddafi declared, "The secession of South Sudan from the North might be a logical choice," and added that he "will support the secession of the Southern Sudanese if the people choose that. But the new state will be a small and weak one that will be targeted by major powers." The statement stunned African leaders, who were assembled to discuss Africa's security and independence. The Libyan Foreign Ministry had to issue statements claiming Qaddafi was misunderstood, and that Libya had not changed its policy toward Sudan.

According to the Arabic television channel al-Jazeera, the leader of the Southern Sudanese Federal state and Vice President of Sudan, Silva Kerr, had said earlier that he has been given assurances by Qaddafi in support of the south Sudanese if they choose "independence."

Tony Blair's Role

Britain's Tony Blair has served as a point-man for Her Majesty, in a decade-long policy of using the Lockerbie case to bring Libya back into the imperial fold. Megrahi and another Libyan were indicted by both U.S. and Scottish prosecutors in 1991, which led to economic sanctions being imposed against Libya by the UN, the United States, and the European Union.



U.S. Navy/Spc. 2nd Class Jesse B. Awalt

Libya's Muammar Qaddafi has prostrated himself before the British, privatizing his country's state-sector industry, toeing the British line on the breakup of Sudan, and signing multimillion-dollar arms deals.



UN Photo/Cia Pak

It was Britain's Tony Blair who, as Prime Minister, orchestrated the 2004 deal with Libya to lift economic sanctions against that country.

It was not until 1999, while Blair was Prime Minister, that Libya was convinced to surrender the two suspects, leading to the immediate suspension of EU and UN sanctions. Despite the conviction of Megrahi, U.S. sanctions continued. It was not until 2004, when Blair flew to Tripoli and signed the final agreements, that all sanctions were lifted. The deal required Libya to “end” a phony nuclear program and hand over billions of dollars to victims of terrorism. In May 2007, a follow-up visit consolidated the British hold over Libya.

Blair was serving two pillars of British policy—oil and weapons—the former represented by BP and Royal Dutch Shell, and the latter by BAE Systems. This is the same combination that the British have used to consolidate their hold over Saudi Arabia, through the multibillion-dollar oil-for-weapons deal known as “al-Yamamah,” headed by London’s chief agent, Saudi Prince Bandar bin-Sultan, and operating through BAE Systems.

Indeed, in addition to Blair, the other key behind-the-scenes player in the Anglo-Libyan deal was Prince Bandar, the former ambassador to the United States and Bush family intimate, who brokered the original al-Yamamah deal. It was Bandar, dating back to 1999, who brokered Libya’s “voluntary disarmament,” opening the door to all the deals that have followed. Bandar received a lucrative payoff from Qaddafi, according to a senior U.S. intelligence source, who noted that Bandar’s involvement with Qaddafi coincided with a foiled Libyan-financed assassination plot against then-Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, the current King.

Blair’s 2004 visit resulted in Shell Oil winning a contract worth up to \$1 billion and BAE Systems winning a civil aviation contract to renovate Libya’s fleet of passenger aircraft. In his visit in 2007, he was accompanied by Guy Griffiths, former chief executive of the arms manufacturer MBDA, which is partly owned by BAE. But the big winner was BP, which has its roots in the notorious Anglo-Persian Oil Company. It signed a deal, potentially worth billions, giving it offshore exploration rights over an area the size of Belgium, in the potentially oil-rich Sirt basin, and an area in the North Ghadames block, the size of Kuwait.

As the result of Blair’s 2004 visit, the Libyan-British Business Council was formed. Its board is filled with former British diplomats and spooks, with decades of experience in the Arab and Muslim world, including former ambassadors to Libya and Iran. Its membership includes major British companies, such as Barclay’s bank, British Gas, BP, and British American Tobacco. Since the United States has no comparative

group, American companies are also members, including JP Morgan and Exxon Mobil.

Its chairman is Lord Trefgarne, whose name is well known to those familiar with the British-orchestrated arming of both sides during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s. From 1983 to 1989, he served as a Ministry of Defence junior minister in the government of Margaret Thatcher. From 1989 to 1990, he was a minister in the Department of Trade and Industry. He was part of the cabal of government officials who orchestrated these sales, including the al-Yamamah deal. According to British media, it was Trefgarne who played a key behind-the-scenes role in securing the release of Megrahi.

Now that the arms embargo has been lifted, British defense industry sources report that BAE is preparing to cash in on the potential \$730 million Libyan arms market, as Libya moves to replace its aging Soviet-made equipment.

Qaddafi Sells Country to Britain

Any welcome into Her Majesty's family of satrapies requires that a nation give up its state-sector industry. In September 2008, in a speech commemorating the 39th anniversary of his revolution, Qaddafi announced that he would carry out "massive reforms" in the economy, which was dominated by the state sector. On the pretext of eliminating corruption, Qaddafi called for "canceling the public sector, because this sector needs competent people and people with a high level of efficiency, patriotism, and morals." This would include the oil industry which should be owned by Libyan citizens, not the state, he said, because the oil wealth is "the property of the Libyan citizens and not the state." He emphasized that these companies "should not necessarily be run by Libyans, but they could hire any expert from foreign countries to run these companies, to develop the industry and increase exports."

For the last two years, the privatization process has included the telecoms, electricity, and water resources. The process is run by the Qaddafi's son Saif al-Islam Muammar al-Qaddafi, educated at the London School of Economics, who heads the Qaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation. While his father prefers the simple life, represented by his air-conditioned tent, Saif has just purchased a £10 million mansion in fashionable Hampstead, North London. Among his British friends, he counts Prince Andrew, who recently led a British business delegation to Libya. Of

course, he has been invited on occasion to Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle to meet Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her Consort, Prince Philip. Also among his friends is the son of Lord Rothschild. It was Saif who is said to have represented Libya in securing the release of Megrahi, and who accompanied the latter on his return to Tripoli.

Megrahi Was Framed

Megrahi was released from a Scottish prison on Aug. 20, on orders Scottish Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill, on grounds of "compassion," because he was dying from prostate cancer. A phony scandal erupted: Who was responsible? Was this the right thing to do? Was Britain blackmailed under threat of terrorism if Megrahi were to die in prison? Hundreds of articles, editorials, and parliamentary debates have simply covered up the real intent of British policy, the policy carried out by Tony Blair.

First, it must be said that Megrahi was innocent of any involvement in the downing of Pan Am 103, a fact that would have come out as a result of an appeal that Megrahi had brought before a Scottish appeals court. The fact that he dropped that appeal has been almost blacked out of the media.

Dr. Hans Koechler, head of the International Progress Organization (IPO), and a renowned international jurist who had monitored Megrahi's 2001 trial on behalf of the UN Secretary General, asserted that Megrahi's withdrawal of his appeal may have been "made under duress" as a form of "emotional blackmail," to attain a "compassionate release." In a series of interviews and statements released by the IPO, Dr. Koechler pointed out that under Scottish law, there should be no link between a prisoner's release on compassionate grounds and the withdrawal of appeals. Although the Scottish authorities refused to admit this, Dr. Koechler pointed out that Megrahi withdrew his appeal on Aug. 12, only eight days before his release on Aug. 20, and at a time when he knew he had only a few months to live.

More important is Dr. Koechler's assertion that Megrahi would have most likely *won* an appeal. He pointed out that, after the 2001 trial and the failure of Megrahi's first appeal, a four-year investigation was conducted by the Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission, which was completed in June 2007. It pointed to a possible miscarriage of justice, and called for referring the case back to the appeals court. The report concluded

that the prosecution had not proven a connection between Megrahi and articles of clothing bought at a Malta shop that were purportedly linked to the bomb. Since this alleged connection was the only material link between Megrahi and the prosecution's bomb-plot theory, without it, the case would collapse.

Koehler said that discovering the truth of who was responsible for a bombing that cost 270 lives "is in the supreme public interest of any polity that is built on the rule of law." He called on the British House of Commons to mandate a public inquiry, or on the UN General Assembly to consider establishing an international commission of inquiry. If such an inquiry were to be held, it would put pressure on Great Britain to reopen the case. Since the bomb that blew up Pan Am Flight 103 was put on the aircraft in Great Britain, it is Her Majesty's government's responsibility to investigate the case.

Open the Lockerbie Files!

On Sept. 4, *The Scotsman* reported that Alex Salmond, Scotland's First Minister, was considering an attempt to secure the public release of the Scottish Criminal Case Review Commission's official judgment, which comprises some 800 pages of text and 13 volumes of appendices. Although a 14-page summary has been made public, the rest is being withheld on the pretext that Megrahi has withdrawn his appeal. If Salmond secures the release of the documentation, the entire Pan Am Flight 103 case could be reopened. This is precisely what the British government has been doing everything possible to prevent.

On Dec. 21, 1988, Pan Am Flight 103, a Boeing 747, disappeared from the radar screens, over Lockerbie, Scotland. No terrorist group took responsibility, but suspicions, which were not based on any hard evidence, centered on Libya and Ahmed Jibril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which would have allegedly done the bombing for Iran, as revenge for the shooting down of an Iranian airliner earlier that year, by an American warship that suspected it was an attacking jet fighter. While there has been endless speculation and thousands of articles and investigative reports on these two theories, there are some simple facts to discredit them.

For example, one has to ask whether it is reasonable to expect Libya to have conducted an act of war against the United States, only two years after it was bombed by the U.S. Air Force, in 1986, in retaliation for an

Berlin discotheque bombing which killed several Americans. As for Iran, in 1988, it was in the midst of UN-mediated peace talks to end the almost decade-long Iran-Iraq War. It does not make sense that Iran would commit an act of war against the United States, at a time when it was trying to end a war in which it had suffered hundreds of thousands of casualties.

Furthermore, these scenarios assume that the bomb was checked in as unaccompanied luggage, and was sent on its way to the cargo hold of the plane. If this were the case, the terrorists had extraordinary luck, since even according to the official accident report, the bomb found its way to the forward luggage compartment and the bulkhead separating it from the compartment under the flight deck. According to aircraft experts, this is the most vulnerable part of the plane; the rear area is less vulnerable. Because the bomb was placed at that particular location, its detonation assured the detachment of the flight deck and the rest of the fuselage, ripping the aircraft apart within seconds.

In the history of modern passenger jet aviation, up to the time of the Pan Am bombing, there were only three other cases in which the aircraft broke apart in mid-air. In all three cases, the bomb was in the forward cargo hold, and the perpetrators were never positively identified. The most interesting of those cases was that of Air India Flight 182, which was downed on June 23, 1985, en route from Montreal to New Delhi, via London. It disappeared over the the Atlantic Ocean, just south of Ireland. It also was a Boeing 747, and it was bombed in precisely the same way as the Pan Am flight. The bomb was again said to have been placed in luggage checked in at the counter, and managed to end up in almost the exact same location as the Pan Am flight. An extraordinary coincidence and an extraordinary piece of luck for the alleged terrorists. No one claimed responsibility. It was not until almost 20 years later, that a case was brought against a Sikh terrorist group called Babbar Khalsa, only to collapse when the jury acquitted all the suspects. The only conviction was the alleged bombmaker, who turned state's evidence and pleaded guilty.

The point is, that such attacks are far more sophisticated than the scenarios presented so far would allow. Since the bomb was put on the aircraft in London, all of these theories serve to deflect from the responsibility of the British government to come up with answers. U.S. security officials should ask: What are the British hiding?