

AN IMPERIAL LOVE AFFAIR

Tony and Lizzie and Bandar and Muammar

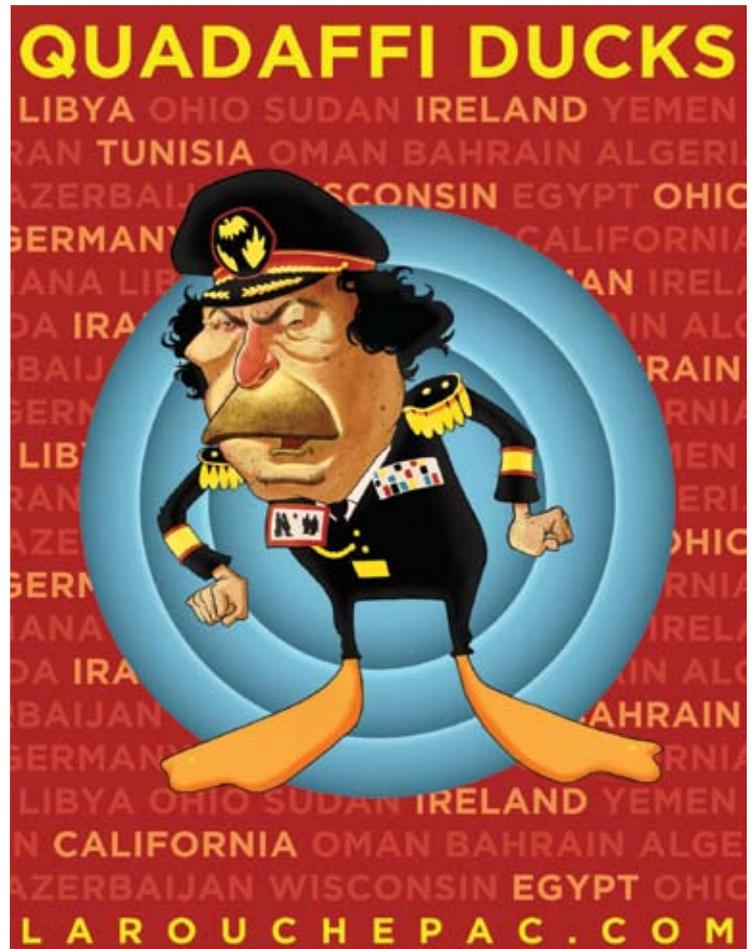
by Jeffrey Steinberg and Scott Thompson

March 7—From practically the day he took office as Prime Minister in May 1997, Tony Blair, along with top officials of MI6, Lord Jacob Rothschild, Baroness Liz Symons, and leading members of the British Royal Family, have promoted Muammar Qaddafi, and fostered Libya's growing political and economic ties with Britain, right up to the present moment, as the Libyan dictator goes through his final "Hitler in the bunker" demise.

By official British accounts, Blair's initial back-channel to Qaddafi was Sir Mark Allen, the MI6 chief for North Africa and the Middle East. In the immediate aftermath of the March 2003 Anglo-American invasion of Iraq, and overthrow of Saddam Hussein, secret talks began with Qaddafi's emissaries, for Libya to abandon its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program, in return for a full normalization of relations with the U.K. and the United States.

On Dec. 3, 2003, a meeting took place at the Travellers Club in London, involving British diplomat Sir Nigel Sheinwald, MI6 man Allen, British and American government non-proliferation and intelligence officials William Ehrman, David Landsman, Stephen Kappes, and Robert Joseph, and Libyan intelligence officials Musa Kusa and Abdullah Alobidi.

Two weeks later, Prime Minister Blair and President George W. Bush proudly announced



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Why do the British support Qaddafi, even now? Think it might have something to do with money?

that Qaddafi would allow WMD inspectors into Libya, as a first step toward Libya abandoning its WMD program. The Qaddafi WMD decision was hailed as a great accomplishment, resulting directly from the Iraq invasion and overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

Coming at a time when the insurgency against the Anglo-American occupation of Iraq was in full swing, Qaddafi's surrender of Libya's purported WMD matériel provided a much-needed propaganda boost for both Bush and Blair, who were coming under increasing public attack for the illegal Iraq invasion—especially since it was now clear that Saddam Hussein had long ago abandoned his own WMD programs, and the war had been hyped on the basis of “sexed up” disinformation.

The Blair-Bush Lie

But the reality was much different and much uglier than even the Bush-Blair phony propaganda claims. In fact, Qaddafi had launched his love affair with London and Washington long before the first Anglo-American bombs rained down on Baghdad. It was soon after the fall of the Soviet Union that Qaddafi made his first foray back into the Western camp, and it came through a pair of unlikely interlocutors, both with deep British ties.

According to a senior U.S. intelligence source, Qaddafi paid Saudi Arabia's Washington ambassador, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, to open a direct channel to President Bill Clinton. Bandar's efforts were blocked for months by National Security Advisor Sandy Berger, who thoroughly distrusted Bandar. Berger's stiff-arming of Bandar worked until the U.S. President's March 1998 trip to South Africa. At that time, Bandar enlisted South African President Nelson Mandela to orchestrate an “impromptu” one-on-one meeting for himself with President Clinton—behind Berger's back—and made his pitch on behalf of Qaddafi directly to the



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Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2009. His “deal in the desert” with Qaddafi led to a flow of millions of dollars of oil money into British coffers.



U.S. Navy/Spec. Jesse B. Awalt

Libya's Muammar Qaddafi: Tony Blair's whole government apparatus was in bed with him.



DoD/R.D. Ward

Saudi Prince Bandar bin Sultan pocketed millions for his role in Libyan and Saudi deals with London.

President. Clinton was reportedly unimpressed. But, in return for his efforts, according to the U.S. intelligence source, Bandar received millions of dollars from the Libyan dictator. And those Libyan funds would keep flowing for years.

This account is buttressed by public records. Ac-

According to a 2004 report by Lyn Boyd Judson, a University of Southern California professor, the Bandar-Mandela effort on behalf of Qaddafi actually began in 1997, when the South African President ventured to Tripoli, to give Qaddafi the Good Hope Medal, the highest civilian honor bestowed upon a foreign citizen by the South African government. Mandela was blunt in his remarks at the award ceremony: “Those who say I should not be here are without morals,” he declared. Pointing to Qaddafi, he continued, “This man helped us at a time when we were all alone, when those who say we should not come here were helping the enemy. Those who are bitter at our friendship,” he concluded, “can go drown themselves.”

Judson, writing a case study for the Georgetown University foreign service school (“A Medal of Good Hope: Mandela, Qaddafi and the Lockerbie Negotiations”), reported: “Two critical things began to take place as a direct result of Mandela’s public statements in Tripoli. The United Kingdom and the United States were thrown on the defensive to explain the fairness of their demands on Libya, and Mandela’s Chief of Staff Jakes Gerwel would team up with Saudi Arabia’s Ambassador Prince Bandar bin Sultan to begin a clandestine shuttle diplomacy between Tripoli, London, Washington, and Johannesburg to negotiate the lifting of the UN sanctions against Libya.”

Those sanctions had been imposed in 1991, after Qaddafi refused to turn over two accused Libyan intelligence officers for trial in the Dec. 21, 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103, over Lockerbie, Scotland, in which 270 people were killed.

While Prince Bandar had cultivated strong personal ties to the Bush family, dating back to the period when former President George H.W. Bush had been Vice President under Ronald Reagan, Clinton’s own relations with Bandar and with the Saudi Kingdom were very strained. And National Security Advisor Berger had good reason to distrust Bandar—and his friends in London. In 1985, Bandar had secretly brokered the “al-Yamamah” deal between Saudi Arabia and Great Britain, under which the British aerospace conglomerate, BAE Systems, would get hundreds of billions of dollars in arms sales to the Kingdom, in an oil-for-arms barter deal that created a covert intelligence fund, and funneled billions of dollars in kickbacks to members of the Saudi Royal Family, first and foremost, Prince Bandar. While official records of “al-Yamamah” confirm that Bandar received \$10 million in personal “commis-

sions” for his role, U.S. government sources believe the amount was at least an order of magnitude greater—\$100 million.

When evidence surfaced that some of those “al-Yamamah” funds had gone through Bandar’s personal accounts at Riggs National Bank in Washington, D.C., to at least two of the Sept. 11, 2001 World Trade Center and Pentagon al-Qaeda terrorists, the Bush White House suppressed the evidence—with FBI complicity.

The Mandela-Bandar secret diplomacy on behalf of Qaddafi achieved an interim objective, years before the Iraq invasion and the Libyan “surrender” of its WMD. In 1999, Qaddafi turned over two Libyan intelligence officers, accused of the Pan Am 103 bombing, for trial.

In January 2001, only one of the two Libyans, Abdel al-Megrahi, was convicted. The second man, al-Amin Khalifa Fhimah, was freed, and returned home to Libya to a hero’s welcome. In 2003, Qaddafi paid \$2.7 billion in compensation to the families of those killed in the Pan Am 103 explosion, and on Sept. 12, 2003, the UN Security Council formally lifted the sanctions against Libya by a unanimous vote. The United States and France abstained.

Britain’s Oil-for-Terrorist Deal

Even before the UN sanctions were lifted, Blair was working through Bandar and Mandela to meet Qaddafi’s final offer. Libya would open its oil and gas reserves to British exploitation by British Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell, and would give lucrative arms and logistics contracts to BAE Systems, in return for al-Megrahi’s release.

MI6’s Mark Allen launched this second phase of Britain’s marriage to the Libyan dictator and his vast oil reserves. And once again, Mandela and Bandar were in on the action.

On June 11, 2002, Mandela paid a visit to al-Megrahi in a Glasgow prison, and began publicly pressing for his return to an Arab country, to serve out the remainder of his sentence.

In March 2004, six months after the UN sanctions were lifted, Blair was the first Western head of state, since the 1988 Pan Am 103 bombing, to travel to Libya and meet with Qaddafi. In the aftermath of the Blair trip, a British-Libyan Business Council was established to open the economic spigot from Qaddafi to the City of London.

In early 2005, Allen made a secret trip to Libya, accompanied by Lord Browne, CEO of British Petroleum



DoD/R.D. Ward

Baroness Symons' most recent defense of Qaddafi was on Feb. 11, in a speech before the House of Lords.

and a director of Goldman Sachs International, seeking major oil and gas concessions from Qaddafi. Qaddafi demanded that al-Megrahi be returned to Libya as a precondition for the deals. Lord Browne became one of Qaddafi's prime lobbyists.

In 2007, Blair made his second trip to Libya as prime minister, accompanied by Sir Nigel Sheinwald, another close ally and a top British Foreign Office mandarin. Sheinwald moved from his post as Blair's chief of the Cabinet Office for Defence and Overseas Secretariat, to become Britain's Ambassador in Washington, soon after the Libya excursion.

It was at this meeting in Libya that the infamous "deal in the desert" was reached, under which al-Megrahi would be freed, on fake humanitarian grounds.

At this time, Blair ally and Inter-Alpha Group founder Lord Jacob Rothschild was put on the board of the Libyan Investment Authority (LIA), Qaddafi's \$100 billion sovereign wealth fund. Once he left office as prime minister, Blair, too, joined the board of LIA.

By the time that Lord Jacob "retired" from the LIA board in 2009, his son Nathaniel "Nat" Rothschild had

moved into the Libyan franchise, cultivating a close personal relationship with Qaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam Qaddafi. Saif was tapped by London to become his father's replacement, and a long-term anchor of Britain's now-shattered "Sunni Stability Belt" strategy of backing dictators and monarchs throughout the Sunni world, especially in the oil-rich Persian Gulf.

Saif Qaddafi owns a \$15 million estate in London, and received a 2008 PhD from the London School of Economics. The title of his dissertation was: "The Role of Civil Society in Democratization of Global Governance Organizations: From Soft Power to Collective Decision-Making." The head of the London School of Economics, Sir Howard Davies, was added to the Libyan Investment Authority board, along with Lord Jacob Rothschild and Tony Blair.

And Blair's Downing Street intimate, Baroness Liz Symons, was appointed by Qaddafi to the International Advisory Board of the National Economic Development Board of Libya, soon after Blair left office. Baroness Symons, who was appointed Life Peer by Blair, is married to Phil Bassett, one of Blair's Downing Street propagandists, who authored the fake White Paper, claiming Saddam Hussein had a secret nuclear weapons program and therefore had to be removed from power.

Symons was and remains a point person for Blair and the monarchy, in their "Duggan Affair" campaign against Lyndon LaRouche, a still-ongoing libel campaign that heavily overlapped with the smear campaign against British scientist and weapons inspector Dr. David Kelly, who exposed the "sexed up" Downing Street dossiers on Saddam Hussein to BBC, and was soon after, in July 2003, found dead, an alleged suicide. A group of British doctors has demolished the official Hutton Report that ruled Dr. Kelly's death a suicide, and their demand for a proper coroner's inquest is soon to be ruled upon by a British court.

Symons' defense of Qaddafi was flagrant, even after the Libyan dictator turned his guns against his own people. On Feb. 11, 2011, Symons defended Qaddafi in a speech before the House of Lords:

"I was in Libya the weekend following President Ben Ali's departure. There were demonstrations even in Tripoli. However, President Gaddafi made a broadcast

saying that similar events were not to be anticipated in Libya because of the sound ideology which the people recognised and valued. The Libyan Government none the less deployed its huge wealth very quickly to subsidise food.”

LSE on Qaddafi's Dole

Symons' defense of Qaddafi was no isolated gaffe. The entire Blair apparatus has been caught in bed with the Qaddafi clan. The British Fabian Society's flagship London School of Economics was staffed with many Qaddafi backers, who were all paid off with lucrative postings and university donations from the Libyan dictator and his playboy son, Saif al-Islam.

Mark Allen, Blair's back-channel to Qaddafi, was not only a paid consultant to BP; he was on the advisory board of the LSE's Centre for the Study of International Affairs, and LSE Ideas, a special studies program bankrolled by Qaddafi. After retiring from the British spy service, Sir Mark also went to work for the Monitor Group, a private intelligence outfit that was hired by Saif Qaddafi to do "research" for his dissertation at LSE.

Lord Anthony Giddens was director of LSE in 2002, when Saif was accepted as a doctoral student. He traveled to Libya in 2006 to confer with Muammar Qaddafi, after which he arranged for the Libyan leader to lecture to LSE students via video conference. Giddens was Blair's intellectual guru, and the author of Blair's "Third Way" ideology.

Prof. David Held, a Blair confidant and LSE professor, was director of LSE's North Africa Research Programme, funded by the Qaddafi Foundation. He was one of Saif's teachers and mentors at LSE.

Held was placed on the board of the Qaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation on June 28, 2009—a month before the LSE accepted a £1.5 million donation from the Qaddafi family fund. Held was appointed to the board along with Rev. Dr. Chung Hwan Kwak, chairman of the Universal Peace Foundation, a front for Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church.

Held was forced to resign from the Qaddafi International Charity board in October 2009, as the result of a revolt by LSE faculty against the deepening ties to the Qaddafi regime. But as recently as Feb. 21, 2011, Held was defending Saif as a great believer in democracy and rule of law. In an interview with the *Guardian*, Held commented on the televised speech by Saif, in which he vowed to crush all opponents of the Qaddafi regime:

“Watching Saif give that speech—looking so exhausted, nervous and, frankly, terrible—was the stuff of Shakespeare and of Freud: a young man torn by a struggle between loyalty to his father and his family, and the beliefs he had come to hold for reform, democracy and the rule of law.”

LSE received millions of pounds sterling in direct grants from Qaddafi, including the £1.5 million “gift” from Saif's charity, a gift now widely viewed as a payoff for his doctorate. LSE also received £2.2 million from Qaddafi to train Libyan diplomats.

Prince Andrew and Victoria's Dirty Secret

By no later than 2008, Prince Andrew, the British Crown's international trade emissary, had gotten into the act, hosting a London business seminar, with Saif Qaddafi as the guest of honor. A 30-year-old Kazak billionaire, Goga Ashkenazi, had introduced Saif to Prince Andrew. Between September 2008 and March 2009, Andrew made at least three business trips to Libya, meeting each time with Muammar Qaddafi.

The final phase of the “deal in the desert” was accomplished on Aug. 2, 2009, when Saif Qaddafi flew to Scotland to escort Megrahi back to Libya. Saif spent the week before Aug. 2 on the Greek island of Corfu, at the estate of Nat Rothschild, awaiting the signing of the Prisoner Transfer Agreement. He was accompanied by Lord Peter Mandelson, Blair's right-hand man, and, at one time, the head of the Queen's Privy Council.

Along the way, a few glitches almost wrecked the British vetting of Qaddafi. At the very moment that Blair and Bush were hailing Qaddafi for “voluntarily” giving up his alleged WMD, two Libyan agents, including one American, were being indicted for a multimillion-dollar assassination plot, ordered by Qaddafi, against Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, now the King of Saudi Arabia. On Nov. 27, 2003, on the eve of the WMD announcement, four Saudis were arrested in Mecca for the assassination plot against Abdullah. They had been recruited by American Muslim Abdurahman Alamoudi and Libyan intelligence official Col. Mohamed Ismael, who paid the men \$2 million to kill the Crown Prince. The Saudi assassins were recruited in London. Alamoudi and Ismael were both indicted in the plot, and Alamoudi reached a plea agreement with American authorities, reducing his sentence to 23 years in jail. By the time the story hit the newspapers, in June 2004, the die had already been cast, and Qaddafi was practically British royalty.