

ANATOMY OF THE LOCKERBIE BOMBING: LIBYA'S ROLE AND REACTIONS TO AL-MEGRAHI'S RELEASE

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Abstract: Despite its long historical antecedents, terrorism is amongst the growing realities of the national history of contemporary sovereign states. With this emergence, destabilizing influence, and internationalization, terrorism has made the associated security challenge a major diplomatic headache for all key international actors and diplomats. This paper, which adopts a theoretical approach, assesses claims that Ghaddafi's Libya championed state-sponsored terrorism. It reviews the Lockerbie bombing and the conviction of Al Megrahi by the court in Netherland as well as his release from Scottish prison on compassionate grounds. It examines Libya's use of available diplomatic tools and channels not only to prevent Abdelbaset Ali Mohammed al-Megrahi from facing justice but also to attain Ghaddafi's political and economic interests. This article documents the political communication that followed his release and calls for increased diplomatic investigations of the Lockerbie terrorist attack. Finally, the paper beckons on Libya's new leaders and the leaderships of USA and Scotland to engage in a progressive multi-lateral strategic co-operation to unravel further facts on the Lockerbie bombing while promoting the current international "war" against terrorism.

Keywords: Al-Megrahi, Ghadafi, bombing, terrorism, prosecution.

INTRODUCTION

With a very long and colourful history that dates back at least to the Zealots about 2,000 years ago, terrorism is not a new feature of human social and political interactions. First associated with the Jacobins' reign of terror following the French Revolution, the term has evolved away from state violence since the mid 19th century and is now definitively associated with the acts of violence by non-state actors. In the 21st century usage, the term is a complex concept that is manipulated by individuals, groups and governments in order to attain multi-dimensional objectives. The rise and fall of Osama bin Ladin and his Al Qaeda network transformed and popu-

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larized the nature, dimensions and scope of terrorism in many parts of the world. The exportation of terror attacks as well as terror cells from Afghanistan and Pakistan to other countries, where the United States mission and other European allies were and are found, brought a new fillip to many Islamist and non-religious terror networks that have gone international in their quest to manipulate terror in order to achieve specific objectives. However, before the widespread radicalization of terrorism, terrorist groups sought support, funding, or alliance with governments of certain states. While some governments provided little or no direct financial sponsorship, they offered terrorists or terrorist groups political safe haven and the needed national and international immunity or logistical back-up to enhance the operational success of their activities while shielding them from the powerful retributive hammer that may befall them locally and internationally. This was the scenario that Libya faced in the political chess game of interested nations following the 1988 Lockerbie bombing.

The bombing of Pan Am flight 103 Airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland on December 21, 1988 generated intense reactions over a period spanning over two decades. The bombing of the air flight led to the deaths of 270 people. Among them were 243 passengers 16 crew members, and 11 people on the ground in Lockerbie that died following the inferno. Although the casualties included people from 21 countries, 179 persons amongst them were American citizens. Given the ensuing pressure on Washington and London not only to uncover the culprits but also to respond appropriately, a massive investigative drive ensued in which more than 15,000 people were interviewed and 180,000 separate pieces were examined in more than 40 countries over a period of about three years.

Reportedly, the investigation led to two Libyans (reputedly Libyan intelligence officers), Abdelbaset Ali Mohammed al-Megrahi and Al-Amin Kalifa Fhimah. The men were indicted by Scottish and United States courts on November 13, 1991 but attempts to arrest and prosecute them in the US or Scotland were initially frustrated by Ghaddafi who refused requests for extradition. The US and the UK prevailed on the UN Security Council, which met on March 31, 1992. A set of sanctions was imposed on Libya under Cap VII of the UN Charter. Consequently, the UN Security Council Resolution 748 banned arms sales to Libya with proposals to freeze Libyan bank accounts abroad and targeted boycott in oil, aviation and industrial relations.

As the sanctions began to impose a heavy financial burden on Libya, Ghadafi decided to cooperate following protracted negotiations. Furthermore, on April 5, 1999 after deep-rooted negotiations and diplomacy, Libya handed the two men over for trial under Scottish law but on the neutral ground of Camp Zeist, a former US Airbase in the Netherlands. Their trial began on May 3, 2000. Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah was acquitted of all charges, but Abdelbaset al-Megrahi was found guilty on January 31, 2001 and was sentenced to a minimum of 27 years imprisonment. Al-Megrahi was the Head of Security for Libyan Arab Airlines and the Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies, Tripoli, Libya (The Nation 2009: 48). Al-Megrahi conviction in 2001 followed the reputedly shaky evidence from a Maltese shopkeeper who identified him as having bought shirt-scrap which were later found wrapped around the bomb (The Guardian 2009a: 10).

Al-Megrahi maintained his innocence to the charges against him. He launched an appeal on January 23, 2002, which was rejected on March 14, 2002. On August 16, 2003, Libya “accepted responsibility” for the actions of her officials and paid \$ 2.7 billion compensation to the relatives of those who died in the terror attack on August 22, 2003. That led to the lifting of UN sanctions on Libya on September 12, 2003 (Jawad and Wooldridge 2012).

However, al-Megrahi served the first part of his sentence at the maximum security prison at Barlinnie, Glasgow but was transferred in 2005 to Greenock Prison. He lost appeals in 2002 and 2007; his case was referred back to Senior Scottish Judges. In the Last two weeks of September, 2009, the English Lord Advocate, Elisha Angiolini said that al-Megrahi had abandoned his earlier position and would be released on compassionate grounds, after withdrawing his position of innocence earlier in order to be granted bail. But al-Megrahi’s lawyer said it was the only way to pursue his innocence. Scottish prosecutors condemned his publication of innocence in a new web site after his release (Sunday Trust 2009: 59).

Al-Megrahi, who had turned 60 while in prison, was freed from Scottish jail on August 20, 2009 on compassionate grounds over his sickness with prostate cancer. Libya worked arduously using all available diplomatic tools at their disposal not only to prevent al-Megrahi from facing criminal in a Western court but also to attain the Gadafi’s political and economic interests. That led to diverse political communications, especially due to the release of al-Megrahi, who was a frontline

convict of that terrorist attack. It also provided a historical context of state sponsored terrorism.

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on qualitative research. Qualitative methodology is generally associated with interpretative epistemology and it tends to be used to refer to forms of data collection and analysis, which rely on understanding, with emphasis on meanings, interpretations and analysis. In the course of this work, the researchers collected a wide variety of primary and secondary source data –from newspapers, books, journals, television and radio stations and internet materials – over many years. Those materials seem to suggest strongly that Libya under Ghadafi’s watch was closely involved in the Lockerbie terrorist bombing. But was he?

Indeed, a combination of evidence from the historical data and materials collected, the acceptance of responsibility by the Libyan Government under Ghadafi and its agreement to pay compensation to the families of those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack, which seem to imbue credence to claims that Libya was responsible for the attack and that it was neither ordered by Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran nor carried-out by Syrian-based terrorist network. However, due to the historic diplomatic crisis between Iran and United States, Ayatollah’s position on the terrorist attack could be misinterpreted by media analysts as that of a protagonist of the attack.

LIBYA AND THE IDEA OF STATE-SPONSORED TERRORISM

Led by USA and Britian, Western countries have consistently presneted arguments, which they used to back up their position that Libya is a major state-sponsor of terrorism from Africa, which remains a political stereotype and international political “status” that is yet to be bestowed on any European state. The alleged “man behind the mask, was the now late leader of Libya President Ghadafi. Ghadafi forcefully took over power from King Idris I in the 1969 bloodless *coup d’état*. Soon after declaring the country a Republic, as against its former monarchical system, he expelled about 20,000 Italians and confiscated their properties in October, 1970. He did not

only demand compensation from Italy for colonizing them but also declared support for opposition groups in Italy. He threatened to strike all the Italian/NATO military installations around the Libyan territory. In August, 1980 two Libyan warships tried to force the oil-drilling rig, "Saipem II" that operated in Libya, to surrender operations (Pisano 1987: 133).

Thatcher (1986) once argued that unlike the case of Libya, Britain had no evidence against Syria with respect to sponsorship of terrorism of any type. The United Kingdom once alleged that, under Ghadafi, Libya was sending financial and logistic support to the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Defence analyst seem to agree that Libya shipped assault rifles, plastic explosives and surface-to-air missiles in the 1980s and 1990s to guerrillas, fighting to end British rule of Northern Ireland (Daily Trust 2009b: 19).

The evidence, as provided by the United States and the United Kingdom, appeared incontrovertible. For instance, the office of the Ambassador at-Large for Counter-terrorism in the US State Department insisted that Ghadafi had made terrorism one of the primary instruments of his foreign policy. This he promoted through the support of radical groups that use terrorist tactics. Tripoli operated numerous training sites for foreign dissident groups that provided equipment and training in the use of explosive devices, hijacking, and assassination, various commando and guerrilla techniques. It also provided terrorist training outside Libya and abused diplomatic privilege by storing arms and explosives at its diplomatic establishments (US Department of State 1988). The United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (1988: 325) equally alleged that Ghadafi sponsored the attempts to assassinate Libyan exiles in Greece, West Germany, Cyprus, Australia and Italy in 1985. They went further to reveal that he offered training, safe haven, finance and fire arms to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC). National and trans-national terrorist movements based in Latin American countries of Chile and Columbia were also said to have received massive support from him.

In 1986, it was alleged that Libya sponsored the bombing of La Belle, a Berlin night club. The incident caused the deaths of three people and left more than two hundred people injured. At the same time, Libya was accused of spending about \$400million on an assortment of weaponry and the training of terrorists in Nicaragua in order to unleash heavy terrorist mayhem in the United States (Chomsky 2000: 21).

Wardlaw (1995: 177) presented the same issue when he wrote that “the identification of Libya as a sponsor (of international terrorism) reached a crescendo in 1986 and culminated in the US bombing raid on Tripoli and Benghazi in retaliation for Libyan complicity in a bomb attack on a discotheque in Berlin in which an American Servicemen was killed and numerous others were wounded”. The US retaliation led to the death of 37 people in Libya including Ghadafi’s daughter, with Ghadafi himself sustaining injury (Albert 2005: 392). Following the retaliatory strikes on Libya, George Shultz, the US Secretary of State stated during an appearance on the NBC Today show on May 13, 1986 that what distinguished Libya in American eyes from other sponsors of terrorism was its foolhardy bragging about her support of terrorism. The focus by top American officials on Libya was aimed not only to demonize Ghadafi but also to justify the decision to carry out military aggression against the country. Indeed, a CBS News/Washington Post poll, *Responses to Terrorism* released on February 8, 1986 showed that Libya was the country most frequently named by Americans for sponsoring terrorist activities. Equally, the participants in the poll nominated Libya as the strongest supporter of individual terrorist attacks.

However, if American officials indeed acted on the basis of Libyan bragging, their action could be said to belie the realities of power politics within the international system where states display power instrumentally to deter or intimidate other states from acting against their interests. As a demographically tiny country, Libya has extremely limited capacity to project power beyond the nuisance tactics that Ghadafi appears to have favoured through his apparent dalliances with leftist elements. As such, mere claims and posturing would not have provided a sufficient reason for going after the Libyan leadership. This is especially so if one considers the baiting actions against US interests by governments of other states such as Iran, Iraq, Cuba, Syria North Korea, and South Yemen. Basically, power politics is used by individual states (including the US and UK) to safeguard their interests by projecting capacity to harm other states politically, economically or even militarily. There is evidence that Ghadafi’s notoriety was about as real as it was bluff. While he provided support for anti-Western activities, it was often neither as generous nor intensive as he often boasted or suggested. But the blustery and notoriety gave him influence well beyond the power of the armies under his command. While tangible evidence supports

the case against Libya for sponsoring international terrorism under Ghadafi, the case that it was responsible for the Lockerbie bombing attack seems contrived, flimsy and, not surprisingly, controversial. Indeed, some analysts such as Wardlaw (1995: 177) argue that there is little doubt that Ghadafi's regime sponsored many acts of international terrorism. Armed with vast revenues from oil, Ghadafi financed a wide range of terrorist organizations in many parts of the world. Libyan Peoples' Bureau in a number of countries were identified as conduits for channelling arms and money to terrorists. Many terrorists were trained at camps in Libya. Not surprisingly, Libya was thought to be a potent player in international terrorist network and that its role or contributions to global terrorism needed to be controlled by working to modify its behaviour.

THE CASE AGAINST AL-MEGRAHI'S AND LIBYAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOCKERBIE

“The idea that anybody in authority still believes the Libyans were guilty has become harder to swallow” (The Independent)¹. Regarding the case against Libya's culpability in the Lockerbie bombing, there have always been doubters. And despite the Lockerbie trial, the conviction of al-Megrahi, and the forced payment of \$ 2.7 billion compensation by Libya, a plethora of expert assessments have continued to reject the outcome. Indeed, the initial suspect, Iran, has remained at the heart of consistent speculations about its motives and likely responsibility for doing so as a direct response for the mistaken attack six months earlier on an Iranian commercial airliner (by USS Vincennes) that killed 290 people travelling to Mecca. In fact, many interested observers who followed the Lockerbie trial (including family members of some of the victims) were never convinced that al-Megrahi was guilty. For instance, as “The Independent” noted in an 11 March 2014 editorial, “The official version of the chemical make-up of the timer fragment has been entirely discredited, as have claims that the bomb could have been put on board in Malta”. Beyond the non-corroboration of official evidence, there is also the matter of Abolghassem Mesbahi – a former senior Vevak (Iranian intelligence) operative – who maintained that it was Ayatollah Khomeini who ordered the bombing with instructions to replicate “exactly what happened to the Iranian airbus” (The In-

dependent, March 11, 2014). Mesbahi's statement has been confirmed by many others including Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, a former President of Iran and Ali Akbar Mohtashami-Pur, the then Minister of Interior (de Braeckeleeer, May 28, 2008).

Why would Libya and al-Megrahi be targeted by the US and the UK for a crime they did not commit? That puzzle may be explained by the fact that the bombing probably provided the Western powers with a welcome opportunity to further punish Ghadafi and Libya for years of truculent attitude and funding violent activities against Western interests around the world. Beyond that, Libya was a far softer target than Iran; it also lacked Iran's mass-based fervent commitment to Western opposition under Ayatollah Khomeini. Dubbed "mad dog" by then US President Ronald Reagan and demonised by the Western press as erratic and dangerous (as compared to the Ayatollah, the nationalistic but reputedly principled religious leader of Iran), Ghadafi was a less problematic figure to target and punish. Western mass media had created an enemy image of Ghadafi, which portrayed him essentially as wild, out of control, and predisposed to use his immense cache of petrodollars to target Western interests around the world.

AL-MEGRAHI'S RELEASE AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Clearly, the relationship between the media and political communication cannot be neglected in domestic and international affairs. Mass media have remained fundamental in the promotion of politics and the presentation of diverse political ideas. As such, the shape not only the nature and extent of communication but also the behaviours of individuals who control the corridors of power in many societies. As underscored by McQuail (2005: 523): "in democracies, the media have a complex relationship with sources of power and political system. On the one hand, they usually find their *raison d'être* in their service to their audience, to whom they provide information and views". The same can be said, more or less, in non-democratic political systems. Mass media in Tripoli was used not only to project the innocence of al-Megrahi but also to project him as a national hero, who was being punished by the West due to their hegemonic influence on the world stage. On the other hand, the Western media – from which much of the world gets their international news feeds – focussed on the

psycho-social impact of terror and the massive pain and loss, which the Lockerbie terrorist attack foisted on the individual families that lost their loved ones. Also, there were significant numbers of reports on the negative impact of that bombing on the properties and economies of the Western states that were affected. Given that context, it was not surprising that the release of al-Megrahi – reputedly on compassionate grounds due to illness – generated massive reactions and political explanations. Given the massive media demonization of his person (and Ghadafi’s Libya) before and during the Lockerbie trial, it was unsurprising that al-Megrahi’s release sparked huge outcry and angst among many family members of the victims. For Dr. Jim Swire, whose daughter (Flora) died in the bombing and the founder of Justice for Megrahi Campaign, the release was in recognition of injustice already done to al-Megrahi. The ensuing political communications by the leaders of the United States, United Kingdom/Scotland and Libya were manifested in different forms as they continually sought to shape the perceptions of their different publics about the release of al-Megrahi.

The decision by Scotland to release al-Megrahi was, apparently, despite the objections of the United States whose citizens made up the vast majority of human losses. Following al-Megrahi’s release, President Barack Obama stated firmly that Washington “objected” to it and that “we thought it was a mistake” (McConville, September 2009). “The Guardian” (2009a) quoted him as saying that Obama viewed it as “highly objectionable”. The BBC News of September 10, 2009 quoted Obama as voicing “disappointment directly to UK Prime Minister, Gordon Brown over the release of the Lockerbie bomber”. Similarly, Hilary Clinton, then US Secretary of State, stated that the Scotland had spurned “repeated” demands from Washington to keep him in prison and that the US “continues to categorically disagree with the decision” (Carrell, August 2010). Robert Mueller, the Director of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, criticized the Scottish authorities that their decision not only “made a mockery of the law and gave comfort to terrorists but also that their “action makes a mockery of the grief of the families who lost their own on December 21, 1988 (The Guardian 2009a). Responding, Alex Salmond, the Head of Scotland Government, told the BBC Radio, that Mueller was wrong in assuming that all those affected by the bombing were opposed to al-Megrahi’s release: “I understand the huge and strongly held views of the American families, but

that it is not all the families who were affected by Lockerbie”. Salmond further maintained: “As you’re well aware, a number of the families, particularly in the United Kingdom take a different view and think that we made the right decision” (The Guardian 2009a).

Within the United Kingdom itself, al-Megrahi’s release had been controversial within the leadership circles. Arguing that the al-Megrahi’s release was “inappropriate”, David Cameron (the leader of the then opposition Conservative Party) demanded that Gordon Brown (then Prime-Minister) should also state whether he agreed with it (Daily Sun 2009: 12). On his side, Brown stated in an interview with “The Financial Times” that when he met the Libyan leader, Ghaddafi, at the G8 Summit, a month before Megrahi’s release, he had stressed it to him that the fate of al-Megrahi was a matter solely for the Scottish authorities (Daily Sun 2009: 12). Speaking to the press five days after al-Megrahi’s release, Brown stated: “I was both angry and repulsed by the reception a convicted bomber, guilty of a huge terrorist crime, received on his return to Libya” (Bloomberg News 2009). Elsewhere, Brown was quoted as saying: “our determination to work with other countries to fight and to root-out terrorism is total” (The Guardian 2009b: 10). But Brown would not say if he thought it was right or wrong to release al-Megrahi; rather, he maintained that it was a judicial issue.

So, why would the British act on such a sensitive issue in a manner that is against the expressed interest of a very close ally – the United States? Peter Fraser, Scotland’s former senior law officer who issued the arrest warrant for the Lockerbie bomber, was horrified: “the idea of us alienating Washington in this way I find breathtaking” (Bloomberg News 2009). Clearly, al-Megrahi’s release, despite Washington’s repeated objections, suggests a fundamental disagreement between both allies over the merits of the case against him. In 2007, Scotland had established a Judicial Review Committee to re-study the case. However, al-Megrahi dropped his appeal so that he could be released on compassionate ground because he was terminally ill with prostate cancer. Clearly, the precise reasons for his release are known only to the British authorities. However, beyond the possibility of fundamental differences over al-Megrahi’s guilt, the state parties had vastly different interests in the case, and attempted in different ways to protect those interests by influencing the outcome. For instance, Libya used an assortment of diplomatic strategies in an

effort to influence the trial process. “The Nation” (2009: 48) documented that the British authorities began to look for ways of restoring diplomatic relations with Libya even before Al-Megrahi settled-down properly in prison. The British were on the receiving end. In 1974, for instance, Ghadafi nationalized its oilfields, and BP suffered hugely. It was no surprise therefore that Tony Blair, the former Prime Minister, travelled to Tripoli in March, 2004 to try to mend fences with Ghadafi. The following month, a United Kingdom Trade Mission arrived in Libya to talk business. A few years later, in 2007, Blair and Ghadafi signed a Prisoner Transfer Deal (which did not cover al-Megrahi) and immediately BP won a 545 million pound sterling oil exploration deal in Libya. The UK and Libya hammered-out another deal in 2008 (The Nation 2009: 48). In essence, the relationship with Libya was important enough that the British government was keen to protect it where possible. However, both the British and Scottish Governments have consistently denied striking a deal with Libya to free al-Megrahi. Keen to dispel public criticisms due to a series of negative newspaper stories, Jack Straw, the UK Justice Secretary, described reports that al-Megrahi was released because of an oil deal as “wholly untrue” (Daily Sun 2009: 12). However, Libyan officials claimed earlier that al-Megrahi’s fate was part of trade talks in recent years. In fact, Ghadafi thanked the then British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, and Queen Elizabeth II for “encouraging the Scottish Government” to take their decision (BBC News, August 22, 2009). Although Ghadafi’s assertion was denied by both Downing Street and Buckingham Palace, there are incontrovertible pieces of written evidence that the British government had engaged in a series of trade talks – including those involving British Petroleum – where al-Megrahi’s release was tabled and accepted. Specifically, Straw had consented in 2007 in a series of letters to include al-Megrahi in a prisoner transfer agreement – ostensibly, due to “overwhelming national interests.” (BBC News, August 30, 2009).

Another incident that illustrates the nature of political communication that followed al-Megrahi’s release was effectively authored by Michael Wildes, the Mayor of Englewood, New Jersey. Sequel to the September 23 2009 UN meeting, the Libyan leader, Muammar Ghadafi was expected to stay in the 4.5 acres (1.8 hectare) property owned by the Libyan Embassy in Englewood, USA. But the Englewood Mayor, Michael Wildes, objected that “it would be offensive for Ghadafi

even to be allowed a U.S visa after Lockerbie bomber, Al-Megrahi was given a “hero’s welcome” on his return to Libya (The Guardian 2009b: 10). Wildes insisted that “People are infuriated that a financier of terrorism, who in recent days gave a hero’s welcome to a convicted terrorist, would be welcomed to our shores, let alone reside in our city,”” (The Guardian 2009b: 10). His position was strongly supported by New Jersey’s top political leadership including congressional delegates, senators and the state Governor, Jon Corzine, who stated flatly that “Gaddafi is not welcome in New Jersey”. As Congressman John Adler stated, “let him land at the UN by helicopter, do his business and get out of the country” (BBC News, August 27, 2009). Ghadafi abandoned the idea of pitching his tent in Englewood after the US government rejected it on the ground that the land was meant for such purpose. The US government also rejected Ghadafi’s request to use Central Park in New York. As in Englewood, New Jersey, Ghadafi’s residence while in the US had become a political drama. His forty Virgin Guards were stopped from constructing his customary Bedouin tent at the Bedouin Estate owned by Donald Trump. .

Furthermore, Ghadafi’s apparent open valorisation of al-Megrahi following his release from jail for a horrible crime (that he denied) sparked sensibilities beyond the directly affected countries. For instance, President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia and President Nicolas Sarkozy backtracked on commitments by informing Interfax News Agency and Agence France Presse (AFP) (respectively) that they would not go to Libya for the 40th anniversary of Ghadafi’s Government. “The Guardian” underscored the point: “in what could be a fall-out of the release of Lockerbie bomber by Scotland, European Governments denied claims by Libyan organizers that they were to send top leaders to celebrations in Tripoli for the 40th anniversary of Ghadafi’s regime. France denied claims that President Nicholas Sarkozy would attend and Russia said President Dimitri Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin would also stay away” (The Guardian 2009d: 10 and The Guardian 2009c: 10).

Clearly, media houses play huge roles not only in driving and shaping political communications but also in influencing public understanding and perceptions about specific political events. The trial, conviction, and untimely release of al-Megrahi from jail attracted broad-based attention not only because of the gravity of the crime he was accused of committing

but also because of the non-transparency of the political manoeuvres and vested economic interests that were linked to the outcome of his trial and conviction. The net effect was that the legal processes that were intended to ensure the maintenance and respect of law and order may have been abused in pursuit of ulterior motives rather than justice. In the end, we are forced to ask if and where justice was ever served.

CONCLUSION

Al-Megrahi, the only man convicted for the Lockerbie terrorist bombing died on May 20, 2012 in Tripoli due to cancer. Although he maintained his innocence of the crime until the end, his health did not allow him the opportunity to prove it. Even in death, al-Megrahi has continued to attract a lot of emotional responses. As the BBC reported, David Cameron, the UK Prime Minister, reacted to his death by stating: “Megrahi should never have been freed” (Jawad and Wooldridge 2012).

Ghadafi, who was vilified for reputedly master-minding or funding the terrorist act, met his death in 2011 – before his culpability for the Lockerbie bombing could be finally ascertained. His removal from office, which was greatly facilitated by the Western governments he opposed so fervently for decades, may have been one of the most unappreciated fallouts from the Lockerbie incident. Certainly, that terrorist attack did much to further damage within Western quarters his previously soiled reputation. One unintended consequence and, as such, another fallout from the Lockerbie bombing was that his toppling from power served to unleash divisive forces that have left Libya in tatters as they tore into the socio-political and economic order he left behind. With the new government in Libya manifestly unable to establish security in the aftermath of 2011 conflict, the strategic international diplomacy on Lockerbie terror bombing has remained a relatively unimportant concern. This is despite the insistence by the National Transitional Council that al-Megrahi’s death would not end the investigation into Lockerbie bombing (Jawad and Wooldridge 2012). As the Libyan Ambassador to Britain underscored: “When we have enough time, enough security and stability, all these files will be opened and everyone will know what happened” (Campbell 2013).

NOTES

¹ <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/evidence-at-last-that-lockerbie-was-not-a-libyan-bomb-9184509.html>

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