



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on August 28, 2009

Anger Over Terrorist's Release Confuses Gadhafi

Saif al-Islam Gadhafi, son of the longtime Libyan dictator, Moammar Gadhafi, is confused as to why families on both sides of the Atlantic are outraged over the recent decision of Scottish Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill to release the only man convicted in the terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103.



Flight 103 was en route from London to New York when a bomb exploded, destroying the plane while flying over Lockerbie, Scotland, on December 21, 1988 and killing all 243 passengers and 16 crew members. Eleven people on the ground in Lockerbie were also killed as large sections of the plane fell to the ground.

Released after serving only eight years of a life sentence, Abdel Baset Ali Megrahi was greeted by a throng of well-wishers chanting and applauding as he stepped off the plane in Tripoli. Gadhafi, however, pointed out to *USA Today* that despite the warm welcome, it could have been even more celebratory: "There was no official celebration, no guards of honor, no fireworks, no parade. We could have arranged a much better reception." Gadhafi's response betrays no concern for the feelings of the friends and relatives of nearly 300 people whose lives were inalterably changed for the worse by the actions of a man he calls "innocent."

Megrahi, a former Libyan intelligence officer and head of security for Libyan Arab Airlines, was convicted on January 31, 2001, by a panel of Scottish Judges sitting in a special court at Camp Zeist in the Netherlands, of 270 counts of murder for his part in the terrorist attack. He was sentenced to life imprisonment. Ostensibly as an act of compassion and mercy, Scottish officials released Megrahi to return home to Libya, as he is suffering from terminal prostate cancer and is expected to live only three months. Ironically, this is a man who demonstrated neither compassion nor mercy for the hundreds of truly innocent people he condemned to a life sentence of mourning as the result of his criminal actions in the sky above Lockerbie in 1988.

Curiously, the younger Gadhafi, an official from a country whose leaders are not always manageable by the powers that be, revealed more of the details of the deal than were previously known. According to Gadhafi, despite their public outcry, the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom have known for weeks of the impending deal and asked only that Libya promise to keep the reception low key. As Gadhafi reckons, the freeing of Megrahi opens the way for trade between Tripoli, Edinburgh, and London and "the next step is fruitful and productive business ... Libya is a promising rich market, so let's talk about the future." The notion that such a tragedy can be disregarded a scant eight years after the end of the trial is crass and ignorant. However, for all the Obama and Brown administrations' public remonstrances, there has been no official denial of what essentially amounts to a quid pro quo with a nation whose name was once synonymous with the sponsorship of terrorism.



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The man whose signature authorized the release of the Lockerbie bomber, Kenny MacAskill, is now considered a "great man" by Gadhafi. Such an appellation is hardly praise when spoken from the mouth of one who seconds before was telling Western reporters: "Lockerbie is history." Thanks to MacAskill's leniency, Gadhafi assures reporters that the hearts of the Libyan people have softened and they will now be able to see that the U.K. and the United States are not crusaders, determined to eradicate Islam from the face of the Earth. Rather, they are to be respected and admired as a merciful, humane, and "civilized people."

Again, to be recognized as civilized by a nation with the blood of innocent civilians on its hands is farcical. No amount of trade deals and no number of open markets should ever be weighed in the balance and be found equal to the lives of guiltless hundreds who lives were cruelly and with premeditation ended by a man with strong ties to the Libyan government and who is now, thanks to the actions of the Scottish government, freely walking the streets of his hometown.

AP Images: Photo of Saif al-Islam Gadhafi



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