

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 12, 2010

The Honorable John Kerry
Chairman
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Lugar
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kerry and Ranking Member Lugar:

I am writing to reiterate my request that the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hold a hearing and conduct an investigation regarding the release of Abdel Basset al-Megrahi, the former Libyan intelligence agent convicted of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, from a Scottish prison last year. The prospect that oil contracts between BP and the government of Libya may have affected the release, as well as new questions about the veracity of medical reports detailing Mr. Megrahi's health at the time, are disturbing developments that demand the attention of Congress.

The bombing of Pan Am 103 was a brutal act of terrorism that resulted in the deaths of 270 people, including 189 Americans. In 2001, Mr. Megrahi was convicted of this crime and sentenced to serve a minimum 20 year sentence in prison. Yet distressingly, he was released from a Scottish prison on August 20, 2009, ostensibly based on "compassionate" grounds due to his failing health.

It is shocking and unconscionable that an oil contract between BP and Libya may have played a role in Mr. Megrahi's release. Reports have surfaced indicating that a 2007 oil agreement may have influenced the U.K. and Scottish governments' positions concerning Mr. Megrahi's release in 2009. BP admits that in 2007 it "told the U.K. government...it was concerned that a delay in concluding a prisoner transfer agreement with the Libyan government might hurt" the oil deal. Furthermore, letters have been released showing that Jack Straw, the U.K.'s Secretary of State for Justice, initially intended to exclude Mr. Megrahi from the prisoner transfer agreement but later switched his position, citing the "wider negotiations with the Libyans" and "overwhelming interests for the United Kingdom." BP has just announced it will begin deepwater drilling next month off Libya's coast, and it is estimated BP could earn as much as \$20 billion from the deal. It is shocking to even contemplate that this company is profiting from the release of a terrorist with the blood of 189 Americans on his hands.

I am also troubled by recent reports that the doctor who certified that Mr. Megrahi had only three months to live – the basis for his "compassionate" release – is now saying that he was paid by the Libyan government and that the three month diagnosis came at Libya's request. Meanwhile, Mr. Megrahi continues to live freely in Libya and the same doctor has now stated that Mr. Megrahi may live another 10 years.

The families of the victims of Pan Am flight 103 deserve to know whether justice took a back seat to commercial interests in this case. I respectfully urge the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to hold a hearing and thoroughly investigate the role that oil contracts played in the decision to release Mr. Megrahi, and the true nature of Mr. Megrahi's health now and at the time of his release.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Lautenberg