

THE MARXIST-LENINIST RESEARCH BUREAU Report No. 6

THE LOCKERBIE DISASTER

ON 21 DECEMBER 1988, A BOEING 747 PASSENGER AIRCRAFT BELONGING TO THE US AIRLINE 'PAN AMERICAN WORLD AIRWAYS' CRASHED IN FLAMES ON THE TOWN OF LOCKERBIE. NEAR DUMFRIES IN SCOTLAND. THE PLANE WAS ON PAN AM FLIGHT 103 EN ROUTE FROM FRANKFURT TO NEW YORK, VIA LONDON. ALL 259 PASSENGERS AND CREW WERE KILLED, AS WELL AS 11 PEOPLE IN THE TOWN.

On 28 December 1988,

" . . . British forensic investigators . . . announced that the crash had been due . . . to an explosion in the forward hold, caused by a plastic explosive such as the Czech-manufactured Semtex" ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 35; p. 36,409).

From the outset it was known that

" . . . some senior US intelligence personnel had been on board" ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 35; p. 36,409).

and it soon became known that

" . . . odd things were happening at Lockerbie. Although the collection of forensic evidence was of paramount importance, it was hampered for two days while CIA agents, some dressed in Pan Am overalls, combed the countryside for the luggage of the dead American intelligence agents and a suitcase full of heroin. . . . After a 48-hour search, assisted by units of the British army, whatever they had found was flown out by helicopter. . . .

Odder still, and more serious, it was later reported that 59 bodies which had been found, tagged and certified dead by a police surgeon on 22 December, were left lying where they had fallen in open country around Lockerbie until 24 December, when they were retagged, removed and recertified dead. But then, according to the police count, there were only 58 bodies. . . . Also puzzling, the name-tag observed by a local farmer on a suitcase full of heroin before that, too, went missing, did not correspond with any of the names on the passenger list.

Another witness . . . saw Americans throwing tarpaulins over bodies and suitcases so that they could examine them in private, and warning searchers to keep clear of certain sectors", (Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: 'Trail of the Octopus: From Beirut to Lockerbie: Inside the DIA'; London; 1993; p. 45, 46).

"David Fieldhouse, an experienced police surgeon, whose contract was abruptly terminated last year, explains how labels he had placed on all but two of the bodies were removed. One body was . . . simply 'spirited away'".

(Richard Norton-Taylor: 'Bomb was carried by a CIA Drug Mule', in: 'Guardian', 16 November 1994; p. 12).

The Alleged Syrian Connection

According to the 'Sunday Times', in October 1988, two months before the Lockerbie disaster, the anti-terrorist unit of the West German police was carrying out a surveillance operation which they called 'Operation Autumn

Leaves' in the city of Neuss on visitors to the flat of an Arab greengrocer -- his brother-in-law Hafez Kassem Dalkamoni (a 43-year-old Jordanian) and a recently arrived friend, Marwan Abdel Khreesat (also aged 43).

"Their (targets were terrorists belonging to the 'People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine -- General Command'. . . .

Dalkamoni was a Syrian terrorist identified by the Israelis as leader of the PFLP -- GC's European network. . . .

Khreesat . . . had arrived on October 13 with his wife and two bronze Samsonite suitcases. Inside one, Dalkamoni admitted later, was a black Toshiba 'Bombeat' radio cassette recorder, Remains of a similar model were later found among the debris at Lockerbie. . . .

He (Khreesat -- Ed.) owned a television repair shop in Amman. . . .

He was one of the world's most skilled aviation bombers. . . . He was wanted in connection with the bombing of an Israeli airliner in 1972". ('The Lockerbie Files', in: 'Sunday Times', 30 September 1990, Section 1; p. 13).

According to 'Keesing's Record of World Events', the 'People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine -- General Command' is

". . . a pro-Syrian splinter from the original PFLP (which had itself split from the PLP in December 1967); . . . in 1986 its leader, Ahmed Jibril, had issued a public warning that his organisation 'would not respect civilians who boarded Israeli or American airliners. Police evidence from West Germany suggested that the group was active in Frankfurt, and that it used Semtex explosives. . . .

Radio Free Lebanon, the organ of the pro-Israel Phalangist Party in Lebanon, declared on Dec. 29 (1989 -- Ed.) that there were signs of Syria's involvement in the attack".

('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 35; p. 36,410).

According to Goddard & Lester,

". . . Jibril had chosen Frankfurt as the target airport for several reasons. It was an important hub for American carriers . . .; the PFLP -- GC's recently reinforced European section was already based in Germany, under cover of that country's sizeable Middle Eastern community; and Jibril knew he could count on the co-operation of local Islamic fundamentalists in Frankfurt, not least among the Turkish baggage-handlers employed at the airport".

(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: op. cit.; p. 14).

and Jibril

". . . derived a large part of the PFLP -- GC's funding from the profits of Syrian drug trafficking".

(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: ibid.; p. 17).

According to the 'Sunday Times', on 25 October 1988 Dalkamoni and Khreesat were arrested. In the boot of their green Taunus car, police

". . . found a black Toshiba radio cassette recorder armed with about 300 grammes of Semtex-H high explosive and a barometric trigger designed to close an electrical circuit at altitude".

('The Lockerbie Files'; ibid.; p. 13).

Simultaneously, the police raided addresses in five other cities,

" . . . seizing 14 more suspects and a lethal arsenal that included an anti-tank gun, sub-machine guns, mortars, rifles, hand grenades, TNT and five kilos of plastic explosives".  
( 'The Lockerbie Files'; ibid.; p, 13).

Altogether 17 persons were arrested.

Dalkamoni and one other suspect -- Abdel Chandafar, a Jordanian -- were kept under arrest, and were later

" . . . charged for bomb attacks aimed at American military trains".  
( 'The Lockerbie Files'; ibid.; p. 13).

After being held for two weeks, all the other arrested persons, including Marwan Khreesat, were released.

"Marwan Khreesat, master bomb-maker, walked out of the courthouse and vanished without trace".  
( 'The Lockerbie Files'; ibid.; p. 13).

"At present there is no explanation for his release, but detectives . . . have described the handling of the inquiry as 'the biggest police scandal in the history of the Federal Republic",  
(David Leppard: 'Lockerbie: The Tangled Trail';, in: 'Sunday Times', 5 November 1989; p. A15).

According to the film 'The Maltese Double Cross', directed by Allan Francovich,

" . . . Khreesat -- now believed to be living in Jordan -- was freed after pressure from the US embassy in Bonn".  
(Richard Norton-Taylor: op. cit.; p. 12).

"Khreesat, it turned out, was a double-agent, who was pretending to be working for the PFLP -- GC while co-operating with an intelligence service friendly to the West. His role was known to the West German secret service. From transcripts seen by 'Panorama', it is apparent that he was released in exchange for his information. He apparently told his . . . debriefers that he had made five devices. . . . There is a strong probability that the fifth device was the one that destroyed Pan Am 103".  
(Gavin Hewitt: 'Up in the Air', in: 'Listener', Volume 122, No. 3,144 (14 December 1989); p. 11).

According to the 'Guardian', another suspect who was released was the Syrian arms dealer Nibzer al-Kassar:

"Kassar is very well known to the Americans. His name first came to light during the Irangate hearings in Washington which investigated the arms-for-hostages deal organised by Colonel Oliver North, then a National Security Council official. The hearings revealed that Kassar was paid \$1.5 million for selling arms to the contra rebels in Nicaragua. . . .

Kassar is said to be related by marriage to Rifaat al-Assad, the brother of the Syrian president. . . .

According to Lester Coleman, a former US defence intelligence official who served in the Drug Enforcement Agency, Washington considered him so

useful that he was allowed to ship drugs to the US.

But Kassar was also said to be close to . . . Ahmed Jibril".  
(Kathy Evans: 'The Syrian Connection', in: 'Guardian', 16 November 1994;  
p. 122).

On 12 April 1989, it was claimed by

" . . . the US television network CBS . . . that the source of the explosive device had been a 'relative' of Hafez Dalkamoni, one of 14 members of the 'People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command' (PFLP — GC) who had been arrested and imprisoned in West Germany in October 1988 after the discovery of a device similar to that used in the Lockerbie bombing".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 35; p. 36,606).

According to the 'Observer', the German police passed their findings to the United States authorities and, as a result, on 18 November 1988, 34 days before the Lockerbie disaster, the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

" . . . warned Pan Am and other US airlines about the presence of PFLP-GC members and the existence and characteristics of the bomb to look out for".  
(John Merritt: 'Lockerbie': Is there a Cover Up?', in: 'Observer', 19 March 1989; p. 15).

However, according to the 'Times', this

" . . . warning that a bomb would be placed on an aircraft flying from Frankfurt was not passed by the Department of Transport to Heathrow".  
(Harvey Elliott, Philip Webster & Michael Evans: 'Doubts grow over 747 Bomb', in: 'Times', 24 December 1988; p. 1).

#### The Alleged Iranian Connection

ACCORDING TO GODDARD & COLEMAN, THE REAL AUTHOR OF THE LOCKERBIE DISASTER WAS THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT

On 3 July 1988, in the Persian Gulf,

" . . . while sailing in Iranian territorial waters, the US Aegis-class cruiser 'Vincennes' somehow mistook a commercial Iranian Airbus that had just taken off from Bandar Abbas airport for an Iranian F-14 fighter closing in to attack and shot it down, killing all 290 passengers on board, most of them pilgrims on their way to Mecca".  
(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: *ibid.*; p. 13).

The Iranian Minister of the Interior, Ali Akbar Mohtashemi,

" . . . was placed in charge of Iran's revenge. At a meeting in Tehran on 9 July 1988, he awarded the contract to Ahmed Jibril, a former Syrian army officer and head of the 'People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine— General Command' (PFLP — GC), based in Damascus".  
(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: *ibid.*; p. 13)

In October 1988, Israeli intelligence agents are said to have

" . . . observed Jibril and al-Kassar dining alone at a Lebanese

restaurant. . . .

al-Kassar eventually promised to use his connections to get a bomb aboard an as yet unspecified American passenger flight from Frankfurt". (Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: *ibid.*; p. 17).

Thus, according to Gavin Hewitt in the 'Listener',

" . . . the bombing . . . was an act of revenge for the shooting down of an Iranian airbus in July last year (1988 — Ed.) by the American warship, the 'Vincennes'. Iranian money and expertise are said to have been involved". (Gavin Hewitt: *op. cit.*; p. 10).

Goddard & Coleman maintain that the operation was financed by Iran:

"US government sources let it be known that the CIA had traced wire transfers of money to Jibril's secret bank accounts in Switzerland and Spain". (Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: *op. cit.*; *ibid.*; p. 14).

"Soon after Lockerbie, . . . intercepts . . . showed money — \$12 million — being transferred as payment for the successful destruction of Pan Am's Flight 103. . . . The country congratulating the terrorists on a job well done was . . . Iran. And the money was being paid to a terrorist group headquartered in Syria and led by the Palestinian, Ahmed Jibril. . . .

No one has denied the authenticity of the intercepts, or the interpretation of them. It was the Americans who first pointed them out". (Alasair Palmer: 'Lies, Libya and Lockerbie', in: 'Spectator', Volume 268, No. 8,542 (28 March 1992); p. 12, 13).

In September 1989, a report commissioned by Pan Am

" . . . from an Israeli intelligence expert known as 'Avner'(Juval Aviv — Ed.) . . . claimed that a CIA group in Frankfurt had made a deal with a Syrian drug dealer with terrorist connections, involving the release of US hostages in return for a safe drug-trafficking route. . . . Bombers took advantage of the CIA protection. The report alleged that warnings of a terrorist bombing went unheeded because they would have exposed the 'drugs-for-hostages' deal". ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 36; p. 37,898).

On 27 September 1989,

" . . . Pan Am lawyers issued subpoenas . . . calling on the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and five other US government departments to disclose results of Western . . . , surveillance of the Pan Am baggage-handling area at Frankfurt airport". ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 35; p. 37,898).

In November 1989, the 'Avner' report was leaked to Congressman James Traficant, a member of the House Aviation Committee. It

" . . . claimed that the bomb was put on board Pan Am 103 in Frankfurt with the unwitting connivance of CIA agents who were running a secret drugs-for-hostages operation.

The report said that the terrorists used the CIA-protected drugs

channel to smuggle the bomb aboard. Furthermore, Pan Am, which is facing claims of \$300 million from relatives of the passengers, alleged the CIA ignored several warnings. . . .

The report . . . does contain remarkable detail, including names, dates, times of meetings, telephone and bank account numbers. It says the whole affair began early last year (1988 -- Ed.), when the French government obtained the release of its hostages through dealings with shady Iranian intermediaries. The CIA decided to emulate the French.

A CIA unit in Frankfurt, identified as 'CIA One', approached Monzer Al Kassar, an international arms dealer, and offered him a protected drug-smuggling route into the United States in exchange for helping release the American hostages in Lebanon. Al Kassar reportedly agreed.

Jibril, of the PFLP-GC, heard of Al Kassar's route and approached him in Paris last autumn (1988 -- Ed.). Jibril was interested in getting access to the baggage-handling area at Frankfurt airport, where Al Kassar bribed Turkish handlers to smuggle drugs on to Pan Am flights with CIA approval.

The report claims Jibril met one of Al Kassar's couriers in Bonn a week before the bombing and hired him for a drugs run. . . .

The report says the CIA ignored three warnings that flight 103 was going to be attacked. The bomb, hidden in a US-made Samsonite suitcase, was allegedly driven to the airport a day or two before December 21 in a black Mercedes. It was picked up by a Turkish baggage-handler who thought the suitcase contained drugs.

On the evening of December 21, the report claims, the West German police videotaped the Turkish baggage-handler substituting the Samsonite case for a similar one, which was put on flight 103. The CIA is said to have a copy of this videotape. . . .

The Pan Am report claims that there was a second CIA group which had been in Lebanon trying to free the hostages. By coincidence, this group of five men, who are named, were killed while returning to America on flight 103".

(David Leppard: op. cit.; p. A15)

On 30 October 1990, NBC News reported:

"NBC News has learned that Pan Am flights from Frankfurt, including 103, had been used a number of times by the DEA as part of its undercover operation to fly informants and suitcases of heroin into Detroit as part of a sting operation. . . .

The undercover operation . . . was set up three years ago by the DEA in Cyprus to infiltrate Lebanese heroin groups in the Middle East and their connections in Detroit. According to law-enforcement and intelligence sources, the Pan Am baggage area in Frankfurt was a key to the operation. Informants would put suitcases on the Pan Am flights, apparently without the usual security checks, according to one air line source, through an arrangement between the DEA and the German authorities,

Law enforcement officials say the fear now is that the terrorists that blew up Pan Am 103 somehow learned about what the DEA was doing, infiltrated the undercover operation and substituted the bomb for the heroin in one of the DEA shipments".

(NBC News, 30 October 1990, cited in: Donald Goddard & Lester K. CFoleman: op. cit.; p. 145).

The following evening, 31 October 1990, Pierre Salinger of ABC News, confirmed the essentials of the story:

"German police would be notified that an undercover courier was arriving at Frankfurt airport. German agents would escort his baggage through all security checks, and one of them would personally place the baggage on the plane".  
(ABC News, 31 October 1990, in: Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: op. cit.; p. 146).

And on 19 December 1990, Pan Am's lawyers commenced an action against the US government:

"The complaint charged that the government had been 'negligent in supervising and controlling an operation utilising criminals terrorists and terrorist sympathisers, at various locations including Frankfurt Rhein-Main airport, which circumvented all baggage security controls and which was utilised by a terrorist organisation to place the bomb on Flight 103".  
(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: op. cit.; p. 145-46).

#### The Charges against Libya

On 22 December 1988, the Libyan government

". . . had denounced the Lockerbie attack . . . and had distanced themselves publicly from the bombers".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 35; p. 36,410).

and as we have seen, until late 1990, the US and British imperialists had accused

". . . a Syrian-based group, the 'People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine -- General Command' (PFLP -- GC)".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 37; p. 38,599).

But in August 1990 Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait and the USA and British imperialists organised an 'international' force to 'liberate' the country.

"Syria declared itself on the side of the Allied forces committed to rolling back the invasion, and from that moment on nothing more was heard from official sources on either side of the Atlantic about Syrian complicity in the Flight 103 bombing".  
(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: op. cit.; p. 119).

"Syria sided with the pro-Western camp at the Cairo summit (on 2 August 1990) and on Aug. 20 the first contingent of 1,200 Syrian troops was despatched to Saudi Arabia".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 36; p. 37,637).

Furthermore, at this time Islamic terrorists backed by Iran were holding hostages from a number of Western countries.

"Islamic 'Jihad', an underground faction of the pro-Iranian radical Shia 'Hezbollah' organisation, was believed to be holding most of the Western hostages".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 37; p. 38,405).

But on 12 September 1991, Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjan declared

" . . . that Iran would do 'whatever is possible' to help . . . negotiate an end to the hostage crisis".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 36; p. 38,455).

And on November 1991, the American citizen Thomas Sutherland, kidnapped in June 1985, and the British citizen Terry Waite (kidnapped in January 1987)

" . . . were released by the pro-Iranian Islamic 'Jihad'"  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 37; p. 38,597).

Consequently, by the time of the Gulf crisis in 1991-92,

" . . . Syria -- and Iran -- had become unexpected partners with the West against Saddam Hussein. When Syrian troops stand shoulder-to-shoulder with British and American soldiers, the 270 victims of Lockerbie take second place".  
( 'The Lockerbie File'; op. cit.; p. 16).

So, on 13 November 1991,

" . . . the United States and United Kingdom authorities . . . announced that they had filed charges against two Libyan nationals . . . for the bomb which exploded on an aircraft over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. Abdelbaset Ali Mohammed al-Megrahi, 39, and Al-Amin Khalifa Fhimah, 35, who were both presumed to be in Libya, were reportedly members of the Libyan intelligence services and former employees of Libyan Arab Airlines".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 37; p. 38,599).

"The men are said to have stored explosives at Luqa airport, Malta; built a bomb hidden in a Toshiba radio; called at a shop to buy clothes used to wrap around the bomb, and placed the contents in a suitcase with Air Malta tags. On 21 December they are said to have placed the suitcase on board Air Malta flight KM180 to Frankfurt airport. It was carried to Pan Am flight 103 bound for New York via Heathrow. The device in the suitcase detonated above Lockerbie, Scotland".  
(James Cusick: 'Gaddafi prepares a Sacrifice', in: 'Independent', 30 September 1993; p. 29).

Accordingly,

" . . . warrants for the arrest of the two Libyans'  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 37; p. 38,599).

were issued in both Britain and the USA.

In other words, the US and British imperialists

" . . . now maintained that the bombing was an act of revenge for the April 1986 raid on Tripoli by US aircraft and that available evidence indicated sole Libyan responsibility".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 37; p. 38,599).

On 14 November 1991,



" . . . Libya's United Nations mission said in a statement that Tripoli unequivocally denies any association with or knowledge of the Lockerbie incident. . . .

The statement began by saying that Libya 'reiterates its condemnation, rejection and denunciation of all forms of terrorism'". ('Times', 15 November 1991; p. 2).

The published case for Libyan responsibility for the disaster rests on

1) the hypothesis that the suitcase containing the bomb

" . . . had reached Frankfurt on an Air Malta flight which left Malta earlier that day. Around the time of the bombing, Megrahi had been security chief for Libyan Arab Airlines and Phima had been the airline's station officer in Malta".

('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 37; p. 38,599).

The hypothesis continued to the effect the two Libyans had

" . . . placed the suitcase (containing the bomb -- Ed.) with its Air Malta tags among the luggage being loaded on to international flights from Luqa airport".

(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: op. cit.; p. 183).

and that, from Malta, the suitcase had travelled

" . . . on board Air Malta flight KM180 to Frankfurt airport".

(James Cusick: op. cit.; p. 29).

on 21 December 1988;

2) evidence from managing director Edwin Bollier of the Swiss company, Meister et Bollier (MEBU) (of Zurich) with regard to the fragment of a timer found in the debris and identified as made by MEBU, that

" . . . he had sold the timers only to Libya".

(Richard Newton-Taylor: op. cit.; p. 12).

On the first point,

" . . . Air Malta, the Maltese police and the Maltese government categorically deny that any baggage, unaccompanied or otherwise, had been put on board Air Malta Flight KM180 to connect with the Pan Am 103 in Frankfurt on 21 December 1988".

(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: op. cit.; p. 73).

On the second point, Edwin Boilier, MEBU's managing director, changed his testimony to declare that

" . . . similar timers were sold to East Germany, The Stasi had connections with terrorist groups, including the PFLP — GC".

(Richard Newton-Taylor: op. cit. op.,. 12)).

On 27 November 1991, the European Council

" . . . endorsed the demands made of the Libyan authorities by the

governments of . . . the UK and the United States".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 37; p. 38,659).

On 4 December 1991,

" . . . Pan American World Airways (Pan Am) ceased operations . . . after facing heavy financial losses; an estimated 10,000 of the airline's employees were reported to have been made redundant".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 37; p. 38,699).

On 5 December 1991, the Arab League Council, meeting in Cairo,

" . . . issued a statement expressing 'solidarity' with Libya, and calling for the avoidance of any military or economic action against Libya".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 37; p. 38,692).

On 7 December 1991,

" . . . Judge Ahmed Taher al-Zawi. who was directing the Libyan inquiry into the allegations, said that the two men were under house arrest. Their imminent trial was confirmed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, Ibrahim Mohammad Bashari on Dec. 8".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 37; p. 38,692).

The Libyan government invited the

" . . . UK and US authorities to present their evidence against the accused in Tripoli. This invitation was refused by the governments concerned, which also rejected a compromise solution, put forward by Libya and backed by some other Arab countries, for a UN investigation into the affair".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,743).

In early January 1992,

" . . . the Libyan government transferred assets from European banks to Middle East banks in anticipation of the imposition by European countries of new economic sanctions".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,743).

On 21 January 1992, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 731

" . . . demanding that Libya agree to extradite to the United States or the United Kingdom those accused of the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103. . . .

The resolution . . . insisted on 'a full and effective response'".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,743, 38,791).

On 12 February 1992, the Libyan government's response was handed to the UN Security Council, It

" . . . refused to hand over the two men, offering instead to try them in Libya".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,791).

On 13 February 1992,

" . . . the United Kingdom and the USA . . . rejected Libya's response".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,791).

On 16 February 1992,

" . . . Bassam Abu Sharif, senior adviser to the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Yasser Arafat, said that a secret PLO investigation had produced evidence that 'Middle Eastern parties' unconnected with Libya were responsible for the Lockerbie bombing.

While refusing to disclose the identity of these parties, he said that the PLO would share its evidence with Libya and was willing to co-operate with any international organisation to prove the accuracy of its information".

( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,791).

On 18 February 1992, al-Megrahi and Fhimah appeared in a Tripoli court to face a

" . . . routine investigative hearing. . . .

Abdul Taher Zawei, Councillor to the Supreme Court, said that under Libyan and international law there was no basis for their extradition. Criminal proceedings could be started in Libya, but this had so far proved impossible because neither the USA nor the UK authorities had responded to his requests to hand over copies of the evidence in their possession".

( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,791).

On 21 February 1992, the Tunisian magazine 'Haqa'iq'

" . . . reported that the PLO dossier shown to Libya confirmed the involvement of Ahmed Jabril, leader of the 'People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine -- General Command' (PFLP -- GC). Jabril it said, had allegedly had Iranian financial backing".

( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,791).

On 3 March 1992,

" . . . Libya appealed to the International Court of Justice in The Hague (as the judicial arm of the UN) asking it to . . . 'enjoin' the UK and the USA from taking action 'calculated to compel and coerce ' Libya into surrendering the two men".

( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,839).

The Libyan case was based on the 'Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation', signed in Montreal on 23 September 1971. This provided that, if a person suspected of such an offence were found to be in a certain state, then that state should arrest him, undertake a preliminary enquiry into the alleged offence, and, if it did not extradite him, arrange for his trial:

"Article 6: Upon being satisfied that the circumstances so warrant, any Contracting State in the territory of which the offender or alleged offender is present, shall take him into custody. . . .

Such state shall immediately make a preliminary enquiry into the acts.

. . .

Article 7: The Contracting State in the territory of which the alleged offender is found, shall, if it does not extradite him, be obliged, without exception whatsoever and whether or not the offence was committed in its territory, to submit the case to its competent authorities for the purpose of prosecution".

(Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation: United Kingdom Treaty Series: Volume 10 (1974): Cmnd. 5,524); p. 5-6).

The Montreal Convention was signed by Britain, Iraq and the United States.

(M. J. Bowman & D. J. Harris: 'Multilateral Treaties: Index and Current Status'; London; 1984; p. 353-54).

The Libyan case was, therefore, that the Libyan government had acted entirely in conformity with the Convention.

On 31 March 1992, the UN Security Council

" . . . approved Resolution 748 that if Libya by April 15 had failed to comply with the UN resolution of Jan. 21 by handing over the two Lockerbie bombing suspects, UN member-states would impose mandatory sanctions against Libya. . . .

Five of the 15 Council members -- Cape Verde, China, India, Morocco and Zimbabwe -- abstained from the vote. which was supported by the other 10 countries. . . . This was only the fourth time on which the UN had imposed sanctions, the previous occasions being sanctions against Rhodesia, South Africa and Iraq".

('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,839).

The sanctions envisaged included:

" . . . i) the denial of airport facilities to any aircraft flying to or from Libya, except in cases of urgent humanitarian need; ii) the withholding of aircraft insurance or maintenance services, aircraft and aircraft components from Libya; iii) the withholding of any kind of arms, military equipment or para-military police equipment; iv) the withdrawal of any military advisers currently advising the Libyan authorities; v) significant reductions in staff levels at diplomatic missions in Libya; and vi) moves to 'prevent the operation' of Libyan Arab Airlines".

('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,839).

On 7 April 1992, the Committee of the Arab League forwarded a message from Libya to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali saying that

" . . . the Libyan authorities would not object to the two men placing themselves at the disposal, via the Arab League, of the UN Secretary-General. This was interpreted by observers as meaning that a trial in a 'neutral country' would be acceptable".

('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,884).

On 14 April 1992,

" . . . the day before the UN sanctions came into force, the ICJ delivered its verdict on the case which Libya had presented on March 3.

. . .

The ICJ statement of April 14 cited Resolution 748 . . . and said that the obligations of the various parties with respect to that resolution 'prevail over their obligations under any other international agreement'". ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,884).

In other words, the imperialists -- so fond of asserting their supreme respect for the 'rule of law' -- now tore up the whole body of international law by asserting that if they succeeded in manoeuvring a resolution through the UN Security Council, this overrode all treaties and conventions!

On 15 April 1992,

" . . . mandatory sanctions against Libya came into force. . . . Although air traffic to Libya was halted, land routes, especially through Egypt remained open. The crucial issue of commercial relations with Libya, a major oil producer, had not been mentioned directly in Resolution 748. . . .

The USA had had no diplomatic relations with Libya since 1981, and had suspended commercial relations in 1986. The UK had no direct representation in Tripoli. . . . The Libyan government announced that it would take reciprocal action against any countries expelling Libyan diplomats". ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 38,883).

On 23 June 1992, the Libyan

" . . . General People's Congress (GPC) . . . resolved that the two Libyans whose extradition was being sought in connection with the December 1988 Lockerbie bombing could be tried abroad, provided the trial took place in a 'fair and just' court". ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 39,030).

On 12 August 1992,

" . . . the UN Security Council decided to renew for a further 120 days the sanctions which had been imposed against Libya in April". ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 39,072).

and following a meeting of the Security Council on 9 December 1992,

" . . . the UN extended for a further 120 days the application of limited sanctions against Libya in force since April". ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 38; p. 39,249).

On 8 January 1993, the official Jamahiriya News Agency (JANA) said that the sanctions

" . . . had caused 'enormous human and material losses'". ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 39; p. 39,295).

From 9 to 12 January 1993,

" . . . land borders were closed by government order . . . as a protest against the UN decision of Dec. 9 to renew international sanctions". ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 39; p. 39,295).

On 8 April 1993, the UN Security Council decided

" . . . to extend for a further 120 days the application of limited sanctions against Libya in force since April 1992".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 39; p. 39,438).

On 13 August 1993,

" . . . the USA, the UK and France announced that they had agreed on new, tougher sancions which the UN Security Council would be asked to apply to Libya after Oct. 1, thereby extending sanctions to oil-related, financial and technical sectors, unless by that date the Libyan government had complied fully with UN Security Council Resolution 731".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 39; p. 39,618).

On 29 September 1993,

" . . . 'Jana', the official (Libyan -- Ed.) news agency, quoted a Libyan foreign ministry source as stating: 'We do not oppose their (the two men accused by the imperialists -- Ed.) standing trial under the Scottish legal system and we urge them to accept'".  
(James Cusick: op. cit.; p. 29).

On 11 November 1993, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 883, providing for

" . . . i) the freezing of Libyan assets abroad; ii) a ban on sales of equipment for the country's downstream oil and gas sectors; and iii) extended restrictions on the aviation industry".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 39; p. 39,760).

The resolution was adopted by 11-0 votes, with China. Djibouti, Morocco and Pakistan abstaining.

On 22 January 1994, the Libyan leader, Colonel Moamer al Kadhafi, told the General People's Congress

" . . . that he approved of The Hague (the Netherlands) as 'an appropriate place' for the trial . . .".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 40; p. 39,836).

of the two suspects.

On 15 December 1994 it was announced

" . . . that Pan American World Airlines was suing . . . for \$300 million for the bombing of Flight 103 . . . the state of Libya, Libyan Arab Airlines and two Libyan citizens accused of carrying out the attack".  
( 'Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 39; p. 39,732).

On 21 December 1993, a BBC radio programme, 'Silence over Lockerbie'

" . . . alleged that the bomb attack was in fact ordered by Iran, in retaliation for the US attack on an Iranian Airbus in the Gulf in July 1988, in which 290 people were killed. Iranian officials, it was claimed, then commissioned the Syrian-backed 'People's Front for the Liberation of

Palestine -- General Command' (PFLP -- GC) to carry out the attack", ('Keesing's Record of World Events', Volume 40; p. 39,792).

In November 1994 it was announced that

" . . . Michael Hurley, the US Drug Enforcement Agency's former attaché to the US Embassy in Cyprus, is suing Bloomsbury, publishers of 'Trail of the Octopus', written by a former US defence intelligence agent, Lester Coleman. The book contradicts denials by the DEA and the CIA that they used Lebanese 'assets' to smuggle heroin to the US via Frankfurt airport".

(Richard Norton-Taylor: op. cit.; p. 12).

Lester Coleman was

" . . . until recently a secret agent of the United States Defence Intelligence Agency".

(Donald Goddard: Foreword to: Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: op. cit.; p. vii).

On 2 May 1990, Coleman had been arrested by the FBI and

"Officials in Washington . . . sought to muzzle him by means of a trumped-up criminal charge, to be suspended in exchange for his silence.

. . . Coleman failed to cave in".

(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: op. cit.; p. vii, 221).

He

" . . . fled to Sweden after the US government accused him of perjury in an affidavit for Pan Am which repeated his story".

(Richard Norton-Taylor: op. cit.; p. 12).

There

" . . . he applied for asylum".

(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: op. cit.; p. 221).

The film 'The Maltese Double Cross'. directed by Allan Francovich, alleges

" . . . that the bombing was financed by Iran and planned by members of Ahmed Jibril's then Syrian-based 'People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine -- General Command' (PFLP -- GC) in revenge for the US's accidental shooting down of an Iranian airbus over the Gulf in July 1988".

(Richard Norton-Taylor: op. cit.; p. 12).

In November 1994, the film was

" . . . withdrawn . . . by the London Film Festival. . . . The festival organisers say it was pulled because 'certain statements similar to those made in the film are currently the subject of of legal action'"

(Richard Norton-Taylor: ibid.; p. 12).

CONCLUSION

THE HYPOTHESIS THAT THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOCKERBIE DISASTER WAS DEVELOPED BY THE IMPERIALISTS AFTER AUGUST 1991 NOT FOR REASONS OF HISTORICAL FACT, BUT FOR REASONS OF POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY.

According to Alasdair Palmer, the Iranian intercepts mentioned on page 5

" . . . , demonstrate that Iran was the prime mover behind the bombing, and that Syria must take some responsibility for it. . . . But the Iranian intercepts won't be used as evidence to demonstrate Iranian and Syrian involvement. Why not? National security. . . .

For 'national security' read political convenience. Syria and Iran are now our friends. They helped release the hostages and they helped defeat Saddam".

(Alasdair Palmer: op. cit.; p.13-14).

Thus, according to Goddard & Pearson, the change against Iraq was based on

" . . . the new policy requirements (of the imperialists -- Ed.) that Syria and . . . Iran should be eased out of the picture".

(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: op. cit.; p. 70).

With the official adoption of the Libyan theory,

" . . . everybody but Pan Am and its insurers were off the hook. If the world could be persuaded to buy this scenario, then the responsibility would be shifted from the Iranians and Syrians to the Libyans, to the obvious benefit of Western foreign policy, not least in its attempts to secure the release of Western hostages in the Middle East; the security and police forces of the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom would be seen to be blameless, and the families of the victims would have a clear shot at a clear target in seeking proper compensation for their loss".

(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Coleman: op. cit.; p. 74).

"The only problem is who to hit. . . . The deciding factor isn't who was responsible, but who can be hit without damaging any of America's current interests in the Middle East".

(Alasdair Palmer: op. cit.; p. 13).

But scepticism about the validity of the theory of Libyan guilt was widespread:

"Despite last week's banner headlines claiming Libya 'was to blame' for the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 two years ago this week, it is still thought the outrage was almost certainly ordered from Iran and planned in Syria".

(Julie Flint: 'Lockerbie Bomb Experts play down Libya Link', in: 'Observer', 16 December 1990; p. 7).

"Relatives of victims who died in the explosion as well as commentators on the Middle East have grown increasingly suspicious that Tripoli's alleged role was in reality a convenient method of removing Damascus from the list of suspects".

('Times', 15 November 1991; p. 2).



"Almost universal scepticism . . . greeted the news that the Libyans were the culprits".  
(Donald Goddard & Lester K. Pearson: op. cit.; p. 119).

"The ultimate outcome of the Lockerbie affair could be that the Western powers take military action against a small Third World country without having proved to the satisfaction of those who matter most in this respect -- Libyans, Arabs and the Third World in general -- that Colonel Gadafy really was responsible for it. . . .

The Arabs would see that as another case of 'Arab-bashing', and . . . in the absence of proof of guilt, they would inevitably regard another raid on Libya as a form of 'state terrorism', as indefensible as the form of terrorism it was supposed to combat".  
(*'Guardian'*, 28 February 1992; p. 21).

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NOTE

DIA = (United States) Defence Intelligence Agency.