

Mess and muddle of Megrahi affair



Jul 26: British Justice Secretary **Jack Straw** (right) writes to Scottish counterpart **Kenny MacAskill**, implying PTA will explicitly exclude Megrahi

Dec 19: Straw writes to MacAskill again, saying he has been unable to exclude Megrahi from PTA because of overwhelming British interests

Jul 2008: Bush administration makes deal with Libya, lifting remaining sanctions in exchange for compensation for U.S. victims of Libyan-supported IRA terrorist attacks

Oct: Secret meeting between British, Scottish and Libyan officials over transfer of Megrahi to Libya

Nov 17: Britain and Libya sign PTA treaty. Draft treaty must be ratified by parliament

Feb 26, 2009: Foreign Office minister **Bill Rammell** holds trade talks in Tripoli. Libyan Europe minister, **Abdulati Alobidi**, warns of "catastrophic" relations if Megrahi – now diagnosed with cancer – dies in UK. Rammell says his fate will be decided by Scottish government

Mar 2009: Westminster Joint Committee on Human Rights accuses Straw of rushing PTA treaty through parliament without sufficient debate

Apr 29: Treaty ratified into law, allowing Megrahi to apply to serve rest of his sentence in Libya



Jul: Gaddafi asks Prime Minister **Gordon Brown** for help with Megrahi's transfer during G8 summit – Brown says it is matter for Scottish executive

Aug 3: UK Business Secretary **Lord Mandelson** has "fleeting conversation" about Megrahi during "entirely coincidental" meeting with Gaddafi's son, **Saif al-Islam Gaddafi**, (right) while on holiday in Corfu



Oct: Brown blocks bid for IRA victims to seek compensation from Libya

Aug 20, 2009: Scotland's Justice Secretary MacAskill (left) announces decision to

release terminally-ill Megrahi on "compassionate grounds"

Aug 21: Megrahi receives hero's welcome in Tripoli, triggering accusations that Brown put oil and gas deals before victims of terrorist attacks

Sep 2: Brown breaks his silence over Megrahi's release, claiming that "there was no conspiracy, no cover-up, no double dealing, no deal on oil"

Sep 5: Straw admits that trade and BP oil deal had been an "essential part" of decision to include Megrahi in PTA

Sep 7: In apparent U-turn, Brown backs bid by lawyers to seek compensation for families of IRA victims killed by bombs allegedly made with Libyan-supplied Semtex. **Saif Gaddafi says he will resist any IRA payout**

Jan 2001: Following trial at Camp Zeist in Netherlands, **Abdel Baset Ali Mohamed Al Megrahi** (right) is found guilty of mass murder of 270 people in Lockerbie bombing and jailed for life

Aug 2002: UK foreign office minister **Mike O'Brien** meets Libyan leader **Muammar Gaddafi** in first official British contact since 1984

Aug 2003: Britain introduces UN resolution to lift sanctions against Libya after Tripoli accepts blame for Lockerbie bombing and agrees to compensate victims' families

Dec: Gaddafi renounces weapons of mass destruction programmes



Mar 25, 2004: Prime Minister **Tony Blair** meets Gaddafi in Tripoli, offers "hand of friendship" – same day Anglo-Dutch oil giant Shell signs \$200 million gas exploration deal

May 29, 2007: Blair signs Memorandum of Understanding with Libya for prisoner transfer agreement (PTA). London does not inform Scottish government of "deal in the desert". BP signs \$900 million oil deal in Tripoli