

# Despite Pan Am Verdict, Libya Is Still a Threat

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**A**fter 12 years of legal and political maneuverings, a Scottish tribunal convicted a Libyan intelligence agent of mass murder. The unexpected verdict has not only brought a measure of justice to the families of Pan Am Flight 103, but also has made Libya the first national security challenge for the Bush administration.

In the coming weeks, both Libya and many of America's own allies will claim that the Lockerbie trial closed a dark chapter and that it is time for a new era. Abuzed Dora, Libya's ambassador to the UN, has already set the tone by declaring: "Let's forget about the past. Let's look to the future." The ambassador's comments have found an audience among British officials, as a Foreign Office functionary similarly conceded that "the verdict will have no implications for the bilateral relationships." After all, there is compelling evidence that Libya has left the terrorism business and closed down the notorious training camps. This view neglects the fact that Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi abandoned terrorism only when confronted with multilateral sanctions that faced his regime with protest and popular unrest. In an ironic twist of events, a Libyan intelligence agent now stands convicted of an atrocious crime, with Tripoli not only refusing responsibility but being acclaimed for disavowing its terrorist past.

The precipitous calls for "closure" contradict the initial U.S. approach to the Lockerbie affair that anticipated the suspects would reveal information regarding Libya's terrorist networks and methods. Such a revelation would set the stage for further intrusive measures isolating the Qaddafi regime. According to the original Anglo-American terms issued in 1991, the Libyan government had "to accept responsibility for actions of Libyan officials; disclose all it knows of this crime, including the names of all those responsible; and allow full access to all witnesses, documents, and other material." By Washington's original reasoning - when the first Bush administration was in power - the Lockerbie conviction would set the stage for further investigation, as no one could believe that a single intelligence agent masterminded the bombing.

The case for sustaining pressure on Libya becomes even more compelling when one takes into account Qaddafi's conduct since the suspension of UN sanctions in 1999. The Pentagon's January 2001 "Proliferation: Threat and Response" report comes to the conclusion that: "Following the suspension of UN sanctions in April 1999, Libya wasted no time in reestablishing contacts with foreign sources, expertise, parts and precursor chemicals for its program" of chemical weapons. The August 2000 CIA report similarly confirms Libya's commitment to unconventional weapons by stressing that "Tripoli continues to develop its nascent and still rudimentary nuclear research and development program." Libya's stockpile is even more ominous given its attempts to acquire missile technology from China and North Korea. In short, Qaddafi's Libya continues to be a serious threat to international

security.

Beyond his quest for weapons of mass destruction, Qaddafi maintains his opposition to the existence of Israel, let alone the diplomatic efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. As with Saddam Hussein, Qaddafi's stated alternative to the peace process is the "battle of the century" as a means of "confronting Zionist occupation."

Despite its designation as a terrorist state and its policies on proliferation and the peace process, Libya, like Iraq, defies easy solutions. The European option of engagement is predicated on the assumption that it is possible to rehabilitate Qaddafi and transform Libya into a "normal" state. After three decades of anti-American activities and continuing attempts to threaten regional stability, this is an impossible claim. The option of overthrow is even more distant; America has fewer assets in Libya than in Iraq. The original UN sanctions are unlikely to be reimposed, as Russia, China, and France are going to resist any attempt to reconstitute multilateral sanctions. And just relying on unilateral U.S. sanctions will feel good but have a limited impact on Libya's economy. The best of bad options would be to convince Qaddafi's European trading partners that Libya remains a state whose actions do not merit full return to the international community. The United States can point to the success of the previous multilateral measures as an indication that Qaddafi, unlike Saddam, is susceptible to international pressure and economic coercion.

At the very least, Europe and the U.S. should agree to work closely on very tight restrictions on Libya's access to dangerous technologies. Given the European community's mercantile instincts, this will be a difficult sale, but it is the best policy available to the Bush team.

The Lockerbie process validates the notion that under certain circumstances multilateral sanctions can compel cooperation from a targeted state. In the case of Libya, the U.S. crafted an international consensus behind a concerted regime of economic sanctions that proved surprisingly durable. Although there will be a great temptation to trumpet the arrival of a "new Libya" and consign Lockerbie to dusty archives, the U.S. must use the conviction to press for further actions isolating the Libyan regime.

The memory of 270 lost lives demands no less.

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