

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 7:13 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: SFRC Megrahi Hearing POSTPONED

From: Rodriguez, Miguel E
To: Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J; Crowley, Philip J; Schwartz, Jonathan B
Cc: Verma, Richard R; Rooney, Matthew M
Sent: Tue Jul 27 18:41:47 2010
Subject: RE: SFRC Megrahi Hearing POSTPONED

Statement from Menendez, Schumer, Lautenberg, and Gillibrand.

No mention of State.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 27, 2010

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MENENDEZ – JOINED BY LAUTENBERG, GILLIBRAND AND SCHUMER – ANNOUNCES NEW PLAN TO GET ANSWERS ABOUT LOCKERBIE BOMBER RELEASE

*Investigation will be launched to gather new information, Senate hearing
date will be re-set*

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ), who will chair a Foreign Relations Committee hearing on the release of the Pan Am Flight 103 bomber, today was joined by Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Charles Schumer (D-NY) in announcing a new plan to gather critical information on the issue. Because the key Scottish government, British government and BP witnesses declined to testify at the hearing scheduled for Thursday, Menendez and his colleagues announced that the hearing date will be re-set and that they will work with the Foreign Relations Committee to launch an investigation into the matter and provide the basis for the re-scheduled hearing.

Senator Menendez explained the new plan: **"We are at a place where no witness of consequence has the courage to step forward and clear the air – they would prefer to sweep this under the rug. Because of this stonewalling, we are shifting our efforts to a longer-term, multi-dimensional inquiry into the release of al-Megrahi. The hearing will be postponed and rescheduled, and it will be coupled with an investigation into al-Megrahi's release. In declining our witness request, the Scottish government did offer to provide answers to further questions we may have. We appreciate that, and will take them up on that offer. We will work with the Foreign Relations Committee to launch the investigation into this matter – asking the pointed questions that we would have in person, and requesting additional documents. Our requests will be frequent and public – we don't intend for this issue to be forgotten or swept under the rug. When our information is more complete, we will release it publicly, hold the hearing and discuss what we have found."**

Senator Lautenberg said: **"I will not rest until there is a clear and credible record of what led to the early release of the Lockerbie bomber. In the last year, troubling questions surrounding the circumstances of al-Megrahi's release have come to the surface. The families of the victims of Pan Am 103 have already suffered so much, and the release of this convicted terrorist has only amplified their anguish and grief. For their sake, we must get to the bottom of these questions. Those who commit vicious acts of terrorism have to know that they will be punished without compassion, and a rigorous investigation will help send that message."**

Senator Gillibrand said: **"It has become clear that there is a great deal of information already in the public domain that has not been fully investigated. Already we have seen an abundance of circumstantial evidence that justice and the international fight against terror were compromised to serve the interests of BP and possibly other companies. The only independent review of this matter was done by the Scottish Parliament, which said they were 'extremely concerned' about the basis on which compassionate release was granted. The Scottish review was also limited in scope and did not examine the external influences on Al-Megrahi's release. Our investigation will review past evidence and new information that we intend to gather in a new light, so that we can answer questions about whether BP tried to free Al-Megrahi. What has happened here is a total miscarriage of justice. Al-Megrahi should never have been released, and we must answer exactly why this happened."**

Senator Schumer said: **"It is time for the UK and Scottish Governments to prove they are part of the solution here and not part of the problem. Day after day, week after week, more and more questions get raised and we need all parties to this controversy involved in answering them. We will continue in our quest for the truth so that justice can be served and the families of the victims can have their faith in the legal process restored."**

Invited to the hearing, but declining to appear were: **Scottish Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill** (made the decision to release al-Megrahi), **Dr. Andrew Fraser** (Scottish prison system doctor cited by MacAskill as responsible for the medical prognosis that led to the release), **Jack Straw, the former British Justice Secretary** (has acknowledged that his government pushed for al-Megrahi's release as part of a prisoner transfer agreement), **BP CEO Tony Hayward** (directly involved in negotiations with Libya), and **Sir Mark Allen** (former British MI6 hired by BP and acted as a liaison between the company and the Libyan and British governments).

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Afshin Mohamadi

Communications Director

Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ)

202-224-4744

From: Rodriguez, Miguel E
Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2010 6:04 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J; Crowley, Philip J; Schwartz, Jonathan B
Cc: Verma, Richard R; Rooney, Matthew M
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No word on the new date.

Reason being given to families and others is that lack of cooperation by UK and Scots in providing a witness undermined the hearing.

Menendez however vowed not to drop the issue or his pursuit of a hearing at a later date.

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