A TALE OF THREE WIKILEAK STORIES

The NYT has gotten a lot of press for this story, detailing that Qaddafi's son, Mutassim al-Qadhafi, paid $1 million to have Mariah Carey to sing four songs at his New Year's Day party in St. Barts, and, the following year, another $1 million to have Beyonce and Usher sing. While it affords the NYT an opportunity to read like the Enquirer, the NYT manages to avoid mentioning other details—detailing how oil revenues have been funneled to Libyan elite in places like Scotland—that appear in the cables they reviewed and which might be more relevant to explain the uprising in Libya.

WikiLeaks Central takes a different approach to reporting on some of the more recent WikiLeaks disclosures on Libya. It describes the supposed turning point in US-Libyan relations after US oil companies, on threat of losing contracts with Libya, pushed through an exception to the Lautenberg Amendment of the 2008 Defense Authorization, which would have made it easier for plaintiffs in terrorism-related suits to seize government assets. The cable describing the reaction to the negotiation of an exception makes it clear Libyans hoped that the deal would encourage the US to pressure Qaddafi to cede power.

> Libyan reaction to news of the U.S.-Libya claims settlement agreement is a mixture of relief and high expectation. Libyans are genuinely pleased that a key political irritant in the bilateral relationship has been resolved, seemingly reducing the likelihood that U.S.-Libya relations could lapse back into something akin to the sanctions period. There is also the belief that expanded political and economic engagement with the U.S. and the West, which is expected to accelerate with the lifting of the Lautenberg Amendment and

> potential asset seizure, will help solidify internal Libyan reforms undertaken in recent years. Many Libyans hope that expanded engagement with the U.S. will include U.S. advocacy for political reform and greater respect for human rights. A key challenge for al-Qadhafi will be to temper expectations that fully normalized relations with the U.S. will prompt an immediate shift in the nature of the regime and its reluctance to move quickly on political reform.

That was over two years ago. And yet Qaddafi is still attacking his citizens from fighter jets.

Surprise. Having paid what amount to bribes to his family and friends to obtain drilling rights, our oil companies have not been in a rush to force Qaddafi to push through political reforms.

But the NYT's reporting is not all tabloid fare.

This article (can anyone tell whether it appeared in the Dead Tree version?), details the influence the American Chambers of Commerce have in our foreign policy. The article largely focuses on the Chamber's attempts to defeat Daniel Ortega, with the Embassy cautiously welcoming the efforts. It also details Chamber involvement in Taiwan.

But just as important is the mention of the pressure Honduras' Chamber brought on Obama to support the coup against José Manuel Zelaya (which an earlier cable had definitively labeled illegal).

> In Honduras, for example, executives at the American-affiliated chamber expressed support for the June 2009 coup d'état that forced out President José Manuel Zelaya, the State Department cables say. After leaders in the group applied pressure on the Obama administration, American officials

> retreated from their initial demands that Mr. Zelaya be allowed to return to power.

As the cables have pretty consistently shown, our foreign policy is increasingly indistinguishable from our business interests. And no matter how often our diplomats describe tepid US support for fostering democracy, it always seem to work out that corporations prefer pliant dictators over real human rights.