THE OTHER SAUDI ASSASSINATION PLOTTER GOT A REDUCED SENTENCE IN JULY



This post from Cannon fire reminded me how convenient for our country it is that Moammar Qaddafi was executed rather than captured alive and tried: he will not be able to tell anyone, now that he's dead, how Ibn Sheikh al-Libi, who under torture provided one of the casus belli for the Iraq war, came to be suicided in a Libyan prison just as Americans started focusing on torture in 2009.

That, plus the death of the Saudi Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz al Saud, made me think of another plot Qaddafi brings to his grave: that he had purportedly arranged to assassinate then Crown Prince now King Abdullah. The evidence to support that plot mostly came from Abdulrahman Alamoudi, a prominent American Muslim who was arrested in 2003 on charges he violated trade sanctions against Libya.

Tell me if this sounds familiar. A naturalized American citizen is arrested upon re-entry to the country and charged with a bunch of crimes. After a period of no bail, he confesses to participation in the assassination plot of a top Saudi.

> Court documents said the assassination plot arose from a March 2003 conference at which Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi and Prince Abdullah had a heated exchange. Angered at how Gaddafi was treated, Libyan officials recruited Alamoudi.

> Even after he learned that the target was Abdullah, Alamoudi shuttled money and messages between Libyan officials and the two Saudi dissidents in London, the documents said. Although Gaddafi is not named as a planner, sources familiar with the case have said he appears in the documents as "Libyan government official #5," who met personally with Alamoudi.

Mind you, though the judge considered the assassination plot in Alamoudi's sentence, he plead guilty not to murder-for-hire, but to prohibited financial transactions with Libya (the kind of thing JPMC just got its wrist slapped for), unlawful procurement of naturalization, and tax evasion.

Anyway, thinking about the similarities between that case and the Scary Iran Plot led me to consult Alamoudi's docket (most of which is not available online). What happens to a guy convicted in connection with plotting with a nasty African dictator as we launch the war to finally kill that dictator?

Well, it turns out that at about the time it was clear we'd stick around to ensure Qaddafi died in this kinetic action, a sealed document got filed in Alamoudi's case. And, on July 20, 2011, Alamoudi got about 30% knocked off his sentence, from 276 months to 197.

Mind you, no one was hiding the fact that Alamoudi would continue to cooperate with authorities while in prison—so it's no surprise his sentence got lowered. Nor does Alamoudi's sentence reduction necessarily have anything to do with Alamoudi's testimony in the assassination plot.

But I do expect, a decade from now, that's what's going to happen to Manssor Arbabsiar's docket.