

RELEASE IN PART
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From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, March 8, 2010 6:18 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: Call From Qadhafi Staffer

FYI

From: Feltman, Jeffrey D
Sent: Monday, March 08, 2010 5:20 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J; Abedin, Huma
Subject: FW: Call From Qadhafi Staffer

Look at this -- from our Embassy in Tripoli, about the Qadhafi rage over PJ's remarks.

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From: Lempert, Yael
Sent: Monday, March 08, 2010 5:14 PM
To: Feltman, Jeffrey D
Cc: Schlicher, Ronald L; Sanderson, Janet A; Cretz, Gene A; Polaschik, Joan A; Nardi, Margaret H; Kalmbach, Heather E; Baker, Natalie A
Subject: Call From Qadhafi Staffer

Jeff,

Wanted to fill you in on a call I just received from key Qadhafi staffer Mabrouka al Sharef; she's the one who initially flagged for us last week that there was GOL blowback to A/S Crowley's comments.

Sharef began by stating how much Libya valued the bilateral relationship with the US, how we had all worked for years to improve things between our countries, "only to have it all ruined in one minute by your spokesman." Sharef said she had sat in on meetings today with Qadhafi, PM Baghdadi, and Qadhafi chief of staff Bashir Saleh. She said all were "angry and upset" that there had still been no apology from the USG for the "insult to the Leader." I reviewed with her Crowley's March 5 comments, noting that he had clarified his remarks were off-hand (I translated that in Arabic as "'non-official.") I also briefed her on your and A/S Crowley's meeting with Aujali, which she had clearly not yet heard about (which means Q most likely had also not been briefed on it). Sharef said such a meeting was appreciated, but did not meet the Libyan demand for an apology. She said, repeatedly throughout the conversation, "The Brother Leader is upset that no one from the USG has explained that this spokesman was not speaking for them, and made clear that his comments were wrong, and apologized for them. He expected behavior and words like this from Switzerland, not from the US." She noted that Q had remarked that he had said nice things about President Obama during his meetings with people from the US Embassy ("You reported that back to Washington, right"; I assured her we had), and was thus surprised that the USG responded with "the words of gangsters!" Sharef repeatedly referenced NOC Chair Ghanem's meeting last Thursday with the GM's from US oil companies: "We don't want to have to take measures against them, but such insults to the Leader cannot stand. Why has the US not publicly distanced itself from Crowley and his comments?!" She

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treated me to a lengthy detailing of Swiss criminality and violations of international agreements, and then said, "But even the Swiss haven't said what your spokesman did!"

I reviewed again with her Crowley's March 5 comments, and noted that, as he is the spokesman for the State Department, he is the correct person, in our view, to remark on the situation; it wouldn't be in keeping with USG practice for someone other than the Department spokesman to comment (i.e. no distancing of the USG from Crowley). I emphasized that the US was not involved, and did not want to be involved, in the Swiss-Libya dispute, we just hope it is resolved soon. I stressed that the US values its relationship with Libya, and wants to continue improving the relationship, and get past this unfortunate bad spot we currently are in. I asked if it would be helpful if a senior USG official called Q to discuss issues of bilateral interest, and reinforce the importance of the relationship. At first, she brushed off such an idea – "that won't be a public apology" – but at the end of our conversation, returned to the idea, noting that it was interesting, and inquiring as to which USG official might call. I said I didn't want to make any promises I couldn't keep; that I'd check with Washington and get back to her with further details tomorrow. She reiterated that she liked the idea, and said we should discuss it further over coffee tomorrow or Wednesday.

Sharef closed by mentioning that she "and most Libyans" are "hand in hand with the US ... we want a good relationship with you, as we like you, you're not like the Europeans."

Appreciate your guidance as to whether I can discuss further details of possible call with Sharef tomorrow.

Thanks, and sorry our hosts are taking up so much of your time lately!,

Yael