

RELEASE IN FULL

Libya: Coalition Forces Media Reaction

London Hub & RRU coverage
Pan-Arab Media
3-20/21-2011 5:00 am

LONDON HUB COVERAGE

Pan Arab TV coverage, Monday March 21, 2011

Main news on all channels today was air attack on Qaddafi's headquarters in Tripoli (Bab al-Aziziya) which serves as his military headquarters. Channels report there was no news of civilian casualties.

Other developments in Libya include:

- Libyan army orders ceasefire
- Celebrations in Benghazi
- Sec Gates says the US will not have a major role in operations in Libya and will transfer mission leadership to France and Britain or to joint NATO command.
- Qatari planes are heading towards Libya, some to take part in enforcing UN resolution and others to carry humanitarian needs for the Libyan people.
- Un-named Arab countries are reported by al-Jazeera to be taking part in the Libya operations too.
- Amr Mousa's comments were responded to by Abdel Hafeez Ghouka, a spokesman of the Libyan National Council who asked Mousa how else to enforce a no-fly zone and save the Libyan people. It is reported that Mousa has an eye on Egyptian presidential elections.
- While Gates says that Qaddafi is not a target; Hague confirms that Qaddafi has to go.

Pan-Arab TV snapshot: 3-20-2011 5 EST/9 GMT

Of note: News on Libya talks about the damage wrought by Western bombing raids, reactions of people in the region, and the situation of refugees on the border. Libya is not at all the sole focus this morning; the news bulletins give equal focus to events in Syria, Yemen, Morocco, and Bahrain; William Hague's comments reported; AJ reports goals of operation unclear – topple Qaddafi or not? – and hints that that is the US' goal.

Al-Jazirah:

- Bombing raids continue; Washington emphasizes it is a “limited” operation;
- In Tunis: AJ conducts interviews with Tunisians in the street about Libya; those interviewed support the Libyan uprising but reject the “imperialist intervention;”
- From the refugee camps on the Libyan-Tunisian borders: UN official confirms that over 800,000 refugees have fled Libya; AJ reports from the borders and interviews Africans fleeing Libya; “we worked hard; we just want to go home,” they say; IOM official interviewed at a camp about its efforts; some are young men who are coming to support the Libyan fighters;
- Reports efforts by the Libyan authorities’ attempts to persuade other news agencies to stop transmission of AJ’s signal; report accompanied by film of the incident in question;
- Terror in Tripoli as it is exposed to a second night of bombing;
- Huge explosion targets Qaddafi’s residence in Bab al-Aziziyah;
- French government spokesman says no reports of civilian casualties;
- **AJ comments that Washington says it does not aim to topple Qaddafi but its actions speak otherwise;**
- Crowds celebrating in liberated town;
- Gates says US will not take the lead in this operation but will hand over to the UK and France via NATO: West is very cautious of Arab fears;
- Hague shown saying it’s hard to predict the future of Libya;
- AJ reports much debate over the real goals of the US and its allies;
- Fears among some of a situation like Iraq emerging in Libya;
- Amr Mousa (3/20) quoted saying this is not what the Arab League agreed to; an opposition spokesman challenges him, asking who will stop the annihilation of the Libya people otherwise;
- Position of Western allies unclear on final goal: EU leaders’ statement contrasted;
- Qatar’s military participation reported, with footage of planes taking off from Doha;
- Demonstrations in front of French embassy in Tunis protesting France’s involvement in the Libya operation;

Al-Arabiya:

- Reports on Qaddafi’s whereabouts and asserts that the Western forces bombed undisclosed places;
- Reports that the situation in side Libya is extremely difficult;
- Due to blocking efforts from the Libyans, AA has changed its satellite frequency;
- Covers UK FM’s statements on events in Libya including his comment that no planes are being used to target civilians

BBC Arabic:

- reports on the destruction by allied forces of Qaddafi's residence; eyewitnesses describe how civilians had come to protect it and were a 100 meters away when the bombs hit;
- Continued to carry clips of Amr Mousa's comments 3/20 that the Arab League had not agreed to the bombing;
- Reports on reactions among European countries

OTHER NEWS:

- In other news, BBC Arabic reports extensively on the protests in Dera, Syria, and the destruction of two offices owned by the Syria President's cousin, Rami Makhlof; ; BBC reports conflicting positions by the Government; eyewitnesses interviewed by phone;
- Al-Arabiyah likewise carries an extensive report on Dera and the use by the Syrian authorities of tear gas; unconfirmed reports of protests in areas of Damascus;
- BBC Arabic reports on the 3/20 protests by the Feb. 20 movement in Morocco;
- AJ reports on the Yemeni President's dismissal of his cabinet and on the huge protests in Sanaa 3/19 calling Salih to step down; Protestors quoted saying they will not leave until he does;
- Al-Arabiyah reports that the Bahraini authorities claim to have stopped a foreign plot against Bahrain; there are allegations of extensive Iranian interference and the use of media equipment to record events in side Bahrain; a person has been detained in this regard;
- AJ reports on the results of the Egyptian referendum; voting participation reached unprecedented levels

RRU COVERAGE

Pan-Arab

Al-Jazeera TV comments weapons companies are the biggest beneficiary from this operation.

Al-Hayat newspaper demands a wider participation from Arab countries in imposing the no-fly zone on Libya and calls on countries that have strong Air Forces, such as Saudi Arabia, to take part.

Al-Quds al-Arabi newspaper reports that the Libyan army orders a cease fire and a "peaceful march" towards Benghazi.

Al-Quds al-Arabi sees "media propaganda" for the military campaign and compares it to the falsification of information in Iraq in 1991 and 2003. It opines history is being repeated, and expects "US intervention" to cause bloodshed with unknown results.

Al-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper reports that the air strikes paralyze the Libyan Air Force and that Qaddafi distributes weapons among his supporters and promises that this “Christian crusade” will be a long war.

Al-Sharq al-Awsat thinks that Qaddafi may have now “a last chance” to find a peaceful exit from the crisis after passing up several previous chances.

Al-Sharq al-Awsat opines although the UNSC resolution doesn’t demand the removal of the Qaddafi regime, the fierceness of the initial attacks indicates that is the Allies’ aim. The writer thinks the region will be better without Qaddafi.

Jordan

Al-Ghad newspaper finds strong support from Arab public to the military operations, which is a shift from their position on the Iraq war.

Qatar

Al-Raya newspaper sees the position taken by the government of Qatar is right and important to stop the bloodshed against the innocent Libyan.

Saudi Arabia

Al-Ryadh newspaper thinks Qaddafi ruled his country ignorantly and calls on him and his sons to be wiser in dealing with their people.

UAE

Al-Bayan newspaper urges Qaddafi to be wiser and take “a suitable decision” while dealing with opposition as there is an international consensus on stopping his belligerence.