

CONFIDENTIAL

RELEASE IN FULL

March 6, 2011

For: Hillary
From: Sid
Re: Qaddafi fears interim government

Latest report:

During the afternoon of March 6, advisors to Muammar al-Qaddafi and his son Saif al Islam stated in confidence that, while Qaddafi himself remains confident that his forces can gain the upper hand against rebel forces throughout the country, Saif is increasingly concerned that the rebels will form an interim government that will give the United States and the nations of Western Europe a focal point for providing both military and humanitarian aid to the rebels. Saif is encouraging his father to continue to speak out accusing the rebels of being puppets of these Western states. By the same token, Saif has instructed government spokesmen to return to the idea that, if this revolution succeeds, Islamist groups such as al Qa'ida and the Libyan Fighting Group (LFG), which Qaddafi has suppressed, will use Libya as a base for attacking the Western states and their allies. Saif believes that pressing these two themes will, if nothing else, confuse the foreign governments, and complicate their efforts to aid the rebels.

(Source Comment: One source with access to Saif stated that word had spread through the Qaddafi government that NATO special forces troops—either Dutch or German—had been captured by government forces outside of Tripoli on 4 or 5 March. Their sources also reported they believe 8-10 British troops had been taken into custody by rebel forces in Benghazi on 4 March. Similar reports have appeared in the press, but there is no independent confirmation.)

As of 6 March, Qaddafi's military advisors, including his sons Montasem and Khamis are warning Qaddffi that the 1500-2000 person rebel force advancing from Benghazi toward Tripoli presents the most immediate threat to the regime. They are particularly concerned by the situation in Misrata, warning that if the rebels can consolidate their hold on this town, they will be able to threaten Sirte, the base of Qaddafi's tribe, the Qadhafah. According to some advisors, Qaddafi views Sirte as a fallback position if he cannot remain in Tripoli; loss of this town would be a serious Psychological and Strategic blow to the regime. Government forces have used attack helicopters and ground support aircraft to attack the rebel forces at Misrata and, while they have been unable to secure the town, they have inflicted heavy casualties on the rebels and slowed their advance on Sirte.

(Source Comment: Individuals with access to Qaddafi's military advisors believe government forces will make increasing use of their attack helicopters and the 250 combat air craft still under their control. They also state that Qaddafi believes that the rebels may soon receive more sophisticated anti-aircraft weapons from the Western allies; weapons which will offset the