

RELEASE IN PART
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From: Sidney Blumenthal [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, January 15, 2013 11:21 AM
To: H
Subject: H: Latest Libya intel; internal govt discussions high level. Sid
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CONFIDENTIAL

January 15, 2013

For: Hillary
From: Sid
Re: Libya internal government discussions

SUBJECT: Libya (13/4)

SOURCE: Sources with direct access to the Libyan National Government, as well as the highest levels of European Governments, and Western Intelligence and security services.

1. (Source Comment: On the morning of January 15, 2013 Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zidan was informed by Interior Minister Ashour Shuwail and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mohamed Abdulaziz that Italy plan to close its consulate in Benghazi and reduce the size of its embassy in Tripoli following attacks on the consulate itself and the Italian consul general. Shuwail reported that the attacks were carried out by Eastern militia forces associated with Ansar al Islam, which, although put under pressure by the National Libyan Army (NLA) following the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi in September 2012, continues to operate in and around that city. Abdulaziz warned Zidan that he should expect this situation to be raised by Italian officials and the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Italian oil company ENI when the Libyan Prime Minister visits Rome in late January 2013. The Minister of Foreign Affairs added that his sources in Rome report that the Italians will repeat their willingness to take risks in starting up operations in Libya, but they will ask for evidence that the new Libyan government is taking steps to improve its ability to protect foreign workers and facilities in Benghazi, and throughout the country.

2. This individual noted that Zidan was visibly upset during the conversation, expressing frustration over this turn of events, and stating that the relationship with ENI must serve as a sign to the managers of other foreign companies that they can operate in Libya in safety under the General National Council Government (GNC). According to a very sensitive source, Zidan is concerned that these latest incidents in Benghazi, taken in combination with the January 4, 2013 assassination attempt against President Mohamed al Magariaf at the Southern town of Sabha, will convince foreign diplomats and businessmen that Libya remains in a state of

chaos. Zidan and Magariaf differ on a number of policy issues, not the least of which is the relative authority of their two offices, but the Prime Minister told Shuwail that they must do everything they can to protect the life of the President if they are to maintain a stable post-revolutionary government.)

3. According to this individual, Zidan and his ministers spoke during their visit to Doha, and later discussed the matter with Libyan intelligence chief General Salim Hassi and NLA Chief of Staff General Yousef Mangoush, ordering them to take all steps necessary to deal with Ansar al Islam and its associated groups. For his part Hassi warned that Ansar al Islam has a significant following in Eastern Benghazi and in the territory between Benghazi and the Egyptian border. He and Mangoush agreed that they will step up operations in that area, noting that they also will reach out for assistance from Egypt and the Western powers in an effort to improve the training of their personnel and develop an international plan to limit the flow of illegal arms into Libya. Hassi noted that he is making progress on the issue of dealing with fighters loyal to the family of former dictator Muammar al Qaddafi, especially through cooperation with the French external intelligence service (Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure – DGSE). The intelligence chief noted that French military operations against rebel forces in Mali have been valuable in this regard. Both generals agreed to follow Zidan's orders, and maintain good relations with their counterparts in Italy as well.

4. For his part Zidan, according to this source, stated that he will raise this matter in his conversations with Qatari premier, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al-Thani, and its Foreign Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Nasser bin Jassim Al-Thani. Zidan will ask Qatar to assist the GNC government efforts to organize and fund a program to improve the quality of its military, police, and intelligence personnel. In the opinion of this individual Zidan plans to point out to the Qatari leaders that Libya needs their assistance to protect the victory of the revolution against Qaddafi. Zidan wants Qatar to assist in training security personnel, while also opening centers to train young Libyans to take on positions in the oil industry previously held by foreign workers.

5. (Source Comment: Prior to their departure for Doha, Mangoush and Zidan discussed the security situation and agreed that the NLA must seek assistance in tracking the movements of the independent militias, as well as the arms that are smuggled to them from Mali in the South West and South Sudan in the South East. Mangoush stated that he was in touch with the military commanders in the appropriate countries, including Egypt, and he plans to reach out to the Western powers in an effort to gain support and training. For his part Zidan complained that Magariaf should not have attended the Sabha meetings, given the strength of Qaddafi supporters in that region. Zidan added that, while he realized that the President is anxious to demonstrate that the GNC government is gaining strength throughout the country he must be realistic about the nature of the threat facing both him and the government. According to this source, Mangoush chose to avoid being drawn into this discussion of the President.)

6. According to a very sensitive source, General Hassi disagrees with the NLA analysis that the Sabha attack was not aimed at Magariaf specifically, noting that there were five prior assassination attempts against Magariaf in 2012, and that he is a target for a diverse collection of enemies, including former Qaddafi forces, groups like Ansar al Sharia, and even his political adversaries in the GNC. Accordingly, Hassi intends to establish new programs to train a detachment of presidential bodyguards, and his own anti-terrorism personnel.