

RELEASE IN PART  
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**From:** sbwhoeop [redacted]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 28, 2011 2:57 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** H: Up to minute detailed state of play politically and militarily. Sid  
**Attachments:** hrc memo up to minute, detailed state of play 022811.docx; hrc memo up to minute, detailed state of play 022811.docx

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CONFIDENTIAL

February 28, 2011

For: Hillary  
From: Sid  
Re: State of play politically and militarily

The latest report:

On February 26, 2011, Professor Idris el-Sharif, the chairman of the committee formed in Benghazi to coordinate opposition military activities, made contact with the newly formed National Libyan Council (NLC) stating that the Benghazi military council would join the NLC as long as he was assured that the National Council was not acting as an interim government. According to el-Sharif it is too early to discuss an interim government. In addition, el-Sharif warned NLC leader Mustafa Mohamed Abud al Gilil that the opposition is made up of a wide variety of ad hoc groups of students, academics and professionals, and that the NLC must guide rather than try to control these groups. At the same time they have to maintain relationships with the National Conference for the Libyan opposition (NCLO) and other established opposition groups, without allowing these groups to establish control of the movement. El-Sharif warned that the NCLO and the largely exile groups that fall under its umbrella have little credibility with the current opposition movement, which is based on the

problems and actions of average people living inside of Libya. El-Sharif added that the NLC is much more relevant to the current situation; however, it must resist the temptation to begin acting like a government or established political party.

On the morning of February 28 sources with access to the various groups in the Libyan Opposition movement stated in confidence that while the NLC is working to establish itself as the central point for the opposition to Muammar Qaddafi, their leader, al Gilil, and other founding members realize that they must be careful to avoid the appearance of trying to seize power. Gilil stated privately that he made a mistake in describing the NLC as an interim government and that after discussions with other members of the council realized that the students and young people who have carried the bulk of the conflict with Qaddafi's forces would react badly to an effort by another group of established figures to gain control over the parts of the country held by the opposition. Accordingly, NLC spokesman Hafiz Ghoga has gone to great lengths to state that the NLC is not an interim government. Instead, he described it as an effort to begin to organize the opposition.

At the same time, the Senussiyyah family, representing the old monarchy, is planning to choose a formal leader under the traditional consultative process last used in 1951 by King Idriss al Seunussi. The chosen leader will have the title of As-Seyyed (a descendant of the prophet Muhammed). Seyyid Idriss bin Abdullah al-Senussi is the leading candidate for this position based on his well established relationships with the leaders of the other Libyan tribes. Seyyid is 54 years old and has, until his recent return to Libya, lived in the United States for many years. He has the support of the powerful al-Obeidat tribe, as well as a group of smaller families who will soon gather together under the name el-Senussiyyah. These moderate Sunni groups intend to restore the pre-1969 constitution, aiming for a national election in eighteen (18) months.

As fighting continues in the area around Tripoli, the NLC, the al-Sennussi and others are working to identify the new leaders of the revolution in an effort to begin working with them in a formal manner. All of these groups will be working to establish relationships with the United States and the other world powers. One individual noted that this is precarious process since

they want to establish their legitimacy but must avoid looking like the puppets of foreign governments, as Qaddafi and his sons have alleged.

A highly reliable source stated in confidence that African mercenaries continue to land in Tripoli, passing through the airport of Sebha (410 miles south of Tripoli) which is still in the hands of Qaddafi loyalists. These troops are flown in on aircraft belonging to the Libyan Company, Afriqiyah Airways. Until February 24 these forces were recruited in Nigeria, Chad, Benin; however, beginning on February 25 the recruits began to include fighters from Algeria, including troops from the Frente Popular de Liberación de Saguía el Hamra y Río de Oro (Polisario Front.) (Source Comment: These Polisario troops are drawn from the Saharawi people fighting against Morocco for the independence of the territory of Western Sahara. These Polisario troops have been trained by the Algerian military and intelligence services to fight against the Moroccan Military in Western Sahara.

An advisor to Qaddafi stated privately that the Government of Morocco has used private channels to protest the recruitment of these forces to the Libyan Government. The Moroccans state that they learned from Polisario sources that Qaddafi has promised to support their struggle against in Western Sahara, if they send mercenaries to fight with the Algerians in support of his regime.

The current military situation in Libya:

**ZAWIYAH** (a city only 27 miles west of Tripoli), Armed rebels maintain control of the city and repulsed an attack by about 2,000 troops loyal to Gaddafi. The loyalists are armed with tanks and anti-aircraft guns mounted on trucks.

**Misrata**, (116 miles east of Tripoli), A counter-attack launched from the airport by forces loyal to the regime was rebuffed in fighting that left at least 30 people dead.

**Benghazi**, Opposition forces are currently in possession of 14 fighter aircraft at the Benghazi Airport, but they have no pilots or maintenance crews to support them.

While Saif al-Islam Qaddafi and his brother Montasem receive the majority of attention in the world press, an advisor to Qaddafi stated in confidence that two other sons, Saadi (who is involved with Libyan Army Special Forces units), and Khamis, who commands the Khamis Brigade of heavily equipped Special Forces troops, are concerned that they may face international war crimes tribunals for the actions taken by troops under their command. These Special Forces troops, particularly snipers, have been accused by opposition leaders of firing on unarmed demonstrators.

In addition to the rescue of British citizens by the SAS and Royal Air Force, German GSG-9 Special Forces units evacuated 132 people from the desert during a secret military mission on Saturday. Two German military aircraft landed on a private runway belonging to the firm Wintershall AG, evacuating 22 Germans and 112 others, flying them to the Greek island of Crete.