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CTA/CPAS... NID 90-288JX...



DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2012-121, document no. 1
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: May 6, 2019

604 MICRO (NUMBER)

1 COPY



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TCS 2988/90
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Special Analysis

LIBYA: Activity in Africa Intensifying

Tripoli has quietly reinvigorated efforts to identify and guide subversive groups in Chad, Liberia, and Rwanda since last year. Idris Deby's seizure of power in Chad probably ensures that Qadhafi will continue his assertive policy for at least the next several months. [redacted]

During a May 1989 meeting of Mathaba, a quasi-governmental organization tasked with exporting Qadhafi's revolution, the Libyan leader told delegates that events in the USSR and the Palestinian *intifadah* proved his theory that popular uprisings against oppressive governments were inevitable. [redacted] He urged the delegates to identify, aid, and guide such movements as they emerge. [redacted]

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The recent appointment as Foreign Minister of Ibrahim Bishari, a black Libyan with extensive experience in African affairs, also suggests renewed interest in Africa. Bishari will be in a position to implement an aggressive policy in Africa, employing Qadhafi's customary mix of diplomacy and subversion. [redacted]

Current Activities

Support for insurgents in Chad, Liberia, and Rwanda suggests Qadhafi is seeking low-cost, low-risk opportunities where clandestine support can sharpen existing ethnic and tribal tensions. Qadhafi aims to promote his unique brand of revolutionary socialism and to weaken US and French influence in the region. [redacted]

Chad. Tripoli has provided arms, ammunition, vehicles, training, and safehaven to President Deby since June 1989. [redacted]

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[redacted] Tripoli is pleased with Deby's victory and his return of approximately 435 Libyan POWs and already is seeking to strengthen its influence in Chad. [redacted] Tripoli is flying medical supplies and possibly other cargo into N'Djamena and has pledged not to allow Goukouni Weddeye, Habre's Libyan-backed predecessor and a potential Deby rival, to threaten the regime. [redacted]

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Liberia. Qadhafi has provided Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front with money and weapons through Burkina since last January, according to sources of varying reliability. [redacted]

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Rwanda. Libya may have provided financial and military support to ethnic Tutsi rebels who invaded Rwanda from Uganda in early October [redacted]. The rebels currently are conducting a low-intensity guerrilla campaign. [redacted]

Outlook

Qadhafi offered assistance to the insurgents in Chad, Liberia, and Rwanda only after they had begun operations, suggesting he requires a demonstration of commitment before he will provide substantial aid. He almost certainly weighs the prospects for a group's success against the risk of needlessly exposing himself to retaliation from the US and France and censure by the OAU. He also does not wish to jeopardize the political gains he believes he has achieved through relatively moderate behavior in the past two years. [redacted]

Qadhafi's expectations almost certainly are unrealistic. He is likely to press Deby to settle the Aozou Strip dispute on favorable terms and to return Libyan dissidents based in Chad. During a recent meeting with the US Ambassador, however, Deby reasserted Chad's claim to the Aozou Strip and denied promising Qadhafi anything in return for assistance. Qadhafi has sought assurances from Taylor, evidently without success, that he would expel US representatives from Liberia, sever formal relations with Washington, and establish a government modeled after Libya's if he came to power. [redacted]

Nevertheless, the Libyan leader is unlikely to reduce his meddling in Africa soon. He almost certainly believes the opportunities for advancing his political agenda in the region through clandestine support for subversive groups outweigh the limited risks. [redacted]

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