



POL 7 UAR

Department of State
TELEGRAM

1969-12-30, Nasser, Libya, Visit

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Benghazi 1381
12-30-69

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ACTION NEA-15

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FM AMEMBASSY BENGHAZI
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AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BENGHAZI 1381

SUBJ: NASSER'S VISIT TO BENGHAZI - PART II

REF: BENGHAZI 1375 - *pol 7 UAR*

1. ON AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 29, UAR PRESIDENT NASSER AND RCC PRESIDENT QADHAIFI ADDRESSED LARGE RALLY OF APPROXIMATELY 30,000 PEOPLE AT NEW STADIUM IN BENGHAZI SPORTS CITY. RALLY STARTED AT APPROXIMATELY 16:15 WITH TRADITIONAL KORAN READING FOLLOWED BY SHORT SPEECH BY BENGHAZI MAYOR MOHAMAD BEN YUNIS, WHO PRESENTED NASSER WITH KEY TO CITY, FORMING BWAYSIIR THEN GAVE SHORT, FIERY SPEECH INTRODUCING QADHAIFI, WHO SPOKE FOR ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES. BWAYSIIR THEN RETURNED TO MICROPHONE TO INTRODUCE NASSER, WHOSE SPEECH ALSO LASTED ABOUT HALF AN HOUR. NEITHER SPEECH CONTAINED ANYTHING NEW (ASSUME ADDRESSEES HAVE TEXT FROM FBIS!).

2. LARGE CROWD IN SPORTS STADIUM WAS IN GENERAL BETTER DISCIPLINED THAN DURING TRIUMPHALTOUR OF BENGHAZI PREVIOUS DAY, DESPITE FACT THAT FAULTS IN PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR SOME GROUPS, INCLUDING SPECIAL INVITEES, TO HEAR SPEECHES. SPECTATORS REMAINED IN SECTIONS ASSIGNED TO THEM UNTIL CONCLUSION OF NASSER'S SPEECH AND POLICE AND ARMY MP'S SEEMED MORE INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING ORDER THAN ON PREVIOUS DAY.

By *MC* UAR Date *7/22/01*

Authority *100-969045*

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3. THE TWO PRESIDENTS AND THEIR PARTY LEFT SPORTS STADIUM APPROXIMATELY 18:00 AND PAID SHORT UNSCHEDULED CALL AT OMAR MUKHTAP'S TOMB BEFORE RETURNING TO GUEST PALACE ON OUTSKIRTS OF BENGHAZI. SINCE THEN, THERE HAVE BEEN NO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS ABOUT NASSER'S ACTIVITIES. HE DEPARTED BENGHAZI FOR CAIRO AT 12:30, DECEMBER 30.

4. COMMENT: DURING RALLY IN SPORTS STADIUM, GADHAAFI LOOKED TIRED BUT NOT EXHAUSTED AND NASSER SEEMED REMARKABLY WELL AND FIT CONSIDERING HIS FOUR-HOUR ORDEAL IN THE BACK OF AN OPEN LAND ROVER PREVIOUS DAY. PRIME MINISTER MAGHRABI WAS SEATED BEHIND NASSER AND GADHAAFI BUT TOOK NO PART IN PROCEEDINGS AND SEEMED TO BE GENERALLY IGNORED. THREE LARAF F-55 MADE REPEATED PASSES DURNING RALLY, ATTRACTING MUCH FAVORABLE COMMENT. ALTHOUGH SOME EGYPTIAN TROOPS AND OFFICERS HAVE BEEN SEEN DURING PAST THREE DAYS, THE HAVE, FOR THE MOST PART, BEEN KEPT DISCREETLY IN THE BACKGROUND.

5. BENGHAZI MADE TREMENDOUS EFFORT TO OUTDO TRIPOLI IN ITS RECEPTION OF NASSER. BANNERS AND STREAMERS (INCLUDING SUDANESE FLAG) WERE EVERYWHERE AND SPECIAL ARNAN WERE ERECTED IN RECORD TIME AT MANY PRINCIPAL INTERSECTIONS. CONSIDERING THAT POPULATION OF BENGHAZI IS GENERALLY ESTIMATED AT ABOUT 150,000, INCREDIBLE NUMBER OF PEOPLE APPEARED FOR MOTORCADAS ON FIRST DAY AND ATTENDANCE OF 30,000 AT RALLY AT SPORTS STADIUM WAS REMARKABLY GOOD. SEVERAL LOCAL INHABITANTS REMARKED PROUDLY THAT IT TOOK NASSER LONGER TO GET FROM AIRPORT TO GUEST HOUSE IN BENGHAZI THAN IT HAD IN TRIPOLI. CYRENAICANS MAY BE SUSPICIOUS AND FEARFUL OF EGYPTIANS IN GENERAL, BUT THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT NASSER AS A PERSON AND A SYMBOL WAS TREMENDOUS APPEAL.
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