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LIBYA: SITREP NO 7: 17 APRIL 1986 (0630Z)

SITUATION IN TRIPOLI

1. Telephone contact with Mr Dunnachie at 2000Z 16 April:
  - Heavy firing in town at around 1830Z: all now quiet
  - British Community nervous but no news of any casualties or harassment
  - No sign of Qadhafi (but see second item)
  - No further information on bomb damage
  - City blacked out: TV playing military music

Latest contact 0500Z 17 April: City appears normal with light traffic.

2. Despite strenuous Libyan denials of a coup attempt during 16 April, media reporting has referred to US intelligence reports of a mutiny by army units at Tarhuna, south-east of Tripoli, that had had to be quelled by airforce strikes.

COLONEL QADHAFI

3. Following a Libyan TV news bulletin on the evening of 16 April, showing Qadhafi receiving "today" the Soviet Ambassador and two Moroccan envoys (the latter said to have conveyed a message from King Hassan condemning the US action), Qadhafi made (162115Z) a 21 minute broadcast from a studio (location not identified). A BBC monitoring report said there was no indication whether the broadcast was live or recorded.

4. Qadhafi attacked President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher on predictable lines and denied that Libya had "issued orders to murder anyone", though he said Libya would "not abandon our incitement of popular revolution". He called on the Arabs to cut off relations with the US; but expressed appreciation for the "friendly stances" of Italy, France, Spain, Greece and Malta, which he said had

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dissuaded him from his intention, at the time of the Libyan attack on Lampedusa Island, to establish an "exclusion zone" in the Mediterranean. But Italy and Spain must, he said, stop allowing use of their ports by the US Sixth Fleet, or Libya would be forced to "escalate the operations in self-defence".

EUROPEAN REACTIONS

5. Dutch Foreign Minister van den Broek reported, as EC President, to the European Parliament at Question Time on the afternoon of 16 April. He refused to be drawn into criticising the UK role in the US attack and said that even if the US decision had been known to any Minister at the Political Cooperation meeting on 14 April, it was "too sensitive to raise". He was "encouraged that the US had not deployed forces without prior consultation with the member states concerned".

6. The emergency meeting of EC Foreign Ministers, which the Secretary of State is attending, begins in Paris at 0800 today, 17 April.

LIBYANS IN THE UK

7. Two Libyans were picked up by the police on 16 April loitering outside the US Embassy in London. Their visas had apparently expired. They are expected to be charged on 17 April.

BRITISH HOSTAGES IN BEIRUT

8. The BBC monitoring service has carried a report by "Voice of Lebanon" radio of an anonymous call to the station claiming to be on behalf of the Islamic Liberation Organisation and saying that the security forces would find, at the Sports City area of Beirut, the body of one of the kidnapped British subjects, who "have been executed". A further reference to the French hostages and to US raids on Libya suggests a possible Libyan connection.

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9. HM Ambassador in Beirut has been asked for an urgent assessment of this report, which has now been picked up by the UK press.

**PUBLIC REACTION**

10. The current score on telephone calls to the Emergency Unit is 634 criticising the US action and UK support for it, 47 in favour, plus 16 calls from America all supporting the action and commending British support.

**US EVACUATION FROM SUDAN**

11. The Americans have formally told us of their decision to evacuate US dependants and non-essential personnel from Sudan (in the wake of the shooting of a member of their Embassy in Khartoum on 15 April). They have offered to help any British citizens who wish to leave.

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