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FM AMCONSUL EDINBURGH  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4109  
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UNCLAS EDINBURGH 192

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARAGRAPH 6, LINE 1)

E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: MOPS, PREL, ASEC, PROP  
SUBJECT: REACTION IN SCOTLAND TO US ACTION AGAINST LIBYA.

1. AT THE CONSULATE:  
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AT NOON ON APRIL 15, 1986, APPROXIMATELY TEN DEMONSTRATORS GATHERED AT THE CONSULATE GENERAL TO DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE U.S. STRIKE AGAINST LIBYA. IN THE EVENING THEY WERE JOINED BY SOME FIFTY OTHERS FOR A VIGIL WHICH LASTED UNTIL SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT. THE DEMONSTRATORS, WHO INCLUDED MEMBERS OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT (CND), YOUNG COMMUNISTS, AND SEVERAL OTHER LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS, CARRIED PLACARDS AND CHANTED SLOGANS. THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS, HOWEVER, AND POLICE PROTECTION WAS ADEQUATE.

2. MOREOVER, DURING THE PAST TWO DAYS THE CONSULATE GENERAL HAS RECEIVED NUMEROUS TELEPHONE CALLS BITTERLY CONDEMNING U.S. ACTION AGAINST LIBYA. THE POST HAS ALSO RECEIVED SOME 50-75  
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LETTERS VOICING CONCERN OVER US ACTION. ONLY A HANDFUL HAVE CALLED TO SAY THEY FULLY UNDERSTOOD WHY THE US ACTED AGAINST LIBYA.

3. IN THE PRESS:  
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UNCLASSIFIED U.S. Department of State Case No. F-2009-03792 Doc No. C17572062 Date: 06/19/2013  
THE BULK OF SCOTTISH MEDIA REPORTS HAVE BEEN BIASED AND DISTORTED,  
EMPHASIZING CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND RARELY NOTING PAST ACTS AND  
CASUALTIES OF TERRORISM. THE SCOTTISH EDITION OF THE "DAILY  
RECORD", FOR EXAMPLE, FEATURED A FULL FRONT PAGE PICTURE OF A  
LIBYAN CHILD UNJURED IN THE RAID WITH THE HEADLINE QUOTE:  
"WE'D DO IT AGAIN" UNQUOTE. THE "GLASGOW EVENING TIMES" PROCLAIMED  
THAT THE BOMBING OF LIBYA WOULD DO NOTHING TO DIMINISH TERRORISM,  
THAT IT WAS INEXCUSABLE THAT INNOCENT VICTIMS WERE KILLED IN THE  
RAIDS, AND THAT THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN WERE OVERWHELMINGLY  
AGAINST SUCH ACTION.

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4. ON APRIL 16TH THE "GLASGOW HERALD" FEATURED A SKETCH OF  
PRESIDENT REAGAN WITH A SMOKING GUN AS A PREFACE TO ALL ARTICLES  
ABOUT LIBYA. THEIR EDITORIAL ENTITLED QUOTE "MORE VIGILANTISM  
THAN SELF-DEFESE" UNQUOTE NOTED THAT THE USG'S ARGUMENT THAT  
WE WERE EXERCISING AN INHERENT RIGHT OF SELF-DEFENSE UNDER  
THE UN CHARTER WAS THREADBARE. AT BEST, IT CONTINUED THAT THE  
RAID SPRINGS FROM CONSIDERATIONS HAVING LITTLE TO DO WITH  
ESSENTIAL STRATEGIC INTERESTS, AND WAS CARRIED OUT IN A WAY THAT  
MAXIMIZED THE MESSINESS OF THE ENTIRE OPERATION. THE OUTCOME,  
THE EDITORIAL CONTINUED, SEEMS MUCH MORE LIKELY TO INCREASE THAN  
TO REDUCE THE TERRORIST THREAT. IT CONCLUDED THAT PRESIDENT  
REAGAN HAS NEVER HAD A LARGE FAN CLUB IN THIS COUNTRY, BUT  
THIS PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF A CALAMITOUSLY SIMPLISTIC APPROACH  
TO INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS WAS BOUND TO INCREASE THE DISTRUST  
OF THE PRESIDENT ACROSS THE ENTIRE POLITICAL SPECTRUM AND PROMOTE  
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A MORE GENERALIZED ANTI-AMERICANISM OF THE MOST UNDESIRABLE  
KIND.

5. "THE SCOTSMAN" (EDINBURGH) PERHAPS SCOTLAND'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS  
NEWSPAPER, NOTED IN ITS EDITORIAL THAT THE DECISION TO BOMB LIBYA  
WAS AN EXTREMELY UNWISE RESORT TO MILITARY ACTION WHICH WILL  
ALMOST CERTAINLY BE INEFFECTIVE IN DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF  
MIDDLE EAST TERRORISM OR WITH COLONEL GADDAFI. IT STATES THE  
FRUSTRATION IN WASHINGTON WAS UNDERSTANDABLE AT THE SUPPORT OF  
TERRORISM, BUT PRESIDENT REAGAN'S AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE WAS ILL-  
THOUGHT OUT AND WAS LIKELY TO BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. IF THE  
RAID HAD BEEN CONFINED TO MILITARY TARGETS AND HAD NOT INVOLVED  
HEAVY CIVILIAN CASUALTIES, THERE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOME JUSTIFICATION  
FOR THE ACTION, ALTHOUGH EVEN IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES IT WAS  
STILL ILL-ADVISED. THE ONLY SENSIBLE AND REALISTIC WAY TO DEAL  
WITH GADDAFI IS FOR THE US AND EUROPE TO ISOLATE LIBYA WITH  
WATER-TIGHT ECONOMIC SANCTIONS.

6. IN SUM, THE SCOTTISH PUBLIC IS FORMULATING ITS NEGATIVE VIEW  
OF THE US ACTION IN LIBYA BASED ON THE TYPE OF BIASED MEDIA

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