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# Libya

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY

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Armed Forces

## NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY PUBLICATIONS

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# LIBYA

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## Armed Forces

### A. Defense establishment

The coup which overthrew the Libyan monarchy on 1 September 1969 was instigated by virtually unknown junior officers of the Royal Libyan Army. They were supported initially by noncommissioned officers and were joined by various senior army and Libyan National Security Force officers within hours after the first announcements. The comparatively bloodless takeover came from a totally unexpected source, but the plotters apparently had planned and coordinated their activities carefully. By the end of the second day, the new regime was in control of Tripoli and had immobilized the strike forces of the National Security Force in Benghazi, Al Bayda', and Tripoli, thereby neutralizing the primary remaining threat to its successful takeover of the country. Factors contributing to the coup included resentment over the political influence and favoritism bestowed by King Idris on poorly qualified senior officers of the army, dissatisfaction with the procurement of weapons from the United Kingdom, which would have required the long-term presence of hundreds of British technicians, and the failure of the government to adopt a more militant attitude regarding Israel. (C)

The armed forces consist of the army, navy, and air force, which prior to the coup had a total personnel strength of about 8,300 men. The three services were established more for prestige purposes than to meet actual defense requirements and were totally ineffective as a combat force. For defense against external aggression, Libya relied on the 20-year defense treaty with the United Kingdom. Signed in 1953, this treaty not only committed the United Kingdom to assist Libya in time of war, but also permitted the stationing of British forces in Libya. In addition, an agreement negotiated with the United States in June 1957 committed the United States to aid in the development of the Libyan Army for the maintenance of internal security and for self-defense. The U.S. agreement was broadened in 1962 to include aid in developing the Libyan Air Force. A subsequent

Libya-U.K. agreement provided aid for the Libyan Navy. (C)

The desire of the government in power after 1969 for involvement in the Arab war against Israel called for the development of a modern military force and the reduction of dependence on the United States and the United Kingdom for support. By June 1973, personnel strengths of all 3 services had been increased, bringing the total number above 23,500. Several years earlier, base agreements with the United States and the United Kingdom had been prematurely terminated, and military assistance from both countries greatly diminished. The Libyans shifted their sources of military aid to Arab countries and other nations sympathetic to the Arab cause. Egypt assumed a predominant role in the training of army personnel both in Libya and in Egypt. It has stationed troops in Libya for dispersal and training of its own forces, for advice and training of the Libyan Armed Forces, and also for the support of the ruling junta. In accordance with an agreement between the Libyan and Egyptian leaders, several thousand Libyan soldiers were rotated to Egypt in January 1970 for training and duty along the Suez Canal. Although the Libyan contingent was recalled before engaging in combat, the move represented Libya's only commitment of personnel to the joint military Arab command. During the October 1973 war with Israel, Libya contributed substantial military equipment and financial aid to the Arab cause, but no army or navy units were sent to the front. Some Libyans, however, may have flown Libyan Mirages which had been deployed to Egypt in early 1973. (S)

Before the 1969 coup all weapons and equipment in use in the Libyan Armed Forces were of Western origin, primarily British and U.S., acquired through purchase and grant aid. The influx of Egyptian troops and advisers introduced Soviet-made equipment which presaged extensive Libyan purchases of military equipment from both the U.S.S.R. and Czechoslovakia, deliveries of which began in 1970. Two contracts for the purchase of military equipment from

the United Kingdom had been concluded by the King. The Libyan Government canceled the one for a mobile air defense and missile system, and the British Government eliminated some 200 tanks from the second one. The remainder of the equipment ordered under the second contract, including other armored vehicles, antiaircraft guns, and field artillery pieces, were to be delivered on an as-needed basis. A destroyer escort designed to be missile-equipped, also purchased under the second contract, was turned over to the Libyans in February 1973. Negotiations for the purchase of eight additional C-130 transport aircraft from the United States have been completed, but approval from the U.S. Government for delivery has not yet been obtained. In early 1970, the Libyan Government contracted for the purchase of some 120 jet fighters from France; deliveries are to be completed by the end of 1974. (C)

In addition to the armed forces, there existed before the coup a National Security Force with a total strength of 20,000. This force, part of which was organized along paramilitary lines, was favored over the army by King Idris and had primary responsibility for maintaining internal security. The National Security Force, considered more trustworthy and loyal than the army, was relied on to counter any coup attempt by the regular armed forces. Most of the men and equipment of the National Security Force, including all the weapons and vehicles of the mobile strike forces, have been incorporated into the army since the coup. What remains of the original National Security Force is a corps of generally unarmed urban policemen. (C)

Two significant developments connected with the 1969 revolt were: 1) the lack of strong opposition encountered by Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) forces in neutralizing and bringing under control the various units of the National Security Force, particularly the Cyrenaican element which had heretofore been considered the King's staunchest supporter; and 2) the subsequent merging of National Security Force personnel with the rebel army forces. This was the first time the National Security Force and the army operated as a joint force, rather than as competitors or rivals. Reportedly, however, jealousy and animosity remains between the army and the former National Security Force personnel, who are now policemen. (S)

The only serious challenges to the regime of Col. Mu'ammur Qadhafi and the RCC have come from its own ranks. In December 1969 the Ministers of Defense

and Interior were arrested on charges of plotting a coup attempt; however, it is possible that the ministers were removed from office to prevent potential opposition to Qadhafi's pro-Egyptian policies. Again in September 1970, some 80 army and police officers and some civilians were arrested in Cyrenaica for allegedly plotting against the regime. At the time there was no clear indication that these individuals were actually aiming to unseat the RCC, but apparently their criticism of foreign and domestic policies could not be tolerated by the government. (S)

The rapid growth of the Libyan Armed Forces does not represent an equivalent improvement in their capabilities. Personnel are generally unskilled and inexperienced, and there is a dearth of qualified officers. Even if the ambitious improvement program continues at its current pace, Libya will not develop a military organization capable of fulfilling its primary mission of national defense in the near future. While the armed forces technically possess the capability to maintain internal security, which is also their responsibility, their responsiveness in the event of widespread disorder would be contingent on the political situation at the time. (S)

### 1. Military history (C)

The Libyan Arab Republic Army came into existence on 1 September 1969. Its immediate predecessor, the Royal Libyan Army, descended from the Libyan Arab Force, popularly known as the Sanusi Army, which was formed early in 1940 by Libyan exiles and refugees residing in Egypt. Other Libyans who had served in the Italian Army and volunteers from the province of Cyrenaica soon joined the force, which offered its services to the British military authorities in the war against Italy. Staffed by both British and Arab officers, the force reached a maximum strength of five battalions, two of which took part in the defense of Tobruk in 1941. Other units were employed in garrison duties and in intelligence operations behind enemy lines.

In 1943 most of the Libyan Arab Force was absorbed by two police forces formed by the British military administration in the provinces of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. The remaining members of the force, some 120 men, were designated to form the Emir's Guard to serve as palace guards and escorts for the Emir. The title of the guard was changed to the King's Guard when Libya became independent in 1951.



The Libyan Government decided to form a federal army in 1952, and the King's Guard, then stationed at Tripoli under the command of a British officer, was moved to Susah<sup>1</sup> in Cyrenaica to form the nucleus of the Royal Libyan Army. The British Military Mission arrived in December 1952, and the 1st Infantry Battalion was formed in early 1953 from the former King's Guard personnel, officers and noncommissioned officers who transferred from the Cyrenaican police force, and recruits from the three provinces. A Turkish army officer became the first Chief of Staff of the Royal Libyan Army; he was succeeded by Iraqi army officers in this position until 1960, when a Libyan officer assumed command. The navy and air force were established in 1962 and 1963, respectively, as specialized components of the army, but they have since become separate services.

The British Military Mission departed in January 1972 at the request of the Libyan Government. A U.S. Military Liaison Section within the U.S. Embassy, which in 1970 replaced the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group established in 1957, was closed in March 1972.

**2. Command structure (U/OU)**

Supreme command of the armed forces is exercised by the Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council who is concurrently Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and de facto Minister of Defense (Figure 1). Headquarters of the Revolutionary Command Council and the Ministry of Defense are both located in Tripoli. A National Defense Council was established in January 1970 and tasked with responsibility for national defense and preparedness of the armed forces. Its members include the Ministers of Defense and Interior, the Commander in Chief and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, the Chief of General Intelligence Service, a number of members of the Revolutionary Command Council, including the Chairman, plus any number of ad hoc members. As the military policymaking body, the council passes decisions on arms supply, strengths, organization, human and material resources, and related matters such as civil defense activities. On the advice of the National Defense Council, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces issues orders affecting the army, navy, and air force. Armed forces headquarters in Tripoli

<sup>1</sup>For diacritics on place names see the list of names on the apron of the Summary Map in the Country Profile chapter and the map itself.

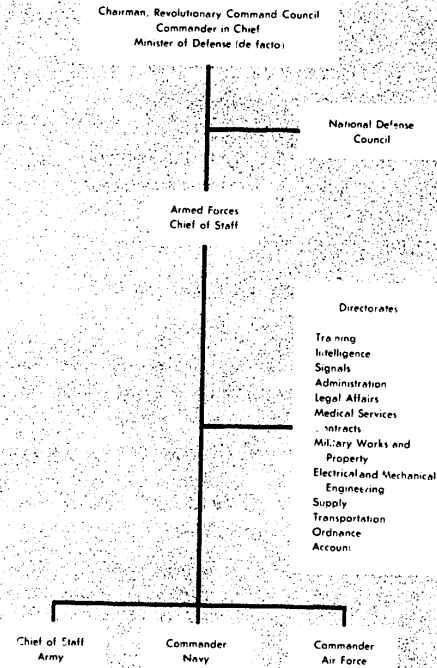


FIGURE 1. Command structure (C)

houses a general staff which administers the affairs of all three services. The general staff, which previously consisted of six directorates, has been expanded in concordance with the overall army development program. A minimum of 13 directorates have been identified, and there are indications that the number will grow as reorganization becomes more defined.

Some responsibilities of the former Directorate of Movements have been dispersed to independent directorates for Training, Intelligence, and Signals. Other functions, such as the formation, disposition, and command of units, have been absorbed by the new Directorate of Administration, which also retains its responsibilities for mobilization and demobilization, appointments, promotions, transfers, retirements, and discharges. Separate directorates have been created for Legal Affairs and Medical Services. Some functions of the Directorate of Contracts and those of the all-encompassing Directorate of General Services and Supply have been assimilated by the newly established Military Works and Property, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, Supply, and Transport-

tation directorates. Still in existence, but with slightly altered duties, are the Ordnance and Accounts directorates.

Since the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces also acts as Chief of Staff of the Army, he exercises command and control of the army, while in the navy and air force this function is delegated to the commanders of the respective services.

**B. Joint activities**

**1. Military manpower (C)**

As of 1 January 1974 Libya had 489,000 males between 15 and 49 years of age, of whom about 58% were physically fit for military duty. Distribution by 5-year age groups was as follows:

AGE	TOTAL NUMBER OF MALES	MAXIMUM NUMBER FIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE
15-19	100,000	65,000
20-24	89,000	55,000
25-29	75,000	45,000
30-34	69,000	40,000
35-39	55,000	30,000
40-44	52,000	25,000
45-49	49,000	25,000
<b>Total, 15-49</b>	<b>489,000</b>	<b>285,000</b>

The average number reaching military age (17) annually will be about 20,000 in the 5-year period 1974-78.

All military service is voluntary. High pay scales have facilitated recruiting efforts, but strength quotas for the expanding armed forces have not been successfully met. A conscription program to induct 200 men a month was scheduled to begin in early September 1969, but the coup prevented its implementation at that time. Increases in personnel strength have begun to taper off, and if voluntary enlistments continue to fall short of requirements, the government might find it necessary to enact a compulsory national service law to maintain force goals. Procurement of men suitable for specialist and technical training presents a major problem, and those so trained are frequently lost to civilian industry. Generally, military personnel are in fairly good health and able to endure hardships. Morale is a variable factor in the armed forces since strong and conflicting sentiments, inherent in the Libyan population, remain within the military environment. In addition to local rivalries, opposition to the preponderance of Egyptian influence has been a major point of dissension throughout the military. Liberal promotions and

lucrative wages have contributed somewhat to *esprit de corps* and have reduced, at least temporarily, the potential for insubordination. On an individual basis, the soldier is basically loyal to his immediate commander and will usually follow his instructions.

Personnel are required to be Libyan citizens between 17 and 25 years of age and to meet physical and mental standards. Technicians and men with previous military service have been exempt from the age and physical requirements. The initial enlistment period, which has been 5 years, with subsequent reenlistment periods of 2 years, may have been extended by the military government. As recently as 1968 as many as 80% of armed forces personnel were illiterate. Improvement in the educational system, which began under the King, have contributed to the increased literacy rate for persons 15 years or younger. Accordingly, educational levels of military personnel can be expected to show a rapid increase in ensuing years.

Since the present government came to power, most of the senior officers of the former Royal Libyan Army have been forced into retirement. Originally commissioned from the ranks of the former Libyan Arab Force, they were, in general, inadequately trained for command, and their continuance in service was in the nature of a reward for wartime service or for rendering personal services to the King. Younger officers for all of the armed forces are drawn from modest to well-to-do urban families and are fairly well educated. They are widely diversified in their geographic, tribal, and racial origins, and most of them have studied and traveled abroad. As a group, they are conscientious, well disciplined, and take their duties and responsibilities seriously.

Enlisted personnel, most of whom are tribesmen from the rural provincial areas, are selected largely on physical standards only, with little or no regard for education or background.

Libya has no reserve system or organization, and in an emergency, expansion of forces is achieved by the recall, on an individual basis, of former military personnel.

In both the army and the air force, large numbers of Egyptian officers serve in an advisory role alongside their Libyan counterparts, providing both the technical expertise and the leadership experience which the younger Libyan officers generally lack.

**2. Strength trends (S)**

In the 21 years the Libyan military services have been in existence, personnel strength has gradually

risen from a total of 120 to over 23,000, as shown in the following tabulation:

	ARMY	NAVY	AIR FORCE
1952	120	...	...
1956	1,850	...	...
1957	2,300	...	...
1958	2,700	...	...
1959	3,000	...	...
1960	4,200	...	...
1961	5,000	...	...
1962	5,200	80	...
1963	6,200	100	95
1964	6,200	190	150
1965	6,200	200	150
1966	6,300	200	130
1967	7,200	215	140
1968	7,500	215	220
1969	9,500	400	400
1970	16,000	1,700	700
1971	16,000	2,000	2,000
1972	16,500	2,500	3,000
1973	18,000	2,500	3,000

... Not pertinent.

Personnel strengths are expected to continue to increase, but at a slower rate than in recent years, as the services develop. The accelerated growth rate in 1970-1972 demonstrates government emphasis on military buildup. No known force goals are available, but the Libyans' ability to produce any sizable force will be restricted by the small manpower reserve available. The services already lack sufficient personnel to utilize effectively the equipment on hand. In view of the additional aircraft remaining on order, the air force will be confronted with an even larger problem unless remedial action is taken.

### 3. Training (S)

All major army units, the air force, and the navy participated in the first large-scale, Libyan joint military maneuvers in August 1972. Subsequently, a number of smaller joint exercises have been conducted. In December 1971 a combined Libyan-Egyptian exercise involving army and air force units of both countries was conducted near Benghazi.

A small number of navy and air force officers are graduates of the Military Academy at Benghazi. A large proportion of servicemen are U.S. or British trained. Since late 1969 Egypt has been providing training for officers and enlisted men both at its own facilities and in Libya.

### 4. Military budget

The defense budget is prepared within the Ministry of Defense and submitted to the Ministry of Finance

for incorporation into the total national budget. The budget is then submitted to the Revolutionary Command Council for approval and adoption into law. (U/OU)

Libyan budgets for fiscal years 1969 and 1970 (1 April-31 March) were prepared under the Idris regime. Prior to the coup in September 1969, the National Security Force was considered to be a separate organization, and funds for its maintenance were included as a separate line item in the defense budget. After the coup about one-quarter of the National Security Force's personnel were merged into the regular armed forces and are now funded under the armed forces budget account. The sharp drop in the total defense budget between FY70 and 71 reflects this merger as well as the deletion from Libya's published budget of the Defense and Arab Cooperation category. This category covered investment outlays for the defense establishment, purchases of foreign military equipment, and Khartoum aid payments. Data on investments are not available; however, based upon known materiel imports, Libya is estimated to have paid about \$52 million for equipment in FY71 and \$110 million in FY72. The Khartoum aid payments for these 2 fiscal years were \$71.5 million and \$59 million, respectively. When the estimated materiel payments and the Khartoum aid contributions are combined with the published armed forces budgets for these years, the totals are \$207 and \$253 million. These totals, which do not include an allowance for investment for the defense establishment, more closely approximate actual defense budgets for 1971 and 1972. Data are not available for making a similar approximation for FY73. Libyan published defense budgets for FY1969 through FY1973 are shown in Figure 2. (S)

### 5. Economic support and logistics

Libya has no capability to produce military materiel other than some simple quartermaster items. Revenue from oil exports, however, enables the country to make fairly substantial foreign military materiel purchases. Libya's economy has exhibited a high growth rate in the past decade as a result of the development of its petroleum industry. However, its economic structure has changed little, and the depressed agricultural sector remains the largest employer of Libya's workers. Manufacturing is on a small scale and is mainly devoted to the processing of agricultural products. (C)

From 1954 to 1970, the United Kingdom was Libya's primary source of military equipment. Through 1972 the United Kingdom supplied materiel

FIGURE 2. Defense budgets (\$)  
(Millions of U.S. dollars)

	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
Defense Budget.....	267.8	338.5	84.0	84.0	121.6
Armed Forces.....	40.2	46.0	84.0	84.0	121.6
National Security Force.....	82.0	82.6	...	...	...
Defense and Arab Cooperation Fund...	145.6	216.0	na	na	na
Defense budget as a percent of national budget.....	27.7	28.4	*7.8	*6.0	*6.7
Defense budget as a percent of estimated GNP.....	10.3	11.6	*2.4	*2.3	na

NOTE—Dollar values for fiscal years 1969 through 1972 converted at .357 dinars (pounds) equal \$1.00. For FY1973 dollar values converted at .329 dinars equal \$1.00.

na Data not available.

... Not pertinent.

\*Not comparable with previous years because of changed budgetary practices.

valued at over \$53 million, including mortars, recoilless rifles, antiaircraft and antitank artillery, and armored vehicles as well as most of the country's naval ships. The United States also supplied significant quantities of ground and air force equipment valued at \$46 million. (S)

Since 1970 the Soviet Union has become Libya's major supplier of ground forces materiel and has agreed to deliver equipment valued at \$129 million, including a variety of infantry weapons, artillery, armored vehicles, and trucks. Additional Communist materiel has been received from Czechoslovakia under a \$19 million contract to provide armored vehicles and trucks. Since 1970 the principal non-Communist suppliers have been France, which has delivered fighter and trainer aircraft and helicopters valued at over \$166 million, and Italy, which has delivered \$8 million worth of armored vehicles and artillery. (S)

The navy and air force are logistically supported by the army, and their requirements are incorporated with those of the army for presentation to higher authority for approval. The logistics system does not function in a manner capable of supporting extensive operations. (C)

### C. Army

The missions of the army are to defend the nation and to maintain internal order and public security. The army is capable of controlling isolated or localized dissident activity; in event of sustained, widespread disturbances, however, cooperation from the local police forces would probably be required to control the situation and restore order. The army is ineffective as a combatant force and incapable of defending against

aggression by Algeria or Egypt. Major weaknesses and deficiencies include the following: dispersion of units along the 1,100-mile littoral, with slight capability to mass forces; little field training; inexperienced leadership; a logistics system inadequate to support field operations; and an insufficient number of trained technical service personnel to maintain equipment in operating condition. The army has had little organizational structure above battalion level capable of planning and implementing an adequate training program, but efforts are underway to remedy this situation. No uniform standards of proficiency are known to be established. (S)

The individual Libyan soldier is of hardy Arab or Arab-Berber stock, resistant to hardship and amenable to discipline, but usually handicapped by a lack of formal education and mechanical and technical aptitudes. Among officers a weakness is the general lack of initiative; decisions on even the most trivial matters are often referred to headquarters level for resolution. (U/OU)

#### 1. Organization (S)

Command authority is vested in the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces who is concurrently Chief of Staff of the Army.

Prior to the September 1969 coup, the army was organized into a two-brigade force—one each in Tripoli and Benghazi—with general headquarters at Al Bayda. After a short interim period in which the brigades were disbanded and headquarters transferred to Benghazi, a large-scale reorganization was undertaken. The brigade concept was regenerated but did not follow the previous pattern; neither did it conform to the organizational plan drawn up by the



FIGURE 3. Ferret scout cars of the reconnaissance battalions in Tripoli parade (S)

British Military Mission, which called for the formation of a field army of one armored and one infantry brigade and the creation of an air defense command. Under the guidance of Egyptian military advisory personnel, the army has been reorganized into two mechanized infantry brigades, one armored brigade, a Republican Guard brigade, and an airborne commando battalion. Territorial deployment is based on a two-district concept, with one district comprising the eastern region of Cyrenaica and the other, the regions of Tripolitania and Fezzan.

## 2. Strength, composition, and disposition<sup>2</sup> (S)

The army has more than doubled its precoup strength of 7,500 as a result of an early massive recruitment program and through the transfer of

<sup>2</sup>For current detailed information, see the *Order of Battle Summary Foreign Ground Forces* and the *Military Intelligence Summary*, both published by the Defense Intelligence Agency.

approximately 5,000 men from the former security force. The gain in officers has been disproportionate to that of enlisted personnel, however, due to a series of actions which removed nearly all officers in the rank of major and above from active service. To offset the officer loss, some warrant officers and cadets who had completed 1 year at the military academy were commissioned, but their number was not sufficient to fill the existing vacancies.

While the brigade structure has been adopted, units continue to be dispersed in battalion-size strengths along the heavily populated coastal regions and at Sabha in the former Fezzan Province. There are five infantry battalions with authorized strengths of 600 and a commando force of at least 300 highly motivated recruits. Three reconnaissance battalions and four tank battalions of about 300 men each are presently organized but the Libyans have sufficient vehicles to outfit additional units (Figures 3 and 4). Two 600-man Republican Guard battalions are probably tank equipped as well. An air defense artillery battalion of approximately 300 men in each mechanized infantry brigade may be attached to an air defense command if Libyan SAM units become operational at sites under construction. Field artillery battalions, also of about 300 men, are stationed in each region. Signal, Engineer, Transport, Medical, and Military Police companies are located both in Tripoli and in Benghazi and serve units in their respective regions.

## 3. Training (S)

Training is inadequate for current and planned requirements. The ouster of senior officers in the aftermath of the coup greatly depleted the already



FIGURE 4. T54/55 medium tank (S)

scarce supply of qualified instructors. Other factors adversely affecting the status of training include inability to plan and execute programs, insufficient training aids, diversity of equipment, and the tendency of units to train on an as-needed basis in an informal, unstandardized manner. Moreover, there is a general ignorance of mechanics and the sciences with a consequent inability to comprehend preventive maintenance or to understand the workings of more sophisticated equipment.

Shortly after the coup great emphasis was placed on military training for college and high school students.

This included both boys and girls. Uniforms were issued and drills were held on a regular basis. This mandatory training, which included arms instruction, came under heavy criticism from students and their families and by late 1970 had been eliminated. In April 1973 basic weapons training was begun for members of the newly formed "popular committees," but arms have not been distributed.

A large basic training center has been established at Misratah (Figure 5). In the past, recruits received 4 months of basic training at the Recruit Training Center at Kassala Barracks in Tripoli. Some training is

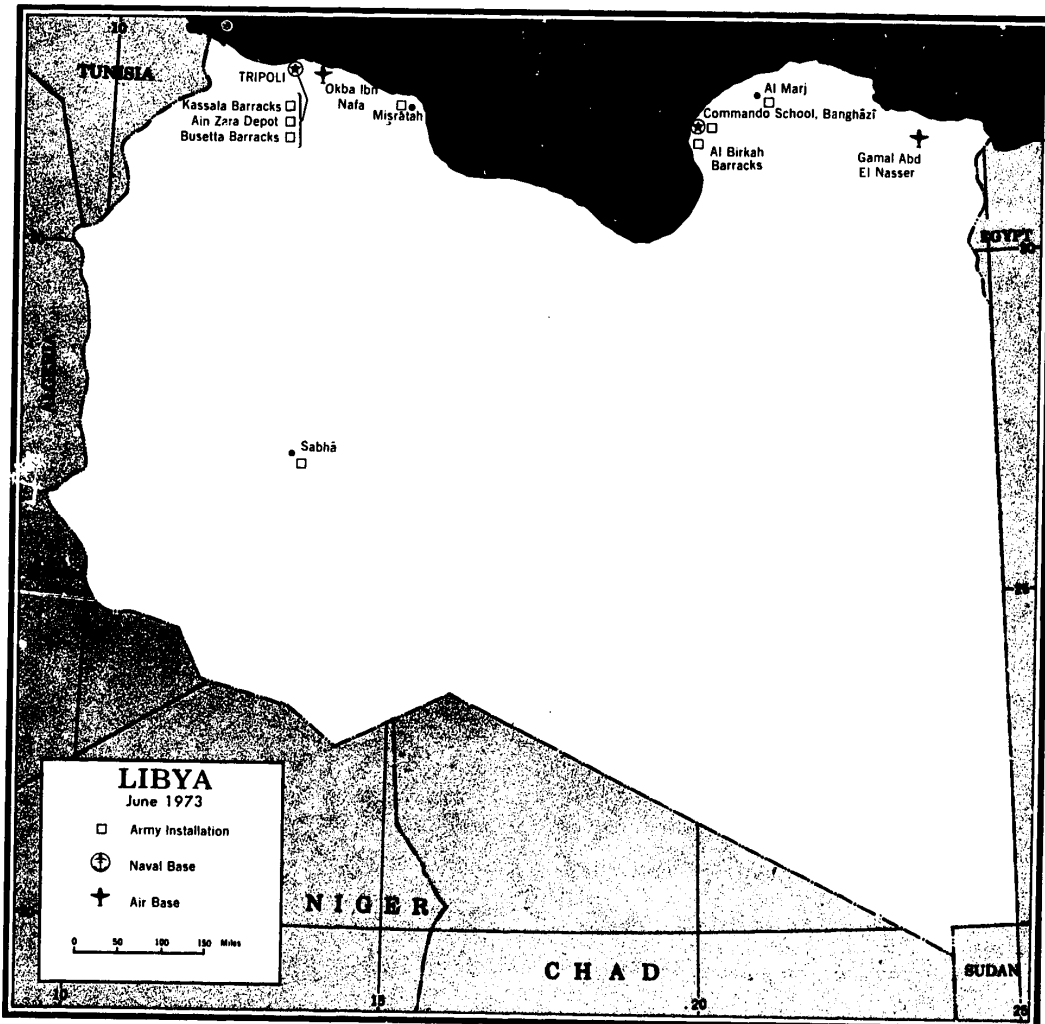


FIGURE 5. Major military installations (S)

still being conducted there as well as at the old navy barracks in Tripoli. Advanced training is given in the units, and often arrangements are made to send personnel to courses in foreign countries. Brigade-level exercises have been held. In January 1970 entire battalion-size units were transferred to Egypt for training, with the intention that while there they would also encounter some combat experience. The plan apparently failed when troops were recalled because of popular resistance to the move.

Four specialist schools continue to operate in Libya. The School of Engineering at Al Birkah (near Banghazi), which had been designed for officer and NCO instruction, provides training in field defense and obstacles, field demolition, boobytraps, mines, water supply, and road construction. A Driving School is also located at Al Birkah, but the School of Signals has been moved from that site to Al Marj. Both officers and enlisted personnel have been trained there in courses ranging from 432 to 864 hours. The School of Infantry has remained at Al Marj where its previous curriculum provided for three officer courses, one NCO course, and two courses for both officers and NCO's.

Libya no longer has a cadet training academy, but sends students to the Egyptian Military Academy. A Commando School has been established at the former Royal Military Academy facilities located in Banghazi. Commando trainees, who are all volunteers, must be between the ages of 17 and 25, in good physical condition, and not married to a non-Arab woman. Courses include instruction in demolitions, guerrilla tactics, weapons, and parachuting. Associated with the program is a field training area located in Tulmaythah, a region previously used by the military academy for annual summer exercises. The first class graduated from the school in May 1970 after about 3 1/2 months of instruction, believed to be given exclusively by Egyptian personnel. The army sponsors commando training oriented toward fedayeen-type activity for Libyan, Palestinian, and other Arab volunteers at a number of camps in Libya including the commando school facilities. Instructors are both Libyans and Palestinians.

Both the United States and the United Kingdom were providing ample army assistance to Libya until the time of the coup, when their operations came to a near standstill. The British Military Mission had primary responsibility for providing training assistance to the army, and the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) had conducted training in the operation and maintenance of materiel supplied by the United States. In addition, the MAAG has provided some formal training in communications and

supply functions, while U.S. mobile training teams had given instruction in small arms and artillery. Some specialist and technical capability was acquired through on-the-job training, and selected personnel received technical training at service schools in the United States and the United Kingdom. Also in the past a small number of Libyan officers attended schools in Egypt, Jordan, and Pakistan.

As the present Libyan Government sought to terminate military assistance contracts with the United States and the United Kingdom, Egypt rapidly assumed the predominant role in the training of the Libyan Army. Currently, Egyptians are providing infantry, artillery, armor, and signal instruction, and are probably engaged in other fields as well. Large numbers of Libyan army officers and enlisted men continue to be sent to Egypt for specialist courses.

The Libyan Army has no known reserve training program.

#### 4. Logistics (C)

With the exception of some quartermaster items, the army is completely dependent on foreign sources for all types of equipment and weapons. Its supply and maintenance systems suffer from lack of organization and experienced personnel. Supplies are procured and distributed in a haphazard manner, and items are resupplied, if available, only when exhausted by the using unit. Stock levels and predicted consumption levels are either unknown or ignored. Maintenance is substandard, and spare parts, when in short supply or nonexistent at unit level, can often be found stacked away in warehouses. The diverse origins of equipment create additional problems. Although the Libyan Army has been involved in the construction of new warehouses, it has placed little emphasis on the training of supply personnel, who often do not possess the language capability to utilize supply catalogues and supply forms.

Primary ammunition supply points for the army are located in Ain Zara Depot in Tripoli and at another depot in Banghazi. Much ammunition is on hand, but it requires cleaning and maintenance. Storage procedures and safety practices are completely absent. Ammunition bunkers and storage facilities vacated by the British at Tobruk and by the U.S. Air Force at Okba Ibn Nafa (formerly Wheelus) Air Base are among areas slated for use by the army.

#### D. Navy

The Libyan Navy was founded in 1962 when the United Kingdom transferred on a loan basis two inshore minesweepers. For the next 10 years a British

naval mission was in residence in Tripoli training the Libyan Navy on its fleet of primarily British-built ships. Almost all Libyan naval personnel are sent abroad for schooling, generally to Egypt, Greece, and the United Kingdom, but also to Pakistan, West Germany, and Yugoslavia. From 1969 to 1970, Egypt conducted a training program for Libyan personnel on board Egyptian ships stationed at Tripoli and Benghazi. (S)

Comprised of about 2,500 men and some 23 ships, the navy is ineffective as a combat force and incapable of fulfilling its mission. Activity is devoted almost exclusively to individual ship training and occasional coastal patrols of short duration. Development of any significant operational capability will depend largely on the scale and extent of continued foreign assistance, both for materiel and training. (S)

#### 1. Organization (C)

The Commander of the Navy exercises direct control over all shore activity and the operating units. Headquarters were moved from Jallo Barracks to Bu Setta Barracks in Tripoli in late 1969, but no formal headquarters staff has been established. Ships are normally based at and operate out of Tripoli but are occasionally stationed at Benghazi and Tobruk. No subordinate operational commands have been organized. The navy is not represented at the Ministry of Defense.

#### 2. Strength, composition, and disposition<sup>3</sup> (S)

Following the coup in September 1969, the Revolutionary Command Council placed all ships and personnel belonging to the Customs Guard and Harbor Police under the control of the navy. Navy strength at that time had been 400 men and eight ships—all constructed by British yards. The integration of the customs and police boats—between 13 and 18 patrol craft—brought the ship strength as high as 26. At present, ship strength is a destroyer escort (DE) (Figure 6), 3 fast, light, guided missile boats (PTGL), 11 motor gunboats (PGM), 5 patrol boats (PB), a motor boat tender (AGP), a vehicle cargo ship (AKR), and a miscellaneous service craft (YAG). All are in active operational status except the YAG, which is in reserve. The DE, delivered to Libya in the United Kingdom in February 1973, reached Libyan waters in August 1973.

The rapid expansion—over sevenfold in 3 years—has had no appreciable effect on what was basically an inefficient force. The removal of the three highest ranking and most capable officers following the coup aggravated the already difficult task of managing the enlarged navy. The promotion of several chief petty officers to the rank of ensign did little to alleviate the critical shortage of qualified leaders.

<sup>3</sup>For current detailed information, see *Automated Naval Order of Battle (Ships)*, Vol VI, and *Naval Forces Intelligence Studies (NAFIS)*, both published by the Defense Intelligence Agency.



FIGURE 6. Libyan destroyer escort in U.K. waters (U/OU)



### 3. Training (S)

Naval training facilities are meager. All officers have been trained abroad, mainly in the United Kingdom, and to a lesser extent in Greece, Egypt, Pakistan, Yugoslavia and other countries. A maximum of five officer candidates have been trained annually in the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. The course curriculum consists of 4 months of English language training, 6 months of academic course work, and 4 months on board a training ship. Selected officers are later sent to the United Kingdom for specialist courses such as gunnery, navigation, and engineering. The minimal language training and the fact that Libyans spend no active training time on Royal Navy combatant ships are major shortcomings of the British program which have contributed to uneven development of the Libyan Navy. The crew of the Libyan DE received familiarization training in the United Kingdom.

The program offered prospective Libyan officers at the Greek Naval Academy, on the other hand, is considered more specifically suited for the needs and capacities of the Libyan cadet. Here students are given a year of language instruction before embarking on an intensive 3-year training program. Strict disciplinary regulations are enforced at the academy, and the attrition rate is very low. Libya concluded naval training contracts with the Pakistan and West German Governments in 1970. A few officers have been sent to West Germany, and about 100 officers, engineers, and cadets have been trained in Pakistan so far. A small group of Libyan trainees is also in Yugoslavia.

Following the 1969 coup, Egypt established a naval mission in Libya. About 100 Egyptian naval advisers began arriving in November 1969 aboard Soviet-built fleet minesweepers and submarine chasers which were subsequently used to train Libyan personnel. In early 1970 Egypt moved its naval academy to Libya, thereby offering the Libyans their first opportunity to receive officer training at indigenous facilities. Egyptian naval advisers, naval ships, and the naval academy returned to Egypt by late 1970.

### 4. Logistics (C)

Libya has no facilities capable of constructing naval ships. Most of the ships now in the Libyan Navy were purchased from the United Kingdom. Libyan naval ships continue to be overhauled and drydocked at Malta, although the Libyan Navy owns a modern 2,000-ton repair tender, the *Zilten*. A 5,000-ton capacity floating drydock, now under construction at

Malta, is scheduled for delivery in 1974. This new facility probably will be available to the Libyan Navy for ship repairs.

The navy's main ammunition depot is at Ain Zara in Tripoli where small arms and cannons are stored. Most arms stores formerly located in Cyrenaica have also been moved to Tripoli.

### E. Air force (S)

Through extensive assistance from the United States, the Royal Libyan Air Force was organized in 1962 and officially began operation in August 1963. Until the withdrawal of the United States from Wheelus Air Base in Tripoli in June 1970, a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) and a U.S. Air Force detachment provided training, maintenance support, and operational assistance to the Libyan Air Force. At the time of the U.S. departure, the Libyans had not yet attained the capability to operate their air force; they remain entirely dependent on foreign sources for spare parts, maintenance, and ground support.

The Libyan Arab Air Force (LAAF), as it has been called since the revolution, is responsible for air defense, aerial reconnaissance, and tactical and airlift support.

An effective air defense capability has not yet been developed but is a high priority element of the training program. Air crews are capable of ground controlled intercepts and have considerable training in air combat maneuvers. With the exception of two Libyan Mirages firing on a U.S. C-130 in international airspace in March 1973, however, the only known air-to-air gunnery practice has been simulated. No routine alert posture or defensive fighter patrols have been noted, but runway alerts have been called when Libya has perceived a threat or wished to demonstrate its readiness posture.

The LAAF has a potential ground support and reconnaissance capability in the Mirage and could probably conduct up to three ground support missions daily in the F-5 and T-33 aircraft. No tactical operations have required that this capability be demonstrated.

Airlift capability is fairly good. Air force C-130's have been used to deliver arms purchases from Europe and to transport personnel and arms to various Middle Eastern and African countries.

In late 1973, the LAAF aircraft inventory included 78 jet fighters, 5 jet reconnaissance, 14 jet trainers, 19 transports, and 12 helicopters. All are of French and U.S. origin. Future acquisitions include the delivery

by the end of 1974 of about 30 additional Mirages of the total of 120 ordered from France. The LAAF also would like to acquire additional fighters and transports from the United States. The absorption of the Mirages by the final delivery date or soon thereafter is clearly beyond the capabilities of the LAAF. Of the 3,000 men now in the air force, nearly two-thirds have been recruited in the last 2 years. Personnel generally possess little educational background and technical aptitude. Qualified officers are scarce, and many of those most experienced, including some pilots, were arrested or transferred to civilian positions following the coup. The nonavailability of qualified manpower to assume leadership responsibility and to alleviate the necessity for reliance on foreign expertise will continue to retard any development of air force capability.

### 1. Organization

Control of the LAAF extends from the Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), who is Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, through the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces to the Commander of the Air Force. Assisting the air force commander are deputies for operations, training, maintenance, supply, transportation, administration, and air traffic control. Headquarters are at Okba Ibn Nafa Air Base. All units are based and normally operate from there, although they have occasionally operated from other fields. Aircraft are organized into two fighter squadrons, one transport squadron, one helicopter squadron, and a training squadron.

### 2. Strength, composition and disposition<sup>4</sup>

Personnel strength of 3,000 includes 150 officers and 2850 enlisted men. While no force goals have been announced, an eventual strength level of over 3,000 will probably be reached. One hundred and ten aircraft are operationally assigned to six squadrons. One jet fighter squadron is comprised of 7 F-5's and 25 Mirage 5's; another consists of 16 Mirage 5's and 2 Mirage IIIR's; and a third consists of 15 Mirage III-E's. Nine C-47 light transports, eight C-130 medium transports, and a C-140 executive jet transport make up the transport squadron. Six Super Frelons, three OH-13's, two Alouette III's, and a Bell 206A are

<sup>4</sup>For current detailed information, see *Free World Air Order of Battle and Air Forces Intelligence Study*, both published by the Defense Intelligence Agency. Information on Libyan airfields is presented in the Transportation and Telecommunications chapter of this General Survey.

assigned to the helicopter squadron. The training squadron is composed of 11 Mirage III-B's, three T-33's, and a Fan Jet Falcon, all jet aircraft.

### 3. Training

Air force recruits are trained, along with army personnel, at the Recruit Training Center at Misratah before assignment to a specific air force program. Libya will remain dependent on foreign assistance indefinitely for officer and specialist training. Technical training by the United States, both in CONUS and at (then) Wheelus Air Base in Libya was initiated in 1963. Third-country training and most support terminated with the departure of the U.S. Air Force from Wheelus in June 1970, but Libyan personnel continued to be sent to CONUS for pilot and technical training until mid-1971. Third-country training has been provided by Greece, Egypt, Yugoslavia, Pakistan, Algeria, France, and, to a lesser extent, other countries. In accordance with the Mirage contract with France, maintenance, pilot and mechanic instructor, and pilot transition training is being conducted in France, and a French training mission assists in Libya. In addition, Libyan pilots in Algeria are being instructed by the French mission there. A large number of personnel (one-third to one-half total strength) is in training programs. Under the U.S. training program, the Libyans had advanced to weaponry training on the F-5 fighters; the average monthly flying time was 190 hours on the F-5's and 100 on the C-47's. Since 1971, the F-5's have probably served primarily for transition training to the Mirages. Details of the training program are incomplete, but it is known that Mirage training is proceeding at a rapid pace, sometimes exceeding French Air Force safety regulations. During 1972 the previous inefficient schedule was replaced by full workdays of three takeoff periods during daylight hours followed by a night sortie. By January 1973, flying time was probably over 500 hours per month, but pilot training still was not keeping pace with Mirage acquisitions.

### 4. Logistics

The LAAF is dependent on foreign sources for all aircraft and associated materiel. Other logistical requirements are provided by the Libyan Army. The LAAF has a slight maintenance and repair capability. Organizational and field maintenance of aircraft require contract personnel, and no depot overhaul facilities exist. No serviceable bulk fuel storage facilities are known; fuel is obtained locally through purchase from private companies.

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Ammunition stores located in the bomb dump at Okba Ibn Nafa Air Base include practice 20-mm ammunition, practice bombs, and practice rockets. Bomb and rocket war reserves purchased from the United States are also stored there.

A supply system existed while the U.S. Air Force occupied Wheelus Air Base, but it has deteriorated in the aftermath of U.S. withdrawal. Lack of supervision, insufficiently trained personnel, poor management, and failure to take any followup action contribute to the inefficiency of the system.

#### **F. Paramilitary (S)**

There are no paramilitary forces capable of making a substantial contribution to the country's combat strength. In October 1971 the Revolutionary Command Council issued an order reviving the Popular Resistance Force which was initially formed in September 1970. It is a volunteer force of about 4,000 men controlled by the army and organized into five provincial battalions of males and one

nonprovincial battalion of females. The Popular Resistance Force is tasked to defend civilian areas during wartime and participate in civic action projects in peacetime. In 1972 the force provided installation security during armed forces exercises. Since April 1973, weapons training has been provided to members of the loosely organized "popular committees" which have sprung up in schools, businesses, and government offices in Libya. Trained committee members will constitute a small, poorly trained reserve force; arms have not been distributed.

In addition to the Egyptian advisers serving with the Libyan army and air force, Egypt has a MiG-15/17 training brigade at Gamal Abd El Nasser Air Base, a total of three TU-16's at Okba Ibn Nafa Air Base, a naval task group operating in Libyan waters, and commando battalions stationed in Tripoli and Benghazi. A major purpose of the deployment is to provide support to the current Libyan regime. In mid-1973 Algeria deployed ships and aircraft to Libya to assist in defending Libyan territory against a perceived Israeli threat.

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