

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2011 7:10 AM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Benghazi update (1200 local)

From: Abbaszadeh, Nima
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2011 06:54 AM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J; Wells, Alice G; Abedin, Huma; Hanley, Monica R; Mills, Cheryl D
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants
Subject: FW: Benghazi update (1200 local)

Update from Rep. Stevens in Benghazi, based on largely on info from acting PM Ali Tarhouni and acting FM Salah Bishari:

- TNC caretaker cabinet/members were up until 4am following events in Tripoli and discussing plans for the coming days. Tarhouni said the TNC has been in constant communication with its people in Tripoli, including both fighters and those entrusted with implementing the stabilization plans. Rebels in Tripoli, in coordination with the TNC, have begun to set up checkpoints inside the city and guard public buildings.
- TNC chairman Abd al Jalil and PM Jibril made statements to the media last night, urging people to refrain from revenge attacks and destruction of public buildings.
- There has so far been “no bloodbath” or serious looting.
- The capture of Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi and Mohamed al-Qadhafi is significant. The TNC, including Abd al-Jalil himself, intervened with rebels surrounding Mohamed’s house to ensure that they did not harm him. They understood that it would be harmful to the revolution and the TNC if he were killed. These events were captured live by Al Jazeera in interviews with Mohamed. Both brothers are in rebel custody (at this time, it is unclear to us exactly who is holding them, however).
- Per Tarhouni, the next steps are: 1) find Muammar Qadhafi; 2) issue a statement announcing the end of the Qadhafi regime and the start of the interim period under the TNC (TNC staff have begun drafting this statement already); 3) insure the delivery of essential services and commodities (esp. addressing the acute shortages of fuel, children’s milk, and medication for blood pressure and diabetes); and 4) move the TNC to Tripoli.
- Regarding the move to Tripoli, Tarhouni said security arrangements would need to be made before they could send the TNC leadership to the capital. We have heard from another contact that some TNC members are already making plans to fly to Misurata and the Western Mountains, possibly as early as today, and from there drive to Tripoli.
- Request for assistance: Tarhouni, who also holds US citizenship, said the items listed above (gas, diesel, baby milk, and medicine) are urgently needed in Tripoli and recommended that the USG ship those items directly to Zawiya’s Port and publicize such assistance as soon as feasible (in coordination with the TNC). He said this would bring the US even more goodwill than it has already earned here.