

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Sidney Blumenthal
Sent: Saturday, October 6, 2012 6:18 PM
To: H
Subject: H: Great to see you. Drop in again. Here's Libya. Sid
Attachments: hrc memo libya cabinet 100612.docx

B6

CONFIDENTIAL

October 6, 2012

For: Hillary

From: Sid

Re: Libya cabinet politics

SOURCE: Sources with direct access to the Libyan National Transitional Council, as well as the highest levels of European Governments, and Western Intelligence and security services.

1. As of October 5, 2012 Mohammed Yussef el Magariaf, the new interim President of Libya told senior advisors that the abortive efforts to form a cabinet under new Prime Minister Mustafa Abushagur represent the first step in the next phase of the struggle for control of the new Libyan Government. According to a sensitive source Magariaf is concerned that Abushagur, supported by the Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) Justice and Construction Party (JCP), as well as certain of the other more traditional Islamist groups, is looking to establish day to day administrative control the new government while defining Magariaf as a ceremonial Head of State.

2. According to this individual, the President, who is not affiliated with a particular party holding seats in the General National Council (GNC), spoke with the new Prime Minister immediately after Abushagur was elected by the GNC on September 12. At that time Magariaf advised him to include in his government members of former Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril's National Forces Alliance (NFA), Abushagur having only narrowly defeated Jibril in the GNC vote. At that time Magariaf was not aware of the fact that Jibril had already demanded 9 cabinet seats for the NFA; however, he did point out that even Jibril's more moderate followers were committed to the idea of a modern Islamic state and would fit into the new cabinet. The President came away from this

discussion with the impression that Abushagur and his supporters intend to marginalize Jibril and the 39 Members of Parliament (MP) controlled by the NFA, concentrating instead on working with the 120 independent MPs in the GNC, looking to establish a more conservative administration. This individual added that Abushagur made it clear that while the President was free to choose his Vice President and staff, the Prime Minister would choose the national cabinet, supported by the GNC.

3. (Source Comment: According to this individual, Magariaf is allowing the current crisis in the Abushagur administration to play out without direct interference. He is convinced that the desire of the Libyan people for peace and stability, which brought him to power, added to the need to balance the regional and political rivalries throughout the country, will lead to the formation of a cabinet that is acceptable to all parties. Magariaf also believes that these developments will eventually leave him as the dominant figure in the government.)

4. In addition, this individual added that Magariaf is seized with the national security situation, the ongoing effort to disarm militia units, and the investigation of the murder of the United States Ambassador. All of these efforts are related to what he sees as his most important role, rebuilding the confidence of the international business community in its ability to operate in Libya safely and efficiently. To this end he does agree with Abushagur that it is important to replace the cabinet of former Prime Minister Abdel Rahman el-Keib, particularly Minister of Oil Abdulrahman Ben Yazza, whose connections to the regime of former dictator Muammar al Qaddafi, and the Italian Oil firm ENI made him unacceptable to the JCP and other conservative parties. That said, this individual notes that Magariaf was surprised and not pleased with the appointment to the ministry of Mabrouk Issa Abu Harroua, another technical expert, who previously worked for Libya's Zueitina Oil Company as well as in the oil sector abroad. Magariaf feels that Abu Harroua does not have the standing among the foreign oil companies that Ben Yezza enjoyed, although he was more acceptable to a number of the conservative members of the GNC.

5. Magariaf was pleased that the Prime Minister, after dramatic confrontations with MPs and demonstrators who entered the GNC chamber, withdrew his cabinet nominations. The President again advised Abushagur to name former Oil and Finance Minister Ali Tarhouni to the Oil Ministry post; however, he fears that that Ali Tarhouni is seen as too close to Western governments to gain acceptance in the GNC. Magariaf is concerned that, while the new cabinet Abushagur plans to put forward on October 7 may contain some members of the NFA and other moderate groups, it will still be dominated by the JCP and conservative elements, and will again fail to gain acceptance, leading to a real government crisis.

6. According to this individual Magariaf and his advisors knew in advance that more than 100 protesters planned to enter the GNC session on October 4, in an effort to prevent MPs from convening to vote on the new cabinet. While Magariaf did not directly influence these protesters he did nothing to warn or advise Abushagur on the developing situation. In particular, the protestors objected to the failure of the Prime Minister to name any minister from the Zawiya region. Although the demonstrators eventually left the hall, a number of the independent MPs, who had said they would support the new cabinet, were shaken by the incident and changed their positions. In the end, according to this individual, Abushagur's efforts to rally their support failed, and he was forced to withdraw all of the nominees, promising to submit a new list on October 7, one that would take into account regional and political considerations.

7. In the opinion of a particularly sensitive source, the failure of Abushagur to name any NFA ministers to the new cabinet will continue to complicate the matter. For his part Magariaf is concerned over international perceptions regarding the nature of the new Libyan government. In this regard, he fears that the Western press is too sharply focused on the fact that the NFA holds the largest single bloc of votes in the GNC (38), missing the fact that the real power in the parliament lies with the 120 independent deputies, who tend to be somewhat conservative on religious and social matters, while focusing primarily on local political issues. Magariaf believes that the appointment of Ali Tarhouni, or another liberal not associated with the NFA, would serve to reassure Western business and government leaders while demonstrating political balance to the Libyan people. Although he continues to make this point, the President has no indication that Abushagur will follow his advice. He does expect Abushagur to again select a majority of cabinet ministers associated with the MB and the JCP.

8. (Source Comment: In the opinion of this individual, Magariaf will remain focused on the security situation, particularly as he is having some success disarming the militias following the death of the U.S. Ambassador. According to this individual, Magariaf believes he must end the power of the regional militia forces before the Libyan economy can improve. The President knows that foreign companies are the key to Libyan oil production, but he fears that they will not increase their commitment to Libya until the government can insure the security of their personnel and facilities. In a final note, this individual added that the Italian government is stepping up its activities in Libya, and the President expects them to pressure to Abushagur appoint an individual like Ben Yezza to the Oil Ministry, where he can favor ENI and other Italian firms.)

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