

Keesing's Record of World Events (formerly Keesing's Contemporary Archives),
Volume 32, February, 1986 Libya, Page 34199
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Internal and foreign affairs

Summary and key dates

General People's Congress session (Feb. 26-March 5, 1985). Passage of budget (March). Formation of 'Pan-Arab Command' by Col. Kadhafi (March). Proposal for creation of 'Arab Union' (June 11). Economic situation (to February 1986). Expulsions of foreign workers (August 1985). Relations with Arab countries (to January 1986). Military agreement with Iran (June 23, 1985). Severance of diplomatic relations by Iraq (June 26). Col. Kadhafi's visit to Soviet Union (Oct. 10-14). Relations with USA—alleged CIA destabilization plan (to January 1986). Contacts with France and Norway (April-October 1985). Convictions of Libyans in United Kingdom (February-May). Deportation of assassination team from Egypt (April). Attacks on Libyans abroad (February-November). Appeal by Col. Kadhafi to exiles to return home (Sept. 3). Internal politics—criticisms of government (1985). Government appointments (May 7). Conflict between Army and revolutionary committees (1985). Assassination attempts on Col. Kadhafi (March-September). Death of Col. Ishkal (November).

The 10th ordinary session of the General People's Congress (the Libyan equivalent of a national assembly) took place in Tripoli, the capital, on Feb. 26-March 2, 1985. The Congress debated the various decisions made during the year by the basic people's congresses (BPCs—Libya's local decision-making bodies) and passed a number of resolutions on internal and foreign policy, of which the most important are detailed below.

Previous resolutions. The Congress criticized its Secretariat and the General People's Committee (GPC, which was broadly equivalent to a Council of Ministers—*ibid.*) for failing to implement certain resolutions, passed at the eighth Congress in 1983 and reaffirmed at the ninth session, relating in particular to the need to reduce the level of bureaucracy in the country's administration; (ii) the need to find employment for vocational graduates in their specialist fields; and (iii) the need to reduce the numbers of foreign workers in Libya. In expressing concern at the delay in implementation, the Congress decided to demand regular progress reports from the GPC.

Economy. The Congress stressed the need for Libya to become self-sufficient in agricultural and industrial production. Towards this end, it called for incentives to encourage people to move out of cities into the countryside. In an attempt to persuade absentee farmers to return to their land, it decided that landowners who had neglected their holdings would have them confiscated unless they undertook to recommence cultivation. The Congress also demanded the construction of 'production sites' in the vicinity of existing centres of population. With regard to housing, the Congress resolved that 'in application of the dictum 'the house for the occupier', all existing occupants would be awarded ownership of their accommodation. As an economy measure, the Congress placed a ban on the import of all luxury cars 'except for the security authorities and the protocols department'.

The Congress approved an administrative budget for 1985 of 1,200 million dinars (a reduction of 17 per cent on the previous year's figure) and a development budget of 1,700 million dinars (a reduction of 19 per cent). No details were announced of the separate military budget. The Congress also voted to impose an import ceiling of 1,518 million dinars. (US\$1.00=0.296 Libyan dinars as at Jan. 1, 1986.)

Foreign affairs. The Congress demanded that the United Kingdom should release imprisoned Libyans, stop harbouring opponents of the regime and halt propaganda campaigns against Libya; it also called for the establishment of better relations with the 'British people and with popular organizations' in the UK. (ii) The Congress called for Italy to agree to the payment of compensation for damages inflicted on Libya during the colonial period, and resolved to hold Turkey responsible for 'handing over Libya to Italy'. (iii) The Congress reiterated its condemnation of Egypt's adherence to the Camp David agreement with Israel, condemned Jordan for flouting Arab League resolutions by restoring diplomatic ties with Egypt, and called for the overthrow of King Hussein. (iv) The Congress demanded that Mr Yassir Arafat, the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, should be put on trial, and affirmed its support for the 'Fatah Revolutionary Council' (i. e. the Fatah rebels-).

Regarding the activities of exiled opponents of the regime, the Congress warned all foreign states against offering them refuge, and 'emphasized the principled stand of the BPCs concerning the pursuit and physical liquidation of stray dogs'.

In a speech to the Congress on March 2, Col. Moamer al Kadhafi, the Libyan leader, noted that 'the world sympathizes with the Jews because they faced massacres (in Nazi Germany)' but added that the Arabs were now 'paying the price for Hitler's fault', and said: 'Now the Arabs face massacres, let them sympathize with us.' He accused the United States of 'hating us because we are Arabs and because they are anti-semitic'. He defended arms purchases from the Soviet Union on the grounds that 'they are siding with us against the Israelis', adding that 'we befriend he who befriends us and become the enemy of he who is our enemy'. He castigated the USA for seeking assurances from Jordan and from Saudi Arabia that US arms supplied to them would not be deployed against Israel.

Col. Kadhafi claimed that the threat posed against Libya and other radical regimes by the USA had 'turned us into terrorists and

(given) us the legitimacy to be so and to act as terrorists'. 'We are humane and we have our culture,' he said, 'but we terrorize the Americans and we terrorize the Israelis. Let us be terrorists.' He also attacked US interference in Arab affairs, arguing that, since the Arab world formed one nation, such activity was tantamount to interference in the internal affairs of a nation state.

When repeating his call for Arab unity and for the abolition of inter-Arab frontiers, Col. Kadhafi used the same speech to announce the formation of a 'Pan-Arab Command', which would 'assume responsibility for the command of the revolutionary forces in the Arab homeland'.

In the ensuing weeks, the Libyan media reported that a number of small-scale radical Arab movements had joined the Command. These included the Palestinian Communist Party, the (Sunni) Lebanese Mourabitoun, the Tunisian Free Unionists' Movement, the Sudanese Democratic Unionist Party, the Iraqi Mujaheddin and several Iraqi Kurdish groups, including the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Democratic Party of Kurdistan. Col. Kadhafi was elected as leader of the Command at its inaugural meeting, held in Tripoli on March 29–31, at which it was decided 'to adopt revolutionary violence and armed struggle' as a means of achieving the aims of the component movements. The meeting resolved that a danger to one movement would be regarded as a danger to all, and decided to form a 'United Pan-Arab Force', to be composed of 10 per cent of each movement's forces. A further meeting, held on Feb. 2–4, 1986, called on Arab states to boycott US products and to withdraw assets from US banks. It resolved to establish 'a revolutionary striking force and martyr (i. e. suicide) units' which would launch attacks against 'US interests' in response to any US attack on an Arab country.

According to Tripoli television, the meeting was attended by, among others, representatives of the ruling Syrian Baath Party, the Fatah Revolutionary Council, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command and the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, as well as representatives from Lebanon, Jordan, Oman, 'Yemen', Bahrain, Iraq and the 'Arabian Peninsula'.

Col. Kadhafi on June 11 proposed the establishment of an 'Arab Union', to be composed of all Arab countries.

The Union would comprise a chairmanship council of rulers, an executive council of heads of government and a series of executive committees, composed of ministers from each state who shared the same portfolio. The chairmanship of the councils would be held by each country's representative on a rotating basis. The Union would also include a national congress of Arab parliaments and a federal Arab court, which would judge any alleged breaches of the union agreement. The Union would also set up organizations to encourage economic co-operation between Arab states. Col. Kadhafi stressed that no country would be obliged to alter its form of government in order to belong to the Union.

The People's Committee for Justice announced on July 16 that Libyan citizenship would be granted to any Arab who applied for it, on the grounds that the 'Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (SPLAJ—the country's official title) is the land of all the Arabs'.

In a speech to revolutionary committees on Sept. 1, Col. Kadhafi urged them to ally themselves with similar organizations in 'Iran, Burkina, Central America and Ireland' and with the environmentalist Green movement and the peace movements in Western Europe. In so doing, he distinguished between the role of the revolutionary committees and that of the official state organs, such as the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison, which dealt with relations with foreign governments and intergovernmental bodies such as the UN.

Libya's economy suffered during 1985 from declining oil revenue and an ambitious development programme, which included considerable expenditure on the 'great artificial river' irrigation project. Oil revenue in 1984 had amounted to US\$11,130 million, and an International Monetary Fund report published in early January 1986 estimated that oil revenue in 1986 would be down to about \$10,000 million—less than half the 1980 figure. The trade deficit for 1985 amounted to \$1,833 million, and in September of that year it was estimated that Libya owed at least \$4,000 million to foreign contractors. Approximately 300 'non-essential' foreign contracts placed with European companies were suspended in February 1985. Foreign currency reserves were estimated as approximately \$2,700 million at the start of 1986. The cash shortage resulted in the Army being paid between two and three months in arrears.

Shortages of consumer goods and certain foods resulted in lengthy queues, and, according to some reports, rioting, towards the end of 1985. On occasion Col. Kadhafi asserted that shortages were intentional, in order 'to make people work harder', but little credence was given to this claim by outside observers.

In an unannounced implementation of earlier decisions to reduce the level of foreign manpower in Libya, the authorities expelled approximately 38,000 foreign workers during August.

The total included 25,000 Tunisians, 6,000 Egyptians, 3,000 from Niger, 2,500 from Mali and 1,000 from Mauritania. The expulsions were carried out by the revolutionary committees, and many of those deported complained of ill-treatment and of being prevented from taking savings or personal possessions with them.

Dr Ali Abdessalam at Turayki, the GPC Secretary for Foreign Liaison, stated on Aug. 28 that the expulsion orders had applied to all those who had refused to take up Libyan citizenship, with the exception of Palestinians. Observers noted, however, that Tunisian and Egyptian nationals had apparently been picked out for deportation. (The effect of the expulsions on Libya's deteriorating relations

with Tunisia will be covered in a forthcoming article on Tunisia.) Tension caused by the expulsions also led to a build-up of forces on the Egyptian-Libyan border. During a visit to Mali on Sept. 10, Dr Turayki said that the expulsions were the result of Libya's declining oil revenues, and promised that those who possessed official contracts would be compensated. (See also below for reported expulsion of Syrian workers.)

While continuing his denunciations in general terms of conservative Arab regimes, Col. Kadhafi attempted during 1985 to maintain good relations with most Arab states, with the exception of Tunisia, Jordan and Egypt, which he consistently denounced. At the end of the year Libya received widespread Arab support following the imposition of US sanctions in the wake of the Dec. 27 Rome and Vienna airport attacks. (The attacks, together with subsequent developments involving accusations of Libyan responsibility, will be dealt with separately in a forthcoming article on the Middle East.) Libya's closest allies in the Arab world remained South Yemen and Syria.

Relations with Syria had been strained in the light of Syrian support for Amal at the time of the latter's attack in mid-1985 on Palestinian camps in Beirut, and diplomatic sources in Syria were quoted in early October as claiming that between 10,000 and 20,000 Syrian workers had been expelled from Libya as a mark of displeasure with Syria's policies towards the PLO in Lebanon. Relations apparently improved later in the year, however. Maj. Abdul Salem Jalloud, the 'Libyan number two', visited Damascus in early November and Mr Abdel Halim Khaddam, the Syrian Vice-President, travelled to Tripoli on Dec. 2. Col. Kadhafi had earlier declared that he supported the idea of Syrian annexation of Lebanon, stating that it was 'a mistake that Lebanon exists in the middle of Syria'. (See for exposition of Syria's historical role in Lebanon.)

Col. Kadhafi visited Algeria on Jan. 28, 1986. His discussions with President Chadli reportedly focused on the need to improve bilateral relations (which had been strained since the conclusion of the Moroccan-Libyan treaty in September 1984-) and on the prospects of a solution to the Western Sahara dispute.

According to Algerie Presse Service, the two leaders 'reaffirmed the right of the Saharan people to self-determination and to independence', and agreed on the need for 'a peaceful solution of the conflict' in conformity with Organization of African Unity resolutions. According to Moroccan officials, Dr Turayki had informed King Hassan of Morocco of the likely content of the talks prior to their taking place. The UAE newspaper Al-Ittihad claimed on Feb. 3 that President Chadli had offered to send up to 75,000 troops to Libya in the event of any US aggression.

A military co-operation agreement with Iran was concluded at the end of a visit to Tripoli on June 20-23 by Hojatolislam Hashemi Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, the Speaker of the Iranian Majlis (parliament).

The agreement provided for the establishment of a joint political and military committee, an 'Islamic Revolutionary League' and an 'Army of Jerusalem to liberate Palestine'. News of the agreement reportedly provoked King Hassan into postponing the scheduled meeting of the joint Moroccan-Libyan parliamentary assembly. Tehran (i. e. official Iranian) radio reported that 'some understandings in principle' had been reached during the talks, a phrase which was seen as indicating that certain differences had emerged between the two sides.

In response to the agreement, and to reports that Libya had expressed support for Iran in the war with Iraq, the Iraqi government announced on June 26 that it had 'withdrawn its recognition of Libya as an Arab regime', and had severed diplomatic relations. Libya responded by calling for Iraq's expulsion from the Arab League.

A 'clarifying statement' issued by the Libyan official news agency JANA on June 29 claimed that the agreement with Iran did not have the status of a treaty (as had initially been reported), and added that the Libyan side had made certain proposals for the ending of the Iran-Iraq war, which had however been rejected by the Iranian side.

Libya maintained generally good relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries during 1985, with a number of ministerial-level consultations taking place. Col. Kadhafi's speeches frequently stressed the Soviet Union's pro-Palestinian stance. Differences were revealed, however, during an official visit to Moscow by Col. Kadhafi on Oct. 10-14, when he failed to attend an official banquet given in his honour.

Some reports suggested that he had had a fierce argument with Mr Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet leader. Particular areas of disagreement were said to include the question of Libyan support for hijackings and other violent actions by Palestinian guerrillas, notably the seizure of the Achille Lauro cruise liner. The visit did not, as had been widely predicted, conclude with the signing of a treaty of friendship, although the two sides did agree to extend an economic co-operation agreement concluded in 1981.

Soviet-supplied long-range SAM-5 surface-to-air missiles were reportedly installed in Libya in December 1985. The US State Department criticized the deployment as 'clearly exceeding any legitimate security interests which the Libyans may have'.

A protocol on co-operation in the fields of security and justice was concluded with Yugoslavia on Feb. 20. Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, the Polish leader, visited Tripoli at the end of November.

Mr Tian Jiyun, a Chinese Deputy Premier, held talks in Tripoli with Col. Kadhafi on Nov. 6, during which they agreed to expand

economic ties.

Relations with the USA remained tense throughout the period from February 1985 to February 1986, with each side accusing the other of supporting international terrorism and destabilization efforts.

In an address on Feb. 20, 1985, relayed by satellite to a conference of the militant black Moslem 'Nation of Islam' organization (led by Mr Louis Farrakhan—, Col. Kadhafi urged black US soldiers to desert and fight their 'racist oppressors'. He offered weapons and financial support to the movement in its avowed aim of establishing an independent black state in the USA. He also declared himself in favour of similar action by American Indians.

A report in the Washington Post of Nov. 4 claimed that President Reagan had authorized a covert operation by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) against Col. Kadhafi's regime.

The operation allegedly had two aims: to halt Libyan support for 'terrorist and subversive' actions abroad, and to lure Col. Kadhafi into a foreign 'adventure' which would give the Libyan military an opportunity to seize power or provide a justification for a neighbouring Arab state to invade. The report claimed that the plan had encountered opposition in the intelligence committees of both the House of Representatives and the Senate, but that a narrow majority on both committees supported it. The report also quoted a CIA assessment of June 1984 as suggesting that the 'vulnerabilities' of the Libyan regime could be exposed through 'a broad programme in co-operation with key countries, combining political, economic and paramilitary action', and that exiled opposition groups could be encouraged to launch 'an intermittent campaign of sabotage and violence'.

A presidential spokesman refused to confirm or deny the report, but stated that President Reagan had ordered an inquiry into disclosures on the subject. JANA described the report as evidence of the failure of the US policy of 'open blackmail and muscular thuggery' as applied against Libya, while the Soviet news agency Tass denounced the alleged plan as 'a fresh instance of international terrorism which has been elevated to the status of national policy by the USA'. On Nov. 7 Col. Kadhafi warned that, if the report proved to be true, Libya would engage in subversive activities inside the USA; he added, however, that he was 'against all forms of terrorism'.

A series of emergency sessions of BPCs decided on Sept. 14 that Col. Kadhafi should not attend the opening of the UN General Assembly later the same month, 'since its headquarters are in America (which is) the leader of international terrorism and the enemy of humanity'.

Subsequent US press reports in late November asserted that considerable quantities of US arms were being supplied to Chad via Cameroon, to support an attack by Chadian government forces against Libyan troops based in northern Chad, and that the Algerian government was co-operating in the effort to draw Libya into a costly and unpopular conflict in Chad. The Algerian government denied that it was in any way involved.

US forces in early January 1986 conducted air and sea manoeuvres in the Gulf of Sirte, an area claimed by Libya as territorial waters and which had on several occasions been the focus of confrontation between the two countries.

M Roland Dumas, the French Foreign Minister, held talks with Col. Kadhafi in Tripoli on April 25, 1985. Dr Turayki visited Paris on Oct. 30–31 for talks with French officials, including M Dumas, during which they agreed that a joint co-operation committee would meet by early 1986. Both of these meetings included discussions on the situation in Chad.

Following a meeting between Dr Turayki and Mr Sverre Strøm, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, on Sept. 25, it was announced that Libya would pay \$500,000 to the Norwegian government as compensation for the detention of the Norwegian vessel Germa Lionel and the death of one of its crew in 1984.

Three Libyan students were on Feb. 20, 1985, sentenced to prison terms of between five and 12 years after being convicted by a British court of bombing offences in Manchester in March 1984. A Libyan student was sentenced on March 12 to 15 years in prison for bombing attacks in the West End of London at the same time. Another student was acquitted, while a diplomat implicated by the trial was deported. A Libyan airline official was deported from the UK in mid-April under the provisions of the 1974 Prevention of Terrorism Act. On May 24 a Libyan national was sentenced to nine years in prison after being found guilty of manufacturing timers intended for use in explosive devices.

The Egyptian authorities in late April deported the four-man team arrested in November 1984 for attempting to assassinate the exiled Libyan opposition leader, Dr Hamid Bakoush. The two British members of the team, Mr Anthony Gill and Mr Godfrey Shiner (whose name is misspelt as Chiner in) were in May charged in the UK with conspiring to pervert the course of justice by assisting Mr Mohammed Shalabi, a relative of Col. Kadhafi, to flee the country while facing drugs charges (ibid.).

Several attacks on Libyans abroad took place during 1985, of which the most serious are listed below.

Mr Ezzedin al Ghadamsi, a former Libyan ambassador to Austria, was shot and seriously wounded in Vienna on Feb. 28, 1985. A Libyan spokesman blamed the attack on the CIA, the PLO and the Moslem Brotherhood. Although Mr Ghadamsi had no official

diplomatic status, he had continued to play an advisory role at the Libyan people's bureau (embassy) in Austria.

An exiled opponent of the regime, Mr Gebril el Denali, was shot dead in Bonn, in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), on April 6, by a man who was immediately arrested by the police. A statement from the Libyan people's bureau in Bonn promised that Libya would 'respect' whatever sentence was passed on the assailant. The West German ambassador was recalled for consultations in the wake of the attack.

Dr Omar Sodani, a former member of the people's bureau staff in London at the time of the shooting incident there in 1984, was deported from Belgium on April 17 after attempting to use false papers in financial transactions. Some reports claimed that he had orchestrated the assassination of Mr Denali. (A number of press reports in August 1984 had stated that Dr Sodani had been executed in Libya following the London shooting—

A body discovered in a wood near Frankfurt, West Germany, in July 1984, was identified on May 17, 1985, as that of Mr Mohammed Heidi Douik, a former Secretary of Municipalities, who had disappeared in April 1980. The corpse had a bullet wound in the head.

Two members of the (Lebanese) Amal militia were on July 25 sentenced in Spain to prison terms of over 20 years each after being convicted of the attempted assassination of a Libyan diplomat in Madrid in September 1984. The defence counsel had argued for acquittal on the grounds that the accused were acting under orders. Three Libyans, including two diplomats, were expelled from Spain at the end of December.

The Egyptian authorities on Aug. 12 charged five people with plotting to assassinate Libyan dissidents in Egypt. The Egyptian Interior Ministry announced on Nov. 11 that security forces had foiled a planned attack by a team of four Libyan agents on a villa in Alexandria where a meeting of about 50 Libyan opposition activists, reportedly including Dr Bakoush, was taking place. Tripoli radio confirmed that a 'suicide commando' raid had taken place in Alexandria. The four agents were convicted on Feb. 3, 1986, on six charges relating to the attack and were sentenced to hard labour for life. During the trial they admitted possessing arms but denied intent to murder. A further three Libyans were convicted in absentia.

A Libyan businessman in Athens, Greece, was shot and wounded on Oct. 6.

In a speech on Sept. 3, Col. Kadhafi invited all opposition exiles to return home, including those who had committed crimes and 'even those sentenced to death', and promised that those who did so would be pardoned if they repented of their actions. He added, however, that those who continued their activities would be pursued and punished. In the same speech, Col. Kadhafi promised a review of the legality of capital punishment, which he described as inhumane.

Against a background of reports that tribal loyalties were determining the results of elections to some of the BPCs, Col. Kadhafi made a speech to the Tripoli municipality BPC on April 24 in which he announced that certain BPCs would have to be reselected since their 'selection procedures' had been discredited due to their tribal basis. He added: 'If you are still being dominated by ideas of the defunct regime and by wise men and tribal chiefs, then we must be in need of another revolution in order to crush this class anew.'

During the course of a speech to an extraordinary session of the General People's Congress held on May 6–7, Col. Kadhafi criticized the BPCs for failing to pay adequate attention to the country's economic priorities, in particular its need to be self-sufficient, and for making unco-ordinated economic decisions. He encouraged more open criticism of the government's economic management, and himself denounced Secretaries who arranged for imports to cover shortages. After listening to the Congress's debates, Col. Kadhafi said that 'I have come out with the clear feeling that the GPC stands censured'. Among its resolutions passed the following day, the Congress appointed a committee of its secretariat to bring to account the GPC, which it decided should remain in office for the time being. As the year progressed, the government came under increasing criticism in the Libyan media.

The Congress approved the appointment of Mr Mohammed al Fayturi as Secretary for Information and Culture and of Mr Musa Mohammed Umar as Secretary of the newly created portfolio of Scientific Research.

JANA reported in early June that a campaign had been launched to burn Western musical instruments, adding that all 'information material and implements that harm our arts and heritage will be destroyed'.

Reports emerged during 1985 of growing conflict between the revolutionary committees (and their paramilitary wing, the revolutionary guards) and the Army, with Col. Kadhafi favouring the former. The revolutionary guards reportedly took over responsibility for patrolling the Tunisian border early in the year (opposition guerrillas having infiltrated across the frontier prior to launching an attack on Tripoli in May 1984—). In late 1985 it was reported that the guards were in control of the distribution of live ammunition at the country's main Army bases. The resultant resentment in the Army was portrayed by some observers as a contributory factor in the staging of at least two attempts to assassinate Col. Kadhafi during the year.

Army officers staged an unsuccessful attack in March on a villa outside Tripoli reportedly occupied by Col. Kadhafi; 15 officers were reported executed as a result of the attempt. In early April a group of officers attacked a convoy in which they believed Col. Kadhafi to be travelling; at least 60 officers were said to have been executed following the failure of this attempt. In addition, the Egyptian official news agency MENA claimed that two officers had fired at Col. Kadhafi on Sept. 14, but had missed.

Col. Hassan Ishkal, the military governor of the region of Sirte and a brother-in-law of Col. Kadhafi, died on Nov. 23 or 24, purportedly in a car accident. Some reports, however, suggested that he had been shot following an argument with Col. Kadhafi, during which he had complained about a decision to strip him of his rank in the light of his persistent protests about the growing influence of the revolutionary guards and of the 'armed people' policy (for which 33004). He was also reported to have been in favour of a reconciliation between Col. Kadhafi and President Habre of Chad, and, to this end, to have attempted to arrange a meeting between them in October.-(BBC Summary of World Broadcasts Le Monde Middle East Economic Digest Times Guardian International Herald Tribune Financial Times El Pais, Madrid)

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