

# Libya gives deadline to U.S. on sanctions

## It links May 12 to Lockerbie payments

By Patrick E. Tyler

**TRIPOLI, Libya:** The United States should act quickly to reward Libya for abandoning its secret weapons programs, the country's prime minister said, warning that unless Washington lifted sanctions by May 12, Libya would not be bound to pay the remaining \$6 million promised to each family of victims killed on Pan Am Flight 103.

The prime minister, Shukri Ghanim, said in an interview Thursday that any decision by the Bush administration was strictly an "internal matter" for the United States. But he said the deadlines and their consequences, recorded in the settlement with the Lockerbie families, were well known to all parties, including senior administration officials.

A quick lifting of U.S. sanctions would allow U.S. oil companies to return here this spring and pave the way for unfreezing \$1 billion in assets that Libyan officials say are languishing in U.S. banks.

Ghanim said his country would like to "accelerate to the maximum" the dismantling of its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons programs so that President George W. Bush would be able to tell Congress in the next few months that the Libyan leader, Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi, had fully and transparently destroyed or surrendered all his illicit weapons.

In Washington, a State Department spokesman said he could not comment on the Libyan prime minister's comments, but quoting Bush in December, he said Libya's recent agreement to dismantle its banned weapons and compensate Lockerbie bombing victims opened the door to the possibility of improving relations, including the lifting of sanctions.

"We have indicated to the Libyans that we are prepared to talk about the remaining bilateral sanctions that apply," he said.

Last month, when Libya agreed to dismantle its weapons program, administration officials said that U.S. sanctions would not be lifted until Libya began to implement its pledge and took further unspecified actions leading to its no longer being identified as a state that sponsors terrorism.

The families of the 270 people killed in 1988 when Libyan terrorists blew up Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland,

have been paid \$4 million each under the agreement signed last September that led the United Nations to lift its sanctions. In the settlement, Libya insisted on a stipulation that the families would not receive the full \$10 million pledged unless the United States lifted sanctions and removed Libya from the list of states supporting terrorism within eight months.

"So of course," Ghanim said Friday, referring to a lifting of sanctions, "this would be for the good of the families of the victims, but we will leave this to the decision of the Americans."

By raising the prospect of a deadline that could deprive Lockerbie families of more than half the compensation they were promised, Ghanim injected a note of both urgency and political pressure into the immediate steps ahead.

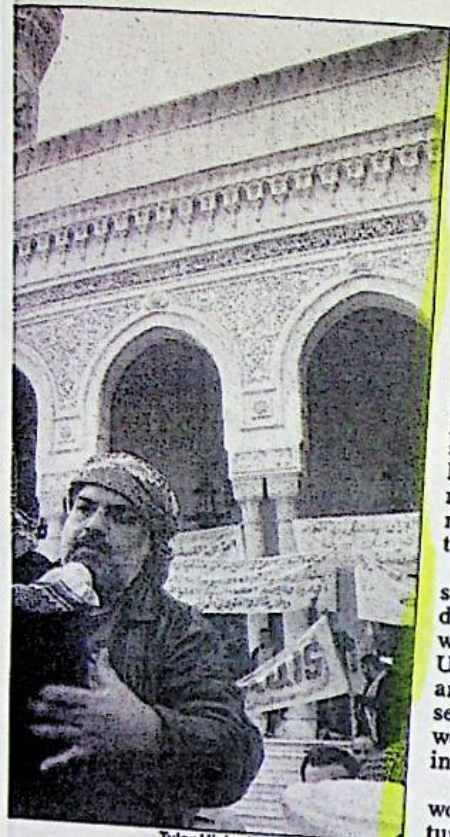
Ghanim also said publicly for the first time Thursday that Libya would like to be paid for turning over certain nuclear materials, just as he understood some former Soviet states had been compensated for such removals.

A leading reformer among Qaddafi's circle of advisers, Ghanim is part of a group that includes Musa Kussa, the chief of intelligence, and Abdulrahman Shalgham, the foreign minister, who have been most influential in recent years in encouraging Qaddafi to break with the radical mix of Arab nationalism and revolutionary internal politics that brought him to power in 1969 but that devastated the country's private economy.

The prime minister's emphasis on the timing for a U.S. response comes at a time when some senior Bush administration officials have questioned the ability of the International Atomic Energy Agency, led by Mohamed El-Baradei, to supervise the complicated process of removal or destruction of Libyan weapons.

The prime minister said that as far as Libya was concerned, ElBaradei was in charge of the disarmament process, along with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. A senior Bush administration official, however, said that U.S. and British intelligence officials, plus nuclear experts from the Pentagon, the Department of Energy and U.S. nuclear laboratories, would arrive here this month to effectively take charge of the disarmament.

The New York Times



Tyler Hicks/The New York Times

Al-Nabi mosque in Baghdad on Friday, and imam, Mahdi al-Sumaydal.

"Muslims?" Sheik Ali Khduair, a student of Islamic law, said. "This mosque must be respected."

Outside the mosque, Imam Janabi addressed the television camera of an Arab network and spoke a few words: "The Sunni people are ready to sacrifice their blood. My brothers, I'd like to say congratulations to you because you will go to paradise."

At least one man was killed and another was wounded overnight as police officers and protesters clashed in Kirkuk, where Kurds, Arabs and Turk-speaking Turkmen are all vying for political influence, Reuters reported. Arabs and Turkmen in Kirkuk opposed to a plan by Kurds on Iraq's Governing Council to grant significant autonomy to a Kurdish area that would include Kirkuk.

The New York Times

Edward Wong reported from Baghdad  
Clark Semple from New York.

## the Bard

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