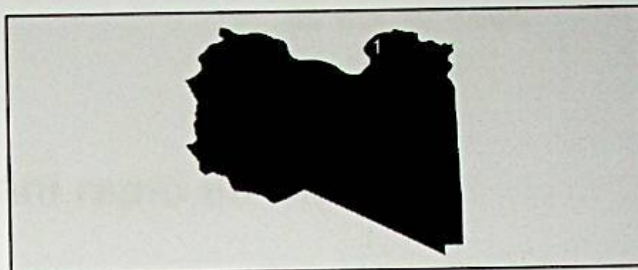


Media Analysis - Libya

Summary: Tensions heighten between major political blocs following extension of General National Congress' term; Italy invites Egypt to participate in Rome conference on international assistance to Libya; Attacks against state symbols continue in Benghazi(1); Libyan Army denies Prime Minister Ali Zaidan's claim that he issued orders for military action against "Cyrenaica Regional Government"



Tensions Heighten Between Major Political Blocs Following Extension of General National Congress' Term

Tensions heightened between the Muslim Brotherhood's Justice and Construction Party (J&C) and Mahmud Jibril's National Forces Alliance (NFA) following the recent extension of the General National Congress' term past its initial 7 February end date. The J&C is the party that exercises the greatest amount of influence in the General National Congress, and as a result it supports the term extension whereas the NFA opposes it. Many supporters of the J&C fear that the NFA and its Zintani militia allies may attempt to use force in the coming days to overturn the extension and dissolve the General National Congress. Illustrating these fears, the J&C's Misratan militia allies recently issued a statement suggesting that they will respond decisively to any attempt to interfere with the extension. Tensions are likely to continue to rise in the coming days as the initial 7 February end date for the General National Congress' term approaches.

Based on media reports in: al-Watan al-Libiyya, Libya al-Mustakbal

Italy Invites Egypt to Participate in Rome Conference on International Assistance to Libya

Italian Foreign Minister Emma Bonino invited Egypt to participate in the conference on international assistance to Libya that will be held in Rome on 7 March. At the conference, Libya and its international partners will make decisions related to assistance programs in the fields of security, justice, and rule of law. Reports indicate Bonino would particularly like to see Egypt engaged in discussions at the conference on border security and illegal immigration. Bonino issued the invitation during a recent meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy that, amongst other topics, focused on developments in Libya. Following the meeting, Bonino stated that she is hopeful dialogue between the Libyan government and the country's various stakeholders will progress before the start of the conference in Rome.

Based on media reports in: al-Manara, Libya al-Mustakbal

Attacks Against State Symbols Continue in Benghazi

Unknown gunmen tried and failed to assassinate former security official Nasser Ali al-Sabahi in Benghazi on 4 February. Local security forces reportedly arrested suspects in the attack within hours, but it remains unclear at this point if the detained individuals were actually involved. Later in the day, a group of unknown gunmen launched an assault against Special Forces positions around Benghazi's al-Jalaa hospital. Although the assault did not result in any human casualties, several vehicles were destroyed. The incidents mark the latest in a string of attacks targeting state symbols in eastern Libya that has left over 140 people dead since mid-2012. Sources indicate that local residents overwhelmingly hold Ansar al-Sharia, or other anti-government Islamist militias, responsible for the violence.

Based on media reports in: Libya al-Mustakbal, Libya Herald