

**Hr: France/Libya. Sid**  
Mar 20 2011

CONFIDENTIAL

March 20, 2011

For: Hillary  
From: Sid  
Re: France/Libya

Latest:

During the evening of March 20 individuals with access to the French and British military and security leadership stated in confidence that French President Nicolas Sarkozy plans to have France lead the attacks on Libya's Muammar Qaddafi over an extended period of time. According to these individuals, Sarkozy is genuinely concerned about the possibility that Qaddafi's troops will commit genocide against the people of Benghazi. However, he also sees this situation as an opportunity for France to reassert itself as a military power. French military commanders were extremely disappointed when, what they believe to be, political differences between the United States and France prevented them from participating in the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. Sarkozy and his military advisors believe that operations in Libya will rebuild the reputation of the French military, which was also damaged by a problematic performance in the first Gulf War.

(Source Comment: For his part, British Prime Minister David Cameron is concerned over how the allies will deal with the rebel forces, if, and when, they take advantage of the air attacks on Qaddafi's forces to renew their move on Tripoli. British intelligence believes that when the rebels recapture Ras Lanuf and other towns they will find evidence of atrocities committed by Libyan troops against the local population. They are, in turn, concerned that the rebels will seek vengeance on Qaddafi's supporters.)

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