

Libya Domestic Media, March 29 (covering March 15 – March 28 2010)

By Odile Noël, MIGS Reporter for Libya

(Jana website, state-owned news agency, Tripoli, in Arabic 0001 GMT 16 Mar 10)

- Al-Qadhafi's suggestion to solve "the tragic situation in Nigeria" is to divide the state in two, creating one state for Muslims and another state for Christians, citing the example of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan. He said "this solution was painful but it was a historic radical solution without which millions of Hindus and Muslims would have been killed continuously in the Indian Peninsula". According to the Libyan leader, nothing else « would stop the bloodshed and burning of places of worship, either churches or mosques, in Nigeria. He urged the former Nigerian President Obasanjo to be the one to divide the Nigerian state in a Christian state in the south and an Islamic state in the north. Al-Qadhafi insisted that the change "should happen through agreement, handshake and hugging not through struggle, fighting or bloodshed" and that "the wealth of oil, and other resources like rivers, minerals and agricultural land should be divided between both states in a peaceful way through brotherly negotiation".

(State-owned Libyan TV, Tripoli, in Arabic 1230 GMT 16 Mar 10)

- The US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and North African Affairs Jeffrey Feltman met with Musa Kusah, the secretary of General People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation. Feltman stressed the public apology for what the official spokesmans of the US Department of State had declared and said and it had been a lesson learned in the development of ties between Libya and the US.

(Jana website, state-owned news agency, Tripoli, in Arabic 1547 GMT 18 Mar 10)

- The Swiss government is said to have officially recognized the mistake it made when the picture of a Libyan diplomat mistreated by the Geneva Canton police was published. The Swiss government also offered to compensate the Libyan diplomat, Al-Qadhafi's son Hannibal, for the incident. The altercation between the two countries had started when Hannibal Al-Qadhafi and his wife had been held on charges for abuse of domestic servants in a Geneva hotel. The charges were later dropped. In response, Libya had stopped its oil exportations to Switzerland and withdrew more than 5bn dollars from Swiss bank accounts, as well as declaring a trade and economic embargo on that country.

(Jana, state-owned news agency, Tripoli, in Arabic 0001 GMT 20 Mar 10)

- Libya and Russia held talks aiming to reinforce bilateral ties between the two countries, more specifically in the sectors of education, oil, economy and railways.

(State-owned Libyan TV, Tripoli, in Arabic 1930 GMT 20 Mar 10)

- The Qatari amir accepted Al-Qadhafi's invitation to attend the Arab summit to be held in Libya.

(State-owned Libyan TV, Tripoli, in Arabic 1230 GMT 22 Mar 10)

- Al-Qadhafi held a meeting with the Portuguese prime minister, Jose Socrates, who was on a visit to Libya. Socrates expressed his country's desire to enhance relations between the two "fraternal" countries in the economic sector namely.

(Jana, state-owned news agency, Tripoli, in Arabic 0001 GMT 23 Mar 10)

- Delegates to the Arab league worked in Sirte on the draft agenda of the upcoming Arab summit and discussed Arab relations with other organizations and countries, including the Palestinian issue, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Iraqi situation.

(State-owned Libyan TV, Tripoli, in Arabic 1930 GMT 23 Mar 10)

- The head of the Al-Qadhafi Foundation and son of the Libyan leader, Sayf al-Islam Al-Qadhafi, declared at a news conference that 214 Islamist prisoners would be released. The number of prisoners released now adds up to 705, with 409 still left in prison. He said Libya could not be called an apostate because it is one of the few countries that implemented Shari'ah law and banned alcohol for all, even tourists. He precised that 156 Libyan security officers and 177 members of Islamist groups died in confrontations, but that these issues were things of the past.

(State-owned Libyan TV, Tripoli, in Arabic 1606 GMT 25 Mar 10)

- The Arab League Ministerial Council started meeting in preparation to the Arab Summit to be held in Libya, discussing draft resolutions regarding the Palestinian issue, the Arab Israeli conflict, Iraq, the Arab Parliament and Arab relations with international and regional groups and other states. Consequences of the Lockerbie issue, lifting of unilateral US sanctions on Syria and Sudan should all be discussed.

(State-owned Libyan TV, Tripoli, in Arabic 1015 GMT 27 Mar 10)

- The 22nd Arab League summit was inaugurated today in Sirte, Libya, by the Qatari emir who talked about "many signs and proofs on a deep Arab crisis which can no longer be ignored." Al-Qadhafi went on to introduce the different personalities present and to declare that the Arab world is waiting for actions and not words from leaders and that decisions taken during the summit had to be approved by masses. The floor was then given to the Arab League secretary-general, Amr Musa, who talked about the need to create a nuclear-free zone in the middle east, the need to include Iran in gatherings and the rejection of Israel as long as it wouldn't recognize Jerusalem's arab identity. He called for action to solve issues in Iraq, Sudan, Yemen and Somalia. He also called for an increase of the Arab League budget.

(Jana, state-owned news agency, Tripoli, in Arabic 28 Mar 10)

- Al-Qadhafi made a statement to Jana after representatives of the Nigerian government said that he “does not know the reality in Nigeria and [...] thinks Nigeria [is made of] Christians and Muslims and [wants it] divided into two states”. In the Libyan leader’s statement, he admitted that it had become clear that Nigeria cannot be divided in two, noting that the Yoruba people, the Ibo people, the Iraw people and the Ijaw people are all separate entities demanding independence. He then compared Nigeria not only to India, but also to the Yugoslavian union which has “ended peacefully”. He cited Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia as countries that became independent peacefully.

(State-owned Libyan TV, Tripoli, in Arabic 1257 GMT 28 Mar 10)

- The end of a final statement by Arab League leader Amr Musa was broadcasted in which he briefed his auditors about a few of the conclusions of the Arab League summit, including the establishment of a new “higher committee”. Also, it was decided that an extraordinary arab summit would be held later this year and that the General Secretariat’s budget would be increased. The rest of the statement was available online and concerned a brief summary of the other issues discussed during the summit: the Arab-Israeli conflict, the situation in Sudan, the development of the system of Arab joint action, and the policy towards Arabs’ neighbours.

(Jana, state-owned news agency, Tripoli, in English 2120 GMT 28 Mar 10)

- The General People’s Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation lifted restrictions on EU citizens of the Schengen zone after it accepted the statement issues by the Presidency of the EU.