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Viewing cable 08TRIPOLI868, U.K. DENIES LICENSE FOR EXPORT OF KALASHNIKOV'S TO LIBYA; GOL POTENTIALLY SEEKING ALTERNATIVE SELLERS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 000868

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR ISN/CATR AND EUR/PRA

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SUBJECT: U.K. DENIES LICENSE FOR EXPORT OF KALASHNIKOV'S TO LIBYA;
GOL POTENTIALLY SEEKING ALTERNATIVE SELLERS

REF: A) TRIPOLI 650, B) STATE 95271

CLASSIFIED BY: Chris Stevens, CDA, Embassy Tripoli, U.S. Dept of State. REASON:
1.4 (b), (d)

1. (C) U.K. Embassy PolOff told P/E Chief on October 30 that HMG had decided not/not to approve a license for U.K. company York Guns to export to Libya 130,000 Kashnikov automatic rifles. Per ref A, York Guns was to have acted as intermediary between an unidentified Ukrainian party and procurement officials at Libya's Temporary People's Committee for Defense (MOD-equivalent). Based on the intervention reported ref B and on concerns expressed by the U.K.'s Embassy in Tripoli that the Government of Libya (GOL) might have intended to re-export the weapons to either the governments or armed rebel factions in Chad and Sudan, the U.K.'s Foreign and Commonwealth Office recommended about one month ago against approving the export license. After conducting a review of the case, Whitehall concurred on October 30 with the decision to not/not approve the export license.

2. (C) Separately, Muhammad el-Obeidi, a Libyan businessman with ties to some quarters of Muammar al-Qadhafi's regime, told P/E Chief on October 23 that he **had signed a contract with a Romanian company (NFI) for the export from Romania to Libya of 100,000 AK-47S automatic rifles**. (Note: El-Obeidi's older brother was Libya's Minister of Defense from 1954-1969; his nephew is a former Prime Minister and the current MFA Secretary (U/S-equivalent) for European Affairs. End note.) El-Obeidi signed the contract in late September in Paris during a business trip there. El-Obeidi said he had been tapped to help facilitate **procurement for the Jafl al-Khamis ("Khamis Brigade")**, a **special forces unit headed by Khamis al-Qadhafi, son of Muammar al-Qadhafi**. He said Captain Ahmed Ben Shraga'a, head of procurement for the unit, has instructions to work through el-Obeidi on a number of "special procurement issues". El-Obeidi was open about the contract, but avoided the question as to whether the rifles were to be used in Libya or re-exported to another destination.
STEVENS

Vali

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