

Libyan Chronology

1969 to 1986



**Headquarters USAF History Branch
Office of the Air Force Historian
Washington, D. C.**

June 1991

The 1986 Libyan Crisis

Since antiquity, Libya has been under foreign rule. Peoples such as the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Turks, and Italians all have ruled over all or parts of the country. In 1911 Italy invaded and decreed the name Libya, formerly used by the Greeks for all of North Africa, except Egypt. Between the World Wars, King Idris Senussi, Emir of Cyrenaica, led the resistance to Italian rule. From 1943 to 1951 Libya was under divided British and French administration. Under the 1947 peace treaty with the Allies, Italy relinquished all claims to Libya. In 1949 the United Nations General Assembly declared that Libya should become independent by 1 January 1952. It became independent on 24 December 1951, and was proclaimed a constitutional and hereditary monarchy under King Idris. In 1959 sizable oil reserves were discovered in Libya. Subsequent revenues from petroleum exports made the country very wealthy after it had been one of the poorest.

King Idris ruled the kingdom until 1 September 1969 when a military coup, led by the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), proclaimed it the Libyan Arab Republic. After a short rule by the military junta, Col Muammar el-Qaddafi, a leader of the RCC, became the *de facto* chief of state. The RCC's goals were to: remove the nation's backwardness; become active in the Palestinian cause; promote Arab unity; and encourage domestic policies based on social justice, nonexploitation, and equitable distribution of wealth. The government's goals included the removal of all foreign military installations and the closure of all foreign libraries and cultural centers to minimize contact with non-Libyan, non-Islamic influences. In 1977, a General People's Congress changed the country's name to the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (or state of the masses). In 1980 Qaddafi relinquished his office to become a "private citizen," although he is referred to as "Leader of the Revolution" and continues as head of state.

Muammar el-Qaddafi, the son of a shepherd, was born in 1943. A lieutenant ten days before the 1969 coup, he issued a Green Book in three volumes in which he outlined his political ideology and Islamic vision of utopia. The book argues the case for a "third universal theory." Western diplomats summarize Qaddafi's philosophy as radical egalitarianism. However, an Arab ambassador, referring to Qaddafi's vision of an austere and militant society, says Qaddafi's goal is to "Bedouinize" the country, that is, to return it to the values of the desert. Some dispute Qaddafi's devotion to traditional Islam. He has emancipated women from traditional strictures, permitting them to drive automobiles, wear western clothes, and serve in the military. His bodyguard was said to be composed of East German and Libyan women. [Background Notes, "Libya," U.S. State Department Bureau of Public Affairs, August 1985.]

Colonel Qaddafi supports worldwide terrorism. Among the groups that have his support are German and Bulgarian terrorists, Abu Nidal, the Irish Republican Army, Carlos (the notorious international terrorist), Philippine Muslim Moro separatists, Palestine Liberation Organization dissidents, the Japanese Red Army, and Kurdish separatists in Iraq. Qaddafi also supports dissidents in Guatemala, El Salvador, Chad, Sudan, Egypt, Algeria, Iran, and assorted Caribbean and Islamic

states. Additionally, he employs Libyan agents to target Libyan dissidents. (For a more detailed listing see Providence Journal, 11 Apr 1986, p. 20.)

"State terrorism sponsored by Libya, Iran, and Syria has less to do with removing the causes of Palestinian discontent than with expanding their national power in the Middle East. With Libya and Iran, the explicit target is the Western World."

— Michael Leeden, senior fellow in international affairs at the Georgetown University center for Strategic and International Studies. Quoted in The Washington Times, 6 May 1986, p 3.

". . . the U.S. is targeted in particular because it represents secularization and modernization — the antithesis of what Islamic religious/political Holy Law dictates to be the correct way of life."

— "The Friday Review of Defense Literature" based on Bernard Lewis in Terrorism: How the West Can Win (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1986) by Benjamin Netanyahu, ed.

"Terrorism is the deliberate and systematic murder, maiming, and menacing of the innocent to inspire fear for political ends."

— *Ibid.*

Terrorism is "the unlawful use or threat of violence against persons or property to further political or social objectives."

— Vice President's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism, Feb 1986

Libyan Chronology

1969

- 1 September Military officers staged a successful coup, displacing 79-year old King Idris. They adopted the Arab nationalist Ba'athist slogan "Socialism, Unity, Freedom." The action in Libya followed similar actions during the previous year in Iraq, Sudan, and North Yemen. Diplomats believed that Libya would turn against the West in general, particularly the United States. ["A Junta in Libya Ousts Monarchy, Sets Up Republic," New York Times, 2 Sep 1969.]
- 6 September The United States formally recognized the Libyan Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), conceding that it did not know the council's leadership, composition, or size. Britain and France also extended their recognition. [Benjamin Welles, "U.S. Recognizes the Libyan Junta that Ousted King," New York Times, 6 Sep 1969.]
- 17 September Premier Mahmoud Soliman al-Maghreby said Libya would tolerate U.S. presence at Wheelus Air Base (AB) until the agreement expired in December 1971. ["Libyans Assure U.S. On Wheelus Accord," New York Times, 17 Sep 1969.]
- 31 October Libya asked the United States to pull out of Wheelus AB before the 24 December 1971 deadline. ["U.S. Is Studying Request for Pullout From Libya," New York Times, 31 Oct 1969.]
- 10 November Col Muammar Qaddafi, leader of the RCC, threatened to go to war if "colonial states" did not withdraw from the country. ["Libyan Leader Vows Fight to Force Troop Withdrawal," New York Times, 10 Nov 1969.]
- 17 December The United States agreed to withdraw all equipment and personnel from Wheelus AB by 30 June 1970. ["U.S. Says It Has Begun to Close Wheelus Base, As Libya Asked," New York Times, 17 Dec 1969.]

1970

- 16 January Colonel Qaddafi assumed the posts of Premier and Defense Minister of the 12-member cabinet. Maghreby, the first premier, resigned. Qaddafi said he saw no problem in developing Libyan relations with the United States and Britain. He stressed Arab unity, especially with Sudan and the United Arab Republic. ["Libyan Colonel, 27, Becomes Premier; Had Headed Junta," New York Times, 16 Jan 1970.]
- 14 February France agreed to sell 110 Mirage jet fighters to Libya. [C.L. Sulzberger, "Pompidou, In Interview, Explains Policy," New York Times, 14 Feb 1970.]
- 12 June The United States returned Wheelus AB to Libya. This came about without U.S. protest and the withdrawal was negotiated calmly. ["U.S. Hands Over Base to Libyans," New York Times, 12 Jun 1970.]

1971

- 26 January Colonel Qaddafi announced a referendum and was chosen President. ["2 Arab States Plan Presidential Votes," New York Times, 26 Jan 1971.]
- 16 February Colonel Qaddafi was reportedly interested in reconciliation with the United States. Tunisian-Libyan-U.S. ties were recalled. [Henry Ginger, "Libyans Reported Cool to Soviets, Warming to U.S.," New York Times, 16 Feb 1971.]

1972

- 6 February According to a New York Times Magazine article, Colonel Qaddafi was turning Libya into a mosque. (In 1970 he expelled some 29,000 Italians from the country. He carries a pistol and machine gun. He took away bureaucrats' furniture.) Arab leaders, including Anwar Sadat, considered him a reckless hothead and laughed at him behind his back. They humored him for his money because Libya was said to have \$2.5 billion in reserves. Although Qaddafi aimed to "obliterate the Zionist nation," his relations with the leaders of the Palestinian fedayeen were not harmonious. The Soviets sold him 200 tanks for cash, although he was fanatically anticommunist. Surprisingly, relations with the United States and France were good, however, the British were upset at the nationalization of British Petroleum. [Edward R.F. Sheehan,

"Colonel Qaddafi—Libya's Mystical Revolutionary," New York Times Magazine, 6 Feb 1972.]

11 June

In a speech marking the second anniversary of the evacuation of U.S. forces from Wheelus AB, Qaddafi said he was sending arms, money, and volunteers to help Irish revolutionaries. He also said he supported American blacks against U.S. "arrogance" and was helping Moslems in the Philippines. Qaddafi vowed to prepare the whole Arab nation for an all-out war of liberation by the end of the year to "fight Britain and the United States on their own lands." Joseph Palmer II, the American ambassador, and Peter Tripp, the British ambassador, walked out during the speech. ["Premier Says Libya Aids 'Revolutionaries' in Ulster," New York Times, 11 Jun 1972.]

6 July

Before his death in 1970, President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt restrained Colonel Qaddafi. Unchecked, Qaddafi saw himself as the prophet of Arab nationalism and Islamic purity. His claims of support to revolutionaries were discounted by the IRA, which said it received no money, and Black Muslims, who said they received a \$3 million "loan" to build a mosque. Boxer Muhammed Ali met with Qaddafi. [Henry Tanner, "Libyan Leader's Policies Meet Resistance at Home and Abroad," New York Times, 6 Jul 1972.]

17 July

A new Libyan cabinet was announced. Qaddafi gave up the premiership but remained president. ["Council In Libya Forms A Cabinet," New York Times, 17 Jul 1972.]

November

U.S. Ambassador Palmer left his post.

1973

15 April

Qaddafi announced a "cultural revolution" and said he was turning the country over to the "popular masses." [Henry Tanner, "Tough Libyan 'Cultural Revolution' Stresses Merger with Egypt," New York Times, 22 May 1973.]

18 May

A restriction requiring airline tickets for arriving travelers to be written in Arabic was imposed. [Henry Tanner, "Libya Raises Another Barrier to Foreigners Seeking Entry," New York Times, 18 May 1973.]

26 June

U.S. oil companies, under threat of nationalization, offered concessions to Qaddafi. ["New Oil Concessions Reported to Libya," New York Times, 26 Jun 1973.]

19 August Palestinian guerrillas denounced Qaddafi as a fascist tyrant who sent his opponents to concentration camps. ["Palestinian Guerrillas Denounce Qaddafi," New York Times, 19 Aug 1973.]

1974

9 April Qaddafi reportedly was removed from daily contact with foreign governments. ["Impact of Change in Libya Unclear," New York Times, 9 Apr 1974.]

5 May Maj Abdul Salaam Jalloud went to Moscow for economic and technical agreements. [Juan de Onis, "Libya Said to Seek Closer Soviet Ties," New York Times, 5 May 1974.]

1975

20 February Some 500 Soviet advisers in Libya were working on air defense missiles (SAM-2, SAM-3, SAM-6) and T-62 tanks. The Soviets were replacing Egyptians who were withdrawn from Libya after Qaddafi and Anwar Sadt quarreled over Middle East policies. [Flora Lewis, "Russians In Libya Increase Sharply," New York Times, 20 Feb 1975.]

16 September Brothers Nelson and William Hunt charged that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had them indicted for their refusal to serve as CIA fronts in Libya. [Martin Waldron, "Two Rich Texans Go On Trial Today," New York Times, 16 Sep 1975.]

1976

12 March Qaddafi expelled 3,000 Egyptians. Subsequently, Egypt banned travel to Libya. ["Egypt Announces Arrest of 12 Libyan Agents," New York Times, 13 March 1976.]

5 April Egyptian President Anwar Sadat said that Libya had ordered \$11 billion in weapons from the Soviet Union. He also called Qaddafi a mental case. [Flora Lewis, "Soviet Navy Loses Rights to Egyptian Ports," New York Times, 5 Apr 1976.]

17 July Libya was called a center for international terrorism. Libyans were said to arm and train world terrorists. Their aim was to create a radical Islamic union. Their clients included the IRA, rebels in the Philippines Chad, Thailand, and Ethiopia. Qaddafi was said to seek to crush Israel and assassinate Arab leaders of Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, and

Morocco. Qaddafi said his struggle was against occupation and injustice. [Bernard Weinraub, "Libyans Arm and Train World Terrorists," New York Times, 16 Jul 1976.]

2 December

Qaddafi and Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev agreed to widen cooperation between their countries. ["Qaddafi To Visit Moscow," New York Times, 2 Dec 1976.]

1977

2 January

The Green Book described a society neither a society neither capitalistic nor communistic, but universal. [C.L. Sulzberger, "A Dialogue Even of the Deaf," Foreign Affairs, 2 Jan 1977.]

25 March

Amnesty International accused Qaddafi of disregarding Libya's own rule of law by altering sentences passed by the courts. ["Amnesty Group Says Libya Altered Court Sentences," New York Times, 25 Mar 1977.]

9 May

The U.S. State Department provided Senator Jacob Javits with material showing Libya's support of terrorism. ["U.S. Says Libya, Somalia, Iraq and Southern Yemen Aid Terrorists," New York Times, 9 May 1977.]

13 June

Qaddafi challenged President Jimmy Carter to improve U.S.-Libyan relations. ["Libya Asks U.S. Consent for Exchange of Envoys," New York Times, 13 Jun 1977.]

1978

22 February

The U.S. State Department denied an export license for two Boeing 727 and eight Lockheed C-130 aircraft for Libya. [Youssef M. Ibrahim, "U.S. Delays Sales Made To Libyans," New York Times, 24 Jun 1978.]

1979

11 January

The White House disassociated itself from Billy Carter's tour of Libya. [Howell Raines, "Carter Acts to Disassociate Himself From Brother's Role with Libya," New York Times, 11 Jan 1979.]

- 24 September Robert L. Vesco, who fled the United States after he was charged with bilking stockholders out of millions of dollars, tried to influence release of aircraft to Libya. [Philip Taubman, "Inquiry Is Reported on Libyan Plane Sale," New York Times, 29 Sep 1979.]
- December In an interview with Orianna Fallaci, Qaddafi said, "Everybody hates America." [Orianna Fallaci, "Iranians are Our Brothers," New York Times, 16 Dec 1979.]
- 2 December A Libyan mob of 2,000 attacked the U.S. embassy in Tripoli. ["Embassy of the U.S. In Libya is Stormed By A Crowd of 2,000," New York Times, 2 Dec 1979.]
- 6 December The United States suspended operations at the Libyan embassy, but did not cut off relations. ["U.S., Vexed By Libya On Embassy Assault, Curtails Relationship," New York Times, 6 Dec 1979.]

1980

- 8 February The United States closed its Libyan embassy after a mob attacked the French embassy. [U.S. Diplomats Leave Libya," New York Times, 8 Feb 1980.]
- 12 April Libyan hit squads presence was reported in the United States and Europe to kill Libyan dissidents. ["Plot On Sadat Was Feared," New York Times, 12 April 1980.]
- 5 May The U.S. State Department ordered Libyan diplomats out of the country following incidents of intimidation of Libyans living in the United States. U.S. diplomats were called home. ["Four Libyan Diplomats Are Expelled by U.S. For Harassing Exiles," New York Times, 5 May 1980.]
- 12 June Ninth Libyan was murdered in Europe. ["A Libyan Is Slain in Milan as Qaddafi's Deadline Ends," New York Times, 12 Jun 1980.]
- 21 July Billy Carter filed as a government agent of Libya to avoid a criminal investigation by the Justice Department. [Nicholas M. Horrock, "Billy Carter Filed As Libyan Agent To Avoid U.S. Criminal Inquiry," New York Times, 21 July 1980.]

26 October A full page advertisement from Qaddafi to Presidents Carter and Ronald Reagan told the United States to pull out of Oman, Somalia, and Egypt and to remove AWACS planes from Saudi Arabia. Otherwise, he threatened war. Qaddafi said that oil belonged to the Arabs. ["Message of Leader Brother Muammar Qadhafi to Mr. Carter and Mr. Reagan," New York Times, 26 Oct 1980.]

1981

24 February Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., returned a \$600,000 gift from Libya because of that country's support of terrorism. [Gene I. Maeroff, "University Returns \$600,000 Libyan Gift," New York Times, 24 Feb 1981.]

3 March France stopped delivery of missiles to Libya due to Libyan intervention in Chad. ["Paris Withholds Boats for Libya," New York Times, 3 Mar 1981.]

7 May The United States ordered Libya to close its mission in Washington, D.C. It also urged all U.S. oil workers in Libya to return home. [Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. Expels Libyans and Closes Mission, Charging Terrorism," New York Times, 7 May 1981.]

19 August Two U.S. Navy F-14 planes shot down two Soviet-built Libyan Su-22 Fitter aircraft inside the Gulf of Sidra, which Libya incorporated into its territorial waters in 1973. However, that act was not recognized by either the United States, Soviet Union, Britain, or France. The United States once again urged American oil workers to leave Libya and return home. [Robert Reinhold, "Bizarre Cases Mar Relations With Libya," New York Times, 19 Aug 1981; Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. Reports Shooting Down 2 Libyan Jets That Attacked F-14s Over Mediterranean," New York Times, 20 Aug 1981.]

30 August U.S. federal investigators said 20 tons of plastic explosives were shipped to Libya in 1977. The shipment was organized by two former CIA agents, Edwin P. Wilson and Frank E. Terpil. [Philip Taubman and Jeff Gerth, "20-Ton Explosive Shipment to Libya Linked to Ex-Agent," New York Times, 30 Aug 1981.]

10 December President Reagan again asked Americans to leave Libya. Additionally, a rumor had been circulating since September of a Libyan plot to assassinate the American President. [Howell Raines, "Press and TV Are Asked to Curb Reports on Protection for Reagan," New York Times, 4 Dec 1981.]

1982

- 14 January The Reagan Administration said Qaddafi had either postponed or canceled the assassination attempt against President Reagan. [Philip Taubman, "U.S. Aides Believe Peril of a Libyan Attack on the President Eases," New York Times, 14 Jan 1982.]
- 10 March The United States placed an embargo on Libyan oil and curtailed export there of high-technology items. [Steven R. Weisman, "U.S. Bans Imports of Oil From Libya," New York Times, 10 Mar 1982.]
- 15 June Former CIA agent Edwin P. Wilson, lured from Libya to New York, was arrested. [Philip Taubman, "Ex-Spy Lured From Libya and Caught in U.S. Trap," New York Times, 16 Jun 1982.]
- 17 November Edwin Wilson was found guilty on seven counts of smuggling weapons to Libya. [Stuart Taylor Jr., "Ex-CIA Agent Found Guilty in Giving Guns to Libyans," New York Times, 16 Jun 1982.]
- 21 December Edwin Wilson was sentenced to ten years in prison and fined \$200,000. He still faced more charges. [Philip Taubman, "Ex-Agent is Given 15 Years in Prison," New York Times, 21 Dec 1982.]

1983

- 19 February Edwin Wilson was sentenced to 17 years for smuggling plastic explosives to Libya. [Bernard Weintraub, "F-14s from Carrier Nimitz Chased 2 Libyan Jets," New York Times, 19 Feb 1983.]
- 20 March The Soviet Union and Libya signed a treaty of friendship. [John F. Burns, "Soviets and Libya Plan an Amity Accord," New York Times, 20 Mar 1983.]
- July-August U.S. Navy aircraft intercepted Libyan aircraft. No weapons were fired. ["U.S. Fighters Intercept Two Libyan MIGs," New York Times, 1 Jul 1983; "Libya MIGs Are Intercepted By Jets From a U.S. Carrier," New York Times, 3 Aug 1983.]
- 23 October A trunk bomb blew up U.S. Marine headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 241 servicemen. [Frances X. Clines, "Beirut Death Toll at 161 Americans; French Casualties Rise in Bombings; Reagan Insists Marines Will Remain," New York Times, 24 Oct 1983.]

- 10 November Edwin Wilson was sentenced to 25 years in prison for plotting to murder two prosecutors and six witnesses against him. [Arnold H. Lubasch, "Ex-Agent Receives 25 Years For Murder Plot Conviction," New York Times, 10 Nov 1983.]
- 4 December The U.S. Justice Department dropped its investigation into Reverend Jesse Jackson's Libyan dealings. ["Investigation of Jackson Ends," New York Times, 4 Dec 1983.]
- 16 December President Reagan barred export licenses for a Libyan oil refinery and petrochemical plant. [Kenneth B. Noble, "President Orders Curbs on Exports to Libya," New York Times, 16 Dec 1983.]

1984

- 22 January Ammar D. el-Taggazy, Libya's top diplomat in Italy, was shot in Rome. ["Libyan Diplomat Shot by 2 Gunmen in Rome," New York Times, 22 Jan 1984.]
- 11 March Libyan terrorists were linked to bombs and explosions in London. [Barnaby J. Feder, "5 London Bombs Linked to Libyans," New York Times, 11 Mar 1984.]
- 17 April Machine-gun fire from the Libyan embassy in London killed a British policewoman and wounded 11 others. [Jon Nordheimer, "Gunman in London in Libyan Embassy Fires Into Crowd," New York Times, 18 Apr 1984.]
- 23 April Britain broke diplomatic relations with Libya. [Barnaby J. Feder, "British Break off Libyan Relations Over London Seige," New York Times, 23 Apr 1984.]
- 7 May An attack on Qaddafi's home was reported. The altercation apparently stemmed from his public and televised hangings of dissidents. [Werner Wiskari, "Attack Reported on Qaddafi Home," New York Times, 8 May 1984.]
- 14 August Libya and Morocco signed a treaty of unity. Previously, Qaddafi had signed unity agreements with Egypt twice, and once each with Syria and Tunisia. Each of the treaties collapsed. [Judith Miller, "Libya's Congress Approves Union With Morocco," New York Times, 31 Aug 1984.]

August

Saudi Arabians turned back gun-carrying Libyans on a pilgrimage to Mecca. There was suspicion that Qaddafi was behind a plot to seize the Grand Mosque in Mecca. [Judith Miller, "Libya Has Few Friends Among Neighbors," New York Times, 2 Sep 1984.]

1985

25 February

Qaddafi, in a speech via satellite to the Islamic Convention in Chicago, urged black servicemen to leave the military and create a separate army because the United States must be destroyed. ["Qaddafi Tells Blacks to Revolt," New York Times, 25 Feb 1985.]

April

Qaddafi called for violence against the United States. National Security Council Adviser Robert McFarlane recommended a proper military response. [Henry Kamm, "Qaddafi Menaces Reagan on Sudan," New York Times, 11 Apr 1985.]

3 May

Reverend Louis Farrakhan accepted a \$5 million "loan" from Qaddafi. [E.R. Shipp, "Chicago Muslim Gets Qaddafi Loan," New York Times, 4 May 1985.]

10 July

Sudan and Libya signed a military agreement. [Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. Tells Sudan of Concern Over Libya Military Accord," New York Times, 10 Jul 1985.]

7 October

The Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro was hijacked by terrorists in the Mediterranean Sea. The United States charged Libyan support for the operation. [John Tagliabue, "Ship Carrying 400 Is Seized; Hijackers Demand Release of 50 Palestinians in Israel," New York Times, 8 Oct 1985.]

27 December

In Rome and Vienna, terrorist gunmen attacked, killing 10 (including 4 Americans) and wounding 113. The White House accused Libya of aiding the terrorists. [John Tagliabue, "Airport Terrorists Kill 10 and Wound 113 At Israeli Counters in Rome and Vienna," New York Times, 28 Dec 1985.]

1986

7 January

The United States broke all economic ties with Libya and ordered approximately 1,500 Americans to return home. ["President's News Conference," New York Times, 8 Jan 1986.]

24 March

U.S. Navy planes attacked a Libyan anti-aircraft site and two guided missile boats after Libya launched SA-5 missiles

against Navy planes. [George C. Wilson, "Navy Planes Cross Libyan 'Death Line,'" The Washington Post, 24 Mar 1986.]

- 25 March U.S. Navy struck Libyan boats and radars. [George C. Wilson and Fred Hiatt, "Navy Again Strikes Libyan Boats, Radar; Qaddafi is Warned," The Washington Post, 25 Mar 1986.]
- 2 April Four people were killed during a bomb explosion on a TWA flight. Qaddafi was held responsible. [Robert Suro, "4 Killed As Bomb Rips TWA Plane on Way to Athens," New York Times, 3 Apr 1986.]
- 5 April West Berlin's La Belle Discotheque, frequented by Americans, was bombed. One U.S. soldier was killed and more than 200 people were wounded. The United States claimed "exact, precise, and irrefutable" evidence of Libyan responsibility for the bombing. [John Tagliabue, "2 Killed, 155 Hurt In Bomb Explosion at Club in Berlin," New York Times, 5 Apr 1986.]
- 14 April U.S. Air Force F-111s and Navy A-6s struck Libyan "terrorist centers" in Tripoli and Benghazi. Air Force planes took off from Britain because other European nations refused to permit overflight. [Neil A. Lewis, "U.S. Jets Hit 'Terrorist Centers' in Libya; Reagan Warns of New Attacks if Needed; One Plane Missing in Raids on 5 Targets," New York Times, 14 Apr 1986.]

Time Chronology¹

- 14 April
- 12:13 pm EST 28 KC-10/KC-135 aircraft departed from RAF Fairford and RAF Mindenhall.
- 12:36 pm 24 F-111s departed from RAF Lakenheath and 5 EF-111s from RAF Heyford. Four silent refuelings were conducted enroute the target area. Note: The above totals include spare aircraft.
- 5:20-6:20 pm The USS Coral Sea launched 8 A-6E strike and 6 F/A strike support aircraft.
- 5:45-6:15 pm The USS America launched 6 A-6E strike and 6 A-7 strike support aircraft.

¹ Air Force Policy Letter for Commanders, "Chronology: U.S. Operations Against Libya," 1 May 1986.

6:54 pm ECM was commenced with EF-111s and SAM suppression with A-7s and F/A-18s.

7:00 pm Simultaneous attacks were commenced on Benina Airfield and the Benghazi military barracks with 12 A-6Es and the Aziziyah barracks - Tripoli and the Sidi Bilal terrorist training camp with 8 F-111s.

7:06-7:11 pm 5 F-111s conducted an attack on the Tripoli military airport, the final target.

7:13 pm All Navy strike aircraft were confirmed away from Libyan land mass. Unable to confirm if all Air Force aircraft were away.

7:15 pm Search and rescue forces were alerted to search for a possible missing aircraft.

7:46 pm Coral Sea strike aircraft were back on deck.

7:53 pm America strike and primary support aircraft were back on deck.

8:14 pm The first return refueling confirmed one F-111 was missing.

10:16 pm One F-11, returning to the United Kingdom, was diverted to Rota, Spain, with an overheated engine.

15 April

3:10 am All aircraft (less the F-111 reported missing and the diverted F-111 in Rota) were reported safe on deck in the United Kingdom.

10:00 pm The search and rescue effort was terminated with a negative result.