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imagery analysis report

Military Airfield Construction and Renovation in Libya (S)

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MILITARY AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION IN LIBYA (S)

INTRODUCTION

1. (S/WN) This report provides information on new military airfield construction and renovations to existing military airfields in Libya through [redacted]. Information is also provided on other military airfields. The report includes a location map, four annotated photographs, and a table. Only major military airfields are discussed in this report.

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DISCUSSION

2. (S/WN) Six airfields are under construction, and two airfields and one helicopter base are undergoing major renovation in Libya (Figure 1 and Table 1). Construction start dates for the airfields range from 1976 to 1981. Three airfields were nearly complete, and three were in the early stages of construction in May 1982.

New Airfields

Al Jufrah Airfield

3. (S/WN) Al Jufrah Airfield (Figure 2), in north-central Libya, 260 nautical miles (nm) south-east of Tarabulus and 116 nm south of Ghurdabiyah Airfield, was first identified in the early stage of construction on [redacted] and by [redacted] the airfield was in the late stage of construction. It consists of a 4,207-meter, main northwest/southeast, concrete and asphalt runway. Also under construction are a parallel, concrete and asphalt, auxiliary runway/taxiway and an aircraft dispersal area with at least 12 fighter-sized probably hardened aircraft shelters (possibly Soviet type). When complete, this airfield will be capable of handling any aircraft currently in the Libyan inventory. A probable barracks/administration area and a possible POL storage area were under construction east of the airfield. A construction-support facility is also east of the airfield.

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Ghadames East Airfield

4. (S/WN) Ghadames East Airfield (Figure 3), 10 nm southeast of the Tunisian-Algerian-Libyan border, was first observed in the early stage of construction in July 1978. This airfield consists of a main, 3,601- by 45-meter runway; a secondary, 1,968- by 40-meter runway; one parallel taxiway; two end-connecting taxiways; two high-speed alert taxiways; seven connecting taxiways; two alert-parking aprons; one main parking apron; and two support-parking aprons. A construction-support camp is 1.2 nm south of the airfield. By February 1980, the graded outline for main and secondary runways, taxiways, and parking aprons had been observed and one third of the main runway had been oiled. By December 1981, the main runway and parallel taxiway had been covered with asphalt. In February 1982, the concrete touchdowns were set and all asphaltting appeared to be complete. By [redacted] the landing markers, orientation numbers, and taxi lines had been painted on all the runways and taxiways. No aircraft have been observed at this airfield.

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Martubah New Airfield

5. (S/WN) Martubah New Airfield, in eastern Libya, 68 nm west of Tubruq and 138 nm east of Benghazi, was first observed in the early stage of construction in July 1977. This airfield consists of a 3,030- by 45-meter asphalt runway with concrete touchdowns, one parallel taxiway/auxiliary runway, two concrete end-connecting taxiways, four connecting taxiways, and one large parking apron. Two earth-covered, POL storage bunkers are also at the airfield. Since July 1977, construction has progressed at a very slow rate, but by December 1980, the runway had been asphalted and work had begun on the concrete touchdowns and end-connecting links. In December 1980, imagery revealed a severe drainage problem at the airfield. A large ditch had been cut across the northern third of the runway and parallel taxiway. By February 1982, an extensive trench network for a drainage system had been observed encompassing the airfield. The concrete touchdowns and end-connecting links were completed, and work on the parking aprons was still underway. This airfield has not become operational.

Al Wigh Airfield

6. (S/WN) Al Wigh Airfield, 172 nm south of Sebha Airfield and 74 nm north of the Chadian-Libyan border, was first observed in the midstage of construction on [redacted]. The airfield consists of a main runway, 4,316 by 72 meters; a secondary runway, 1,805 by 45 meters; one parallel taxiway; five link taxiways; and a large parking apron on the east side of the airfield. A construction/support camp with one large vehicle-storage building and at least 50 housing trailers is adjacent to the east side of the airfield. The construction/support camp and probable runway drainage trenches were seen on imagery of [redacted]. The completion of this airfield will provide Libya with an isolated, bomber-capable airfield in the southwestern portion of the country.

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Tubruq Airfield

7. (S/WN) Tubruq Airfield, on the western outskirts of Tubruq in eastern Libya, was first observed in the early stage of construction in late 1976. Brief periods of construction were observed during 1978 and 1980. This airfield consists of a 3,400- by 45-meter runway, two connecting taxiways, and a large parking apron. Runway extension, grading, and rolling were underway in 1981 but have ceased. When completed, this air-

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field will be capable of handling all of Libya's present inventory of large cargo transport aircraft. The very slow and sporadic nature of the construction at this facility suggests that it has a low priority.

Matan As Sarra Airfield

8. (S/WN) Matan As Sarra Airfield, in southwest Libya, approximately 75 nm north of the Chadian-Libyan border, was initially identified in the early stage of construction in July 1980, and construction has not progressed very rapidly. The airfield consists of one runway, which will be approximately 4,120 meters long. Although the function of this airfield has not yet been determined, it could accommodate any aircraft currently in the Libyan inventory when complete.

Renovated Airfields

Al Bumbah Airfield

9. (S/WN) Al Bumbah Airfield (Figure 4), in northeastern Libya, was the first Libyan airfield specifically constructed to support helicopters. Ini-

tial construction of a landing strip was first observed on [redacted] the initial deployment of 11 HOPLITEs was observed. By mid-September, the initial grading and rolling for a second landing strip was underway, and the construction of permanent barracks and a hangar was also observed. The mobile trailers which have been in the support area since July 1980 were probably used as both barracks and support/operations buildings. This airfield supports 25 to 30 HOPLITEs.

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Brach Airfield 2

10. (S/WN) Brach Airfield 2, 40 nm northwest of Sebha Airfield in west-central Libya, consists of a 1,829-meter runway, constructed on the site of an abandoned gravel/sand runway. The runway was first observed under construction in September 1980; by October 1981, the airfield had become fully operational. In February 1982, a 1,243-meter extension at the southeast end of the runway was in the midstage of construction. Upon completion of the runway extension, this isolated airfield could accommodate bomber aircraft. The first deployment of military aircraft (17 L-39 Albacross) to this airfield was observed on [redacted]

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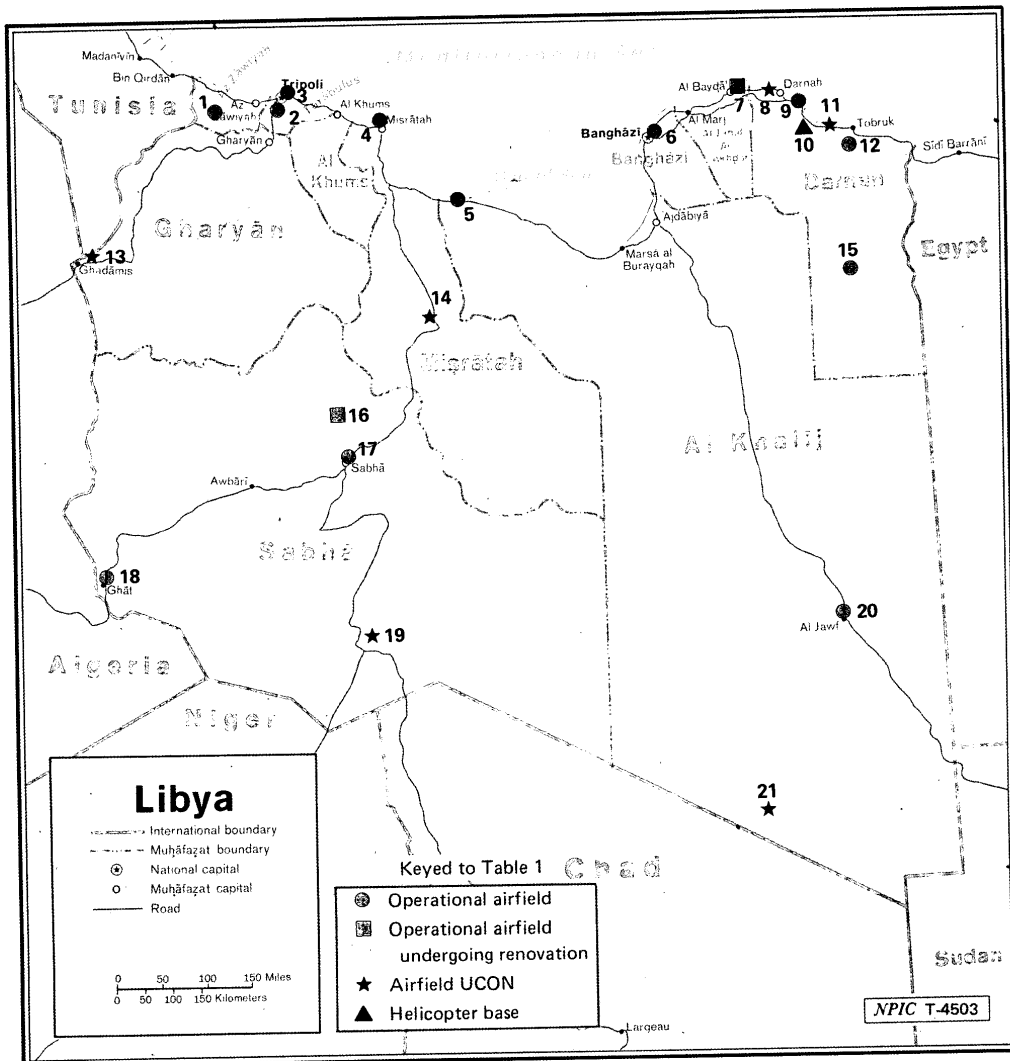


FIGURE 1. LOCATIONS OF MAJOR MILITARY AIRFIELDS IN LIBYA

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Table 1.
Major Military Airfields in Libya
(Items keyed to Figure 1)

This table in its entirety is classified SECRET/WWINTEL

Item	Airfield/BE No/Coordinates	Runway Orientation & Length (m)	Surface	Remarks	Item	Airfield/BE No/Coordinates	Runway Orientation & Length (m)	Surface	Remarks
1	Okba Ibn Nafa [redacted] 32-28-28N 011-53-55E	E/W, 3,232 x 45	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Fighter base; Mirage F-1, & HIND; parallel taxiways & 8 hardened aircraft shelters (ucon)	11	Tubruq [redacted] 32-05-46N 023-50-21E	N/S, 3,400 x 45	Runway ucon	Prob civilian base ucon
2	Tripoli [redacted] 32-39-45N 013-09-35E	E/W, 3,660 x 45 N/S, 2,230 x 45	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Military/civilian base; CANDID, Super Frelon, & CH-47	12	Gamal Abd-El Nasser [redacted] 31-51-15N 023-55-02E	E/W, 3,018 x 48 NNW/SSE, 3,002 x 40 NE/SW, 2,538 X 34	Concrete	Fighter base; Mirage III/V, & FISHBED; 2 double, 17 single aircraft bunkers, & runway improvements in progress
3	Umm Aitiqah [redacted] 32-53-48N 013-16-32E	ESE/WWN, 3,450 x 60	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Fighter/bomber base; BLINDER, FOXBAT, Mirage III/V, L-39, & C-130; parallel taxiway & 14 double aircraft bunkers	13	Ghadames East [redacted] 30-08-00N 009-42-00E	NE/SW, 3,601 x 45 N/S, 1,968 x 40	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Final stages of cons; support facs being built
4	Misurata [redacted] 32-19-28N 015-03-50E	NW/SE, 3,400 x 44	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Training base; FISHBED, Galeb, & HOPLITE; parallel taxiway	14	Al Julfrah [redacted] 29-10-00N 016-00-00E	NW/SE, 4,207 x 61	Asphalt & concrete	Ucon; 12 prob hardened aircraft shelters, support facs, parallel auxiliary runway/taxiway, & aircraft hardstands
5	Ghurdabiyah [redacted] 31-03-34N 016-35-49E	N/S, 4,300 x 64 NW/SE, 3,605 x 46	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Fighter base; FLOGGER, FITTER, L-39, & HAZE A; 80 hardened aircraft shelters & N/S & NW/SE parallel taxiway (FOXBAT deployment)	15	Al Booster [redacted] 29-53-30N 023-20-54E	NE/SW, 3,496 x 46	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Forward deployment base; limited support facs
6	Benina [redacted] 32-05-45N 020-16-30E	NW/SE, 3,633 x 46	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Military/civilian base; FLOGGER & G-222T transport; parallel runway	16	Brach Airfield 2 [redacted] 27-40-00N 014-16-00E	WNW/ESE, 3,072 x 60 (including extension)	Asphalt	Prob military/civilian base; runway extension in progress
7	Labraq [redacted] 32-47-23N 021-57-53E	E/W, 3,261 x 44 NE/SW, 1,961 x 60	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Fighter base; FLOGGER, HIND, & CH-47; parallel E/W taxiway, air-field support bldgs ucon	17	Sebha [redacted] 26-59-36N 014-28-01E	NW/SE, 3,639 x 45	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Military/civilian base; Mirage III/V, SF-260, & CH-47 (FOXBAT deployment)
8	Martubah New [redacted] 32-32-45N 022-44-50E	NNE/SSW, 3,030 x 45	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Ucon; drainage system being installed	18	Ghat [redacted] 25-07-57N 010-08-56E	N/S, 3,609 x 46 ENE/WSW, 1,503 x 30	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Military/civilian base; SF-260; N/S parallel taxiway in midstage of cons (FOXBAT deployment)
9	Al Bumbah North [redacted] 32-27-36N 023-06-52E	NW/SE, 3,393 x 45	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Fighter base; FISHBED; taxiways, parking aprons, & airfield support bldgs ucon	19	Al Wigh [redacted] 24-11-00N 014-33-00E	NW/SE, 4,216 x 72 NE/SW, 1,805 x 45	Unk Unk	Ucon
10	Al Bumbah [redacted] 32-25-15N 023-07-32E	NW/SE	Asphalt	Helicopter base; HOPLITE	20	Kufra [redacted] 24-10-55N 023-19-08E	NNE/SSW, 3,694 x 45	Asphalt with concrete touchdowns	Fighter/bomber base; BLINDER & FISHBED; resurfacing/repairing runway & parallel taxiway
					21	Matan As Sarra [redacted] 21-40-00N 021-54-00E	NNE/SSW, 4,120	Oiled sand	Prob support base ucon

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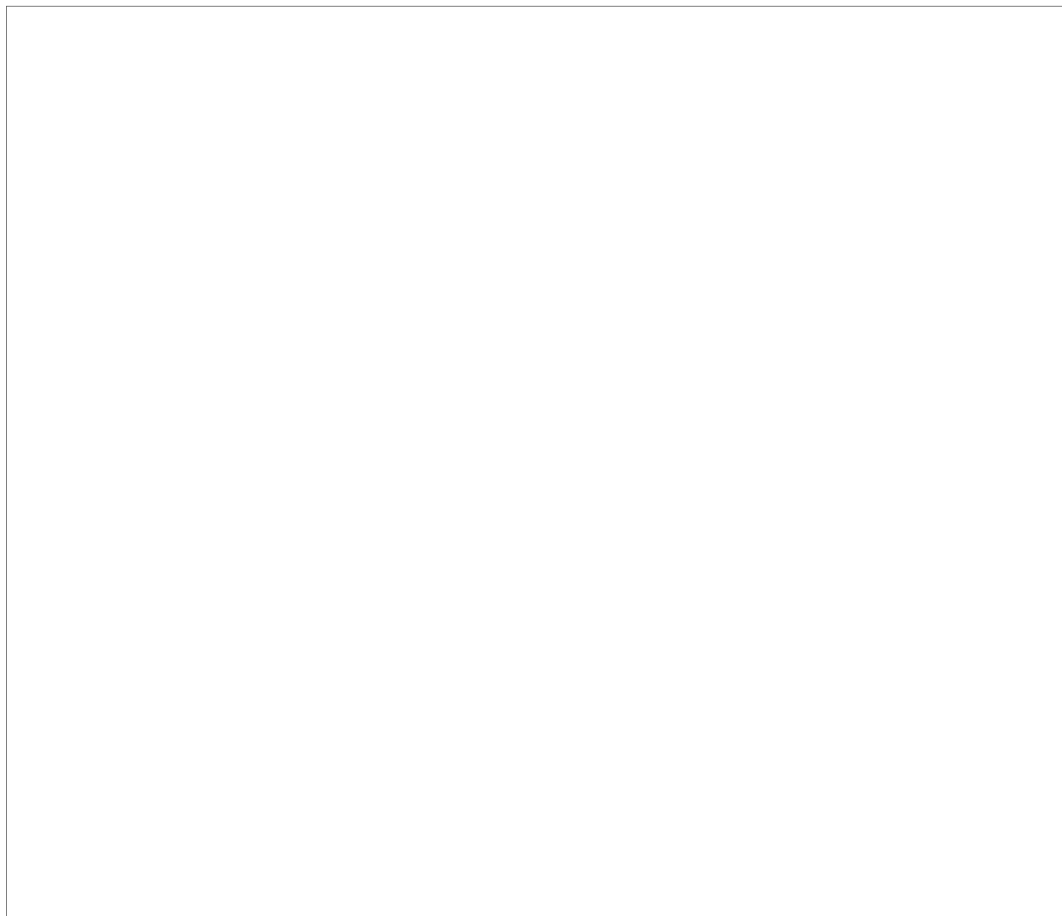
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Labraq Airfield

11. (S/WN) Labraq Airfield (Figure 5), 11.5 nm east-northeast of Al Bayda in northeast Libya and 104 nm northeast of Benghazi, has been undergoing major reconstruction since mid-1978. In November 1979, the northeast/southwest, 1,961-

by 60-meter runway became operational; in January 1980, FLOGGER aircraft were observed here for the first time. Prior to the arrival of the FLOGGERS, only small straight-winged aircraft and helicopters had been present. The east/west, 3,261- by 44-meter main runway and probable auxiliary runway/parallel taxiway were still under construction.

REFERENCE

IMAGERY

(S/WN) Selected imagery acquired from January 1976 through May 1982 was used in the preparation of this report.

(S) Comments and queries regarding this report are welcome. They may be directed to [redacted] Third World Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, NPIC, [redacted]

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