THE LIBYAN NEWS AGENCY AND THE FLOW OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS INTO LIBYA

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By
Suliman Y. Shwaeb, B.S.J.

The Ohio State University
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Approved by

[Signature]
Advisor
Department of Journalism
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

It is easy to see the importance of the global news agencies. Few newspapers, radio stations, or television networks can afford more than a very limited number of correspondents to bring international news to their audiences. Most of the news media depend heavily on the news agencies. A newspaper or radio or television station may be able to cover most of the important local stories in its community, but cannot afford the high cost of gathering national and international news.

International news agencies provide the raw material of news to the mass media either directly or through smaller news agencies. From that point on it is up to the editor of a given medium or agency to decide which of the items to use.

It has been estimated that three of every four international news stories used by the mass media are world news agency stories.¹ The other stories come from foreign correspondents of individual mass media, from syndicates or from miscellaneous sources.

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As the need for more regional news than was provided by the world news agencies increased in the past two decades, the movement toward regional solutions has gained in strength. These solutions have usually been in the form of agreements between smaller news agencies operating in the same part of the world. Such agreements strengthen the economic position of agencies which cannot afford a large network of foreign correspondents.

The national news agencies in many countries operate as arms of the government, or as government-sponsored monopolies for disseminating foreign news. These agencies select news from global news agencies and pass it on to the media within the country and thus ultimately to the nation's media users. In many countries the media are not free to obtain reports directly from international news agencies, but must receive them through the national news agency.

The need for news from different parts of the world is not new. As far back as 1848, Havas in France started a news gathering operation using pigeons to gather business news from different parts of Europe. Reuters in England, Wolf in Germany, and AP and UPI in America came into being to play the role of gathering and disseminating news around the world. The expansion of news agencies was spread rather evenly during the 1950's. News agencies came into being in Asia, North and South America, Europe, and for the first
time in North and Tropical Africa. The second wave of news agencies expansion came in 1960-1962 with a total of 23 news agencies were organized in new African States, as well as in Asia, North America, Oceania, and the USSR.²

The growth of national news agencies perhaps can be ascribed to a number of factors: newly gained political independence, the rise of literacy, the growth of national mass media, the development of a complex infrastructure, and the growth in demand for local news coverage. The national news agencies are not only a reflection of the political and economic development, but they also fill the need for local news coverage which the international news agencies do not provide.

In most of the developing nations the mass media are controlled by the government. In most African countries the government participates in news agency operations. This participation varies from outright control to assistance for a commercially operated news agency.³

The Task of the National News Agency

There are certain fundamental principles for any well organized and efficiently operating news agency, whether national or international. The agency must:

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³ Ibid.
a) organize a comprehensive coverage of news, which is fast, accurate, and reliable.

b) distribute this news to a variety of subscribers who must be able to trust its accuracy and impartiality.

One additional principle of operation of all national and international news agencies is that there must be one central office which organizes the collection of news, and supervises its editing and distribution.

National news agencies exist in order to provide news of the activities of the government departments and to explain their policies and projects. They are an important source for other news agencies, newspapers and broadcasting services, but they are only one of many sources of news.

In the opinion of the author, a national news agency, in addition, should reflect the life of the nation and of its people at all locations and in all aspects. It should be concerned with disasters, tragedy, triumph, with proceedings of courts of law, and with sports and cultural events. It should be concerned with "human interest" stories, and with life itself. All these happenings should be covered in addition to day-to-day reporting of top political development in the life of a nation and the general social and economic development of the country.

The well organized international news agency gives news coverage of this kind on a global basis. With a highly developed, world-wide communication network, it provides
minute-by-minute coverage of the drama of great events. Coverage must be faster than that of any individual newspaper; so fast that only direct radio and television reporting from the scene can compete with it. It also must provide a variety of information relating to the life and problems of people in all countries of the world, explaining the significance of events in a factual manner immediately comprehensible to people living thousands of miles from the scene of the events and speaking many different languages.  

The large international news agencies sell their news services in most of the countries of the world. They are trusted in so far as they are reliable, well informed, and objective.

The national news agency, equally with the world news agency, would well be advised to concentrate on facts and to avoid tendentious comment if it is to win the wholehearted confidence of its subscribers both at home, and particularly overseas. In the case of an international news agency, a country which has broken off diplomatic relations with the country in which the news agency's headquarters is situated has been known to continue to subscribe to the service of the news agency. This has been done because the subscriber respected the agency's impartiality and integrity in the news treatment.  


5. Ibid.
National news agencies in most of the developing nations are controlled by the government, as are the rest of the mass media. These nations have been foreign colonies until recently, and they are beset by many problems such as a high rate of both illiteracy and poverty. The mass media in these nations have the potential to play an important role in overcoming these problems. News agencies as a part of the mass media are usually required to participate in solving national problems.

It is the purpose of this study to examine a segment of the mass media -- wire services -- which has had little attention from scholars who have dealt with the mass media in developing countries. This segment has usually been ignored by those scholars who are citizens of these nations and who have dealt with their mass media.

This study is focused on one of the developing nations, Libya, its news agency, and the flow of international news into that country. The central concern is the Libyan News Agency. In Libya this agency is the main source of international news reaching the mass media.

The first part of this study deals with the history of the Libyan News Agency from its founding to the present time. It now plays an important role both in the Arab and African world and in the world in general.

The second part of this study deals with the gate-keeping process in the Libyan News Agency. It is mainly a
content analysis of the international news the gate-keepers pass on to the local mass media.

Gate-keepers in the news agencies are those who decide what will be disseminated to the mass media and to private users. Wilbur Schramm, developing an idea of Kurt Lewin, noted the role of the gate-keeper in mass communication in which "at every point along the chain, someone has the right to decide whether the message shall be received and re-transmitted in the same form, or with changes." Schramm noted that the gate-keepers by saying yes or no to the message that comes to them along the chain, play one of the most important roles in social communication. He added that in the news chain, where the story passes through many gates, the news agency and telegraph editors are especially important because they are responsible for the greatest number of decisions about the passage of news along the chain.

Chapter 2

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LIBYAN NEWS AGENCY

Tunis Conference:

Libya's strong interest in the affairs of the African continent was demonstrated in the field of information by her participation in two important conferences on the development of information on that continent.

The first conference was the Meeting on Development of Information in Africa at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on January 25 to February 6, 1962.

At the suggestion of this conference a meeting was convened in Tunis, April 1 to April 6, 1963, on the development of news agencies in Africa.\(^7\)

The Tunis meeting set up the Union of African News Agencies after defining the role of news agencies in emerging African nations as follows:

a. Reaffirmed belief in the importance of expanding news agencies as vital to any program for general development of the information media.

b. Reiterated that provisions for expanding information media should form an integral part of the plan for general economic development of the country concerned.

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c. Considered specifically that these plans should provide for the establishment and development of a news agency.8

The UNESCO Mission:

Following the Tunis Meeting, the government of Libya requested UNESCO to make a preliminary survey and recommend steps for the establishment of a Libyan national news agency.

As a result, Mr. E. Lloyd Sommerlad, of the Mass Communication Techniques Division of UNESCO, visited Tripoli in September, 1963. He conferred with the officials of the Ministry Information and Guidance, with the representatives of the press and broadcasting service and with experts in the field of telecommunications. Mr. Sommerlad recommended that a Libyan News Agency be established by statute as a public corporation. He further recommended that UNESCO should supply a news agency expert to visit Libya, to plan the details of organization, staffing, telecommunications, and budget for the agency.

Following Mr. Sommerlad's recommendations, the Director General of UNESCO, in agreement with the government of Libya, appointed Mr. Donald James Dallas, an expert with more than 25 years experience in international news agency techniques, to undertake a mission to Libya. He was

8. Ibid, p. 4.
instructed to make concrete proposals for the establishment and effective operation of a national news agency in Libya.\(^9\) Reports prepared by Mr. Dallas on various aspects of the organization, including staffing, telecommunications, and a draft budget for the first twelve months of operation of the agency, were considered by the Director-General and the Administrative Board of the Agency, who were already appointed.

Mr. Dallas also prepared a draft statute for the agency. Guided by that, the Libyan council of Ministers adopted a constitution for the news agency. This statute is embodied in the Royal Decree of October 1, 1964, setting up the Libyan News Agency as follows:

The Royal Decree:

**Official Gazette of the Kingdom of Libya**

Special Issue dated 6 October 1964, Vol. II, no. 5

ROYAL DECREE INTRODUCING A BILL ON THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIBYAN NEWS AGENCY

(Official translation from the Ministry of Information)

Having seen Article 54 of the Press Law No. 11 of 1959, as amended by the Decree promulgated on 22 November 1962,

And acting upon what has been submitted to us by the Minister of Information and Guidance, and following the approval of the Council of Ministers,

We, Idris the First, King of the Kingdom of Libya, do hereby decree as follows:

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Article 1

A public corporation entitled "The Libyan News Agency," with a juridical personality, shall be established and attached to the Ministry of Information and Guidance. For the purposes of this Law, it shall be referred to herein-after as "the Agency."

Article 2

The Agency shall provide a proper and objective news service and help the Libyan information media. To this end, the Agency shall have the following powers to:

(a) organize a reliable and comprehensive service to gather news throughout the Kingdom of Libya and distribute it, against payment, to the Libyan information media, to public and private bodies and to individuals;

(b) obtain by subscription, exchange or any other means, foreign news and disseminate it in accordance with the provision of the preceding Article;

(c) provide foreign news agencies with correct news about Libya on an exchange or sale basis.

Article 3

The administration of the Agency and the management of its affairs shall be vested in an Administrative Board and a Director-General, under the supervision of the Minister of Information and Guidance.

Article 4

The Administrative Board shall comprise the Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of information and Guidance as its Chairman; the Director-General of the Broadcasting Department, the Director-General of the Press and Publications Department, a representative from the Ministry of Communications, selected by its Minister every year, and five other members appointed by the Council of Ministers for a two-year period, subject to renewal. Two of these five shall represent private newspaper owners, and the other three shall be persons interested in information affairs.

The remuneration of the Chairman and Members of the Board shall be fixed by resolution from the Council of Ministers. The Board shall meet, at the invitation of the Chairman, at least once every two months; the invitation
to the meeting should be accompanied by the agenda and should be addressed to the members at least five days before the date fixed for the meeting.

A meeting of the Board shall be deemed legal when two-thirds of its members, including the Chairman, are present. Decisions shall be by a majority vote of the members present, and the Chairman will have a casting vote.

Decisions of the Board shall come into force only after their approval by the Minister of Information and Guidance. If the Minister does not give his approval or disapproval within fifteen days of the date on which he has been notified of them, the Board's decisions shall be deemed approved and shall come into effect.

Article 5

The Administrative Board shall be responsible for:

(a) defining the overall policy of the Agency within the framework of the State's general policy;

(b) approving the draft budget and endorsing the final account;

(c) approving draft regulations on the organization of work in the Agency, particularly those dealing with personnel and budget and accounts matters, without being restricted to the rules and procedures followed within the government, such regulations to be issued by decisions from the Council of Ministers;

(d) considering questions submitted either by the Minister of Information and Guidance or by the Agency's Director-General in respect of the Agency's activities and conduct of work.

Article 6

The Agency's Director-General shall be appointed by a resolution from the Council of Ministers on the recommendation of the Minister of Information and Guidance. He shall be the head of the administrative machinery of the Agency, and shall have the right to attend the meetings of the Administrative Board and to take part in its discussions, but without the right to vote. The Director-General shall have competence to:

(a) represent the Agency in courts of law, as well as in the Agency's contacts with others;
(b) prepare questions to be submitted to the Board of Directors;

(c) implement the decisions adopted by the Administrative Board;

(d) supervise the staff of the Agency;

(e) prepare the draft budget and final accounts and submit them to the Administrative Board;

(f) submit a quarterly report to the Minister of Information and Guidance and to the Administrative Board on the activities and financial position of the Agency;

(g) other competence provided for in the Regulations or vested in him by decisions of the Administrative Board.

**Article 7**

The Agency's fiscal year shall commence on 1 April and end at the end of March each year. However, the Agency's first fiscal year shall start on the date on which this Law comes into force.

**Article 8**

The Agency shall have a separate annual budget, prepared at least three months prior to the commencement of the fiscal year, in accordance with good commercial practice. The final account shall be prepared within not more than three months after the end of the fiscal year, and shall be accompanied by a report on the Agency's activities and fiscal position during the preceding year.

The budget and final account shall, after their approval by the Administrative Board, be presented to the Minister of Information and Guidance, who shall submit both to the Council of Ministers for approval.

The Agency's first budget shall be prepared within three months of the date of the coming into force of the present Law.
Article 9

The Agency's revenue shall consist of:

(a) amounts allotted to the Agency from the State budget;

(b) the Agency's net profits and surplus of revenue from the preceding year;

(c) donations, bequests and trusts (waqfs) accepted by the Administrative Board on the condition that they are not in contradiction to the objectives of the Agency;

(d) other income which the Administrative Board should decide to add to the revenue.

Article 10

The Agency, in the management of its funds and the keeping of its accounts, shall be subject to the practice followed by financial and commercial enterprises.

Article 11

The Audit Office (Diwan) shall be entrusted with auditing the Agency's accounts; the Chief of the Diwan must submit an annual report thereupon to the Minister of Information and Guidance and the Administrative Board not more than two months after the end of the fiscal year.

Article 12

Without prejudice to the functions of the Audit Office, the auditing of the Agency's accounts shall be entrusted to two auditors who shall be appointed each year by a decision of the Minister of Information and Guidance, on the recommendation of the Administrative Board, their remuneration to be determined by the same decision.

The two auditors should not belong to the same audit body and their appointment as auditors of the Agency's accounts shall not exceed three consecutive years.

The two auditors should submit an annual report to the Minister of Information and Guidance and to the Administrative Board within not more than two months after the end of the Agency's fiscal year.
Article 13

The Agency shall put at the disposal of the auditors all books, papers and statements to enable them to fulfill their duties; the auditors should ascertain that the draft budget and other statements are properly prepared, and that they truly represent the Agency's financial position.

The two auditors, or either of them, must notify the Director-General in writing of any deficiency, default or contravention. If the deficiency, default or contravention is not put right by the Director-General, the auditor ought to mention this in the annual report to be submitted to the Minister and the Administrative Board. In case of serious default involving real loss to the Agency, the auditors, or either of them, must draw the attention of the Administrative Board to the matter for their consideration.

Article 14

The Agency shall be exempted from all kinds of taxes and fees, whether public or local, and the other contracting party shall bear all stamp duties payable in respect of the contract.

Article 15

When no provisions are made in this Law and the regulations issued thereunder, the provisions of the Civil Service Law applicable to government officials and employees shall also apply to the Agency's staff and employees; the Administrative Board shall exercise in this respect the functions of the Director-General, Civil Service Department.

Article 16

The Minister of Information and Guidance shall execute this Law, and it shall be enforced as from the date of its publication in the Official Gasette.

Issued on 1 October 1964
By order of the King

Khalifa Tellisi
Minister of Information and Guidance

IDRIS

Ibrahim Ben Sha'ban
Acting Prime Minister
Thus by the end of the UNESCO mission, the Libyan News Agency was created. The Libyan government set up the Libyan News Agency as a statutory public corporation, following Mr. Summerlad's recommendations.

The mission recommended three phases for the news agency operation. The first phase of the operation in 1965-66 provided Libya for the first time with its own comprehensive internal news service, distributed on a subscription basis to government departments, the broadcasting service, newspapers, and other clients. The second phase in 1966-67, linked Libya with her sister Arab states in a free and full exchange of news. The third phase, 1967-68, linked Libya with other African States with English news editions.10

The Mission recommended that certain key appointments, either prior to or after the commencement of the operation, should be personnel with wire service experience elsewhere. The mission also recommended that the agency appoint an Arabic speaking journalist, thoroughly experienced in news translation from English to Arabic and in the organization of domestic news coverage to train personnel. His function would be to train the news reporting staff of the agency, and in particular the trainee recruits, and advise on problems of translation and news handling in Arabic. The mission also recommended the appointment of an Arabic

supervisor of the operators, who would be thoroughly versed in all aspects of teleprinter operation and in handling of tape. He would also be responsible for training new recruits, advise on the organization of all the agency's communication and technical equipment and ensure the smooth operation of the technical side of the news agency. 11

The Libyan government built and equipped the news agency office in Tripoli. It also provided the technical needs, particularly the teleprinters. Arrangements were also made for the supply of the best available foreign news services. One major problem the agency faced with the lack of trained technical personnel. The news agency conducted two training courses; one was concerned with editing and translating and was supervised by UNESCO. This course lasted six months, during which the following subjects were the central concern:

1. Importance of journalistic training
2. News Reporting
3. News reporters and their obligations
4. Interview techniques
5. Editor and editorial staff
6. Translation
7. Brief background on international news agencies

11. Ibid, p. 15.
8. The press law in Libya.\textsuperscript{12}

The second course was concerned with teleprinter operation, which was supervised by an Arab expert. Trainees in the courses were 56 Libyan young men. To fill the urgent need for trained locals, the news agency recruited additional experts to teach training courses from other Arab countries. The courses lasted six months. Many senior editors and technicians who attended these courses felt that the period was not long enough to learn many skills.\textsuperscript{13}

In order to provide for the shift work seven days a week, for holidays, sickness and other contingencies, the agency needed at least 36 journalists in the headquarters alone. Some of these had been employees of newspapers and broadcasting services, and the rest were recruited and trained.

The Press in Libya Before the Establishment of the News Agency:

1. Radio: The Libyan Broadcasting Service was the main source for dissemination of national and international news. Its main studios are in Tripoli and Benghazi. It also has a studio in Beida (see map). The staff was

\textsuperscript{12} The Libyan News Agency in Brief, pamphlet in Arabic, published by the Libyan News Agency, circa 1968.

\textsuperscript{13} Interview with Abdulkader Bouseiry, a senior editor in the agency, interviewed during his English language study in Athens, Ohio, August, 1975.
divided into two sections: (a) editors-translators to handle foreign news services and to prepare foreign news bulletin; (b) home reporting staff. All news bulletins were prepared in Tripoli and were sent by teleprinters to Benghazi, a distance of more than 600 miles. The Benghazi staff could either have the Tripoli-prepared bulletins read over the Benghazi radio service or directly relay the Tripoli Bulletins.\(^{14}\)

Copies of all the news bulletins, both foreign and domestic, broadcast by radio were made available to newspapers in Tripoli and in Benghazi. With the exception of one newspaper, the broadcasting service was the only medium of mass communication in Libya which directly received any radioed foreign news service from abroad. The broadcasting service was also the only medium of mass communication in Libya employing a relatively large journalistic staff dealing with both foreign and domestic news.\(^{15}\)

2. Newspapers: At that time there were 15 newspapers. Eight were in Tripoli, and six were in Benghazi, and one was in Sebha. They were as follows:

Tripoli—Tarabulus Al-Garb (government newspaper, daily).

Il Gornal di Tripoli (independent Italian language newspaper, daily).

\(^{14}\) Interview with Hussni Saleh, Director-General of the Libyan news agency, 1973-75. October 13, 1975.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.
Al-Raid (independent newspaper, three times a week).
Al-Hurria (independent newspaper, weekly).
Al-Maidan (independent newspaper, weekly).
Al-Talia (Trade union newspaper, weekly).
Sunday Ghibli (independent English language newspaper, weekly).
Tripoli Mirror (English language newspaper, weekly, owned by the newspaper Al-Raid).
Benghazi--Barka Al-Jadida (government newspaper three times a week).
Al-Hakika (independent newspaper, weekly).
Al-Zaman (independent newspaper, weekly).
Al-Amal (independent newspaper, weekly).
Al-Rakib (independent newspaper, weekly).
Cyrenica Weekly News (independent English language newspaper, weekly).
Sebha--Fazzan (government newspaper, weekly). 16

It is obvious from the list above that there were only two daily newspapers, both published in Tripoli. One reason for this undoubtedly was the lack of an organized, regular supply of foreign and domestic news to newspapers. The majority of newspapers depended entirely upon news summaries prepared by the broadcasting service. These

summaries were designed for radio listeners, not for a newspaper-reading public.

Donald J. Dallas of the UNESCO mission said that his talks with newspaper editors in Tripoli and Benghazi indicated that all concerned with the press in Libya were anxiously awaiting the launching of the news agency in order to obtain a full and comprehensive news service. This would enable editors to make their own selections of news and features. The launching of the news agency also would result in a greater diversity of content in the Libyan press. The actual launching of the news agency resulted in many newspapers converting from weekly to daily, especially in Benghazi, where the Al-Hakika made such a change.

The Libyan News Agency, which was an entirely new organization, with no precedent, was established in accordance with the Royal Decree issued on October 1, 1964. The decree specified the agency's juridical personality and the general line this corporation was to follow so that it might undertake to furnish news service in an unbiased manner. The agency was also to help the Libyan information media by organizing a comprehensive, reliable service for the accumulation of news from all parts of the country and its distribution to the Libyan information media and other

public and private bodies and individuals. There was to be a fee for this service.

The agency also undertook to secure, through subscription, news exchange or any other means, foreign news for distribution to the Libyan information media and other public and private bodies and individuals, as well as to supply foreign news agencies with news about Libya. This news was to be obtained by purchase or exchange.

The objectives of the agency were listed as follows:

1. Local news
2. Summaries and statistics of domestic, economic, industrial, and social development
3. News about Libya in foreign countries
4. News of particular Libyan interest in foreign countries
5. News of interest to the Arab region in other countries
6. Important World News
7. Political, economic, financial, social, and cultural summaries obtained from other news agencies.18

The Agency's General Policy:

The agency's Administrative Board, headed by the Under-Secretary of State of the Ministry of Information and Guidance, undertook the laying out of the Agency's general policy, approval of its budget and final accounts and the issuance of regulations concerning the operational organization of its staff. The Board comprised the Director-General of the Broadcasting Department, the Director-General of the Press and Publications Department, a representative from the Ministry of Communications selected by its Minister each year, and five other members appointed by the Council of Ministers, for a two-year period, subject to renewal. Two of these five represented private newspaper owners, and the other three persons were interested in information affairs.19

General Administration:

The Agency's Director-General, in cooperation with the Administrative Board and under the supervision of the Minister of Information and Guidance, directed the general administration of the agency and the running of its affairs. He had the right to attend the meetings of the Administrative Board, and to take part in discussion, but without the right to vote. As head of the agency's administrative machinery, he had to:

(a) Represent the agency in courts of law, as well as in the agency's contact with other.
(b) Prepare questions to be submitted to the Board of Directors.
(c) Implement the decisions adopted by the Administrative Board.
(d) Supervise the staff of the Agency.
(e) Prepare the draft budget and final accounts, and submit them to the Administrative Board.
(f) Submit a quarterly report to the Minister of Information and Guidance and to the Administrative Board on the activities and financial position of the agency.
(g) Supply competence provided for in the regulations or vested in him by decisions of the Administrative Board.

Sections of the Agency:

The Libyan News Agency consisted of five main sections:

1. Editorial and Translation section.
2. Administration and Public Relations section.
3. Accounting and Financing section.
4. Engineering, Maintenance, and Training section.
5. Archives and Library section.
Finance:

The agency's fiscal year commences on April 1 and ends on March 31 each year. Its annual budget is prepared in accordance with commercial practice and is accompanied by a report on the agency's activities and financial position during the preceding year.

The agency's revenue consists of:

(a) the amount allotted to the agency from the state budget.

(b) The agency's net profits and surplus revenue from the preceding year.

(c) Donations, bequests and trusts accepted by the Administrative Board on condition that they are not in contradiction of the objectives of the agency.

(d) Other income which the Administrative Board could decide to add to the revenue.\textsuperscript{20}

Even though the Libyan News Agency was in the first stage of building its administrative staff in 1965, the agency made giant steps in the first three months as related in the first quarterly report by the Director-General of the agency to the Minister of Information. He reported that the agency was:

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, p. 3.
1. Securing a place for the headquarters in Tripoli.
2. Recruiting administrative staff from different government departments.
3. Inviting experts in news agency operations from different organizations.
4. Recruiting journalistic staff through newspaper advertising and conducting training courses.
5. Planning to establish offices in the Eastern part of the country.
6. Arranging to receive foreign news services. Also arranging with UNESCO to provide experts in the mass communications field. (The agency imported tele-printers from the German company SEMIENS.)

The Director-General also reported that:

1. Reuters news agency agreed to supply news bulletins in Arabic directly from London. Reuters also agreed to disseminate Libyan news abroad.
2. The Director-General headed a delegation from the Administrative Board, visited a few Arab states and observed the news operation in these states.
3. The news agency reached an agreement with Morocco News Agency to exchange news service. The agency also made plans for starting a listening section to monitor foreign broadcasting services.
4. The news agency started to distribute news bulletins to Libyan Embassies abroad. The Agency also started to transmit Libyan news on three wave lengths in February, 1965. This transmission was for one hour daily to Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

5. The news agency was considering an offer by Reuters to train a few key officials in London and in Lebanon.

The news agency provided news service from different parts of the world to the Libyan information media through teleprinters. The agency also provided different government departments with news service.21

The main reason for establishing the Libyan News Agency was to give full coverage of events in Libya and in the world and to disseminate this news to the mass media in Libya and other news agencies abroad.

Local Coverage:

The Libyan News Agency established its headquarters in the capital, Tripoli. Since the capital is situated in the western part of the country, there was an urgent need to establish offices in the eastern part of the country, especially in Beida, where the majority of

21. The first quarterly report by the Director-General to the Minister of Information, LNA/2/5, dated June 26, 1965.
government activities took place. The agency opened two offices, one in Beida, and the second in Benghazi, the second largest city in Libya. One major problem was the lack of experienced people to start the operation.

The news agency recruited a large number of journalists from the broadcasting service and other government departments. It also assigned part-time correspondents in many different cities in the country. The news agency also opened another office in the southern part of the country, in Sebha.

The Beida office was connected with the Benghazi office in November, 1967. The Beida office relayed news bulletins to the Benghazi office, which in turn transmitted them to the headquarters in Tripoli.

The Benghazi office is responsible for coverage of events in the eastern parts of the country. This office acted as the center where all bulletins are gathered and transmitted by teleprinters to the headquarters. The agency's headquarters edited this news and transmitted it to newspapers and broadcasting services in Tripoli. The headquarters also transmitted news to the Benghazi office to be disseminated to newspapers and broadcasting services.

The Benghazi office also provided news reports by hand delivery to 35 different organizations and government

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22. Letter from the supervisor of Benghazi office to the Director-General, LNA 8/8/37/68, February 2, 1968.
offices. This office experienced many technical problems, especially in the first year.23

**Foreign News:**

It is the objective of the Libyan News Agency to provide a picture of what takes place in Libya. The agency's foreign transmission originally covered the Middle East on the first wavelength with a frequency of 14573 K.C., with two news editions daily from 10:30 to 11:30 (GMT), and from 15:30 to 16:30 (GMT). The agency also transmitted to Morocco and Algiers two daily news editions on the third wavelength of 1168.4 K.C., from 11:45 to 12:45 (GMT), and from 16:45 to 17:45 (GMT). The second wavelength was directed to Tunis with a frequency of 5945 K.C., from 10:30 to 11:30 (GMT), and from 15:30 to 16:30 (GMT).24

The Libyan News Agency also received the following services from other news agencies at specified times:

1. **Reuters**

   From 8:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., special night news to Libya; from 9:05 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., morning news; from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., a special news edition to Libya; and from 5:05 p.m. to 12:05 a.m., continuing news.

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23. Ibid.

24. Report by the Director-General to the Minister of Information, March 31, 1969.
2. Middle East News Agency (MENA)
   From 8:00 a.m. to 12:05 a.m.

3. Deutsche Presse Agentur of Federal Republic
   of Germany, through MENA in Cairo
   From 11:00 to 12:00 a.m.
   From 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.
   From 9:00 to 10:00 p.m.

4. Morocco News Agency
   From 12:00 to 13:00 p.m. and from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m.

5. Tunis News Agency
   From 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., and from 6:30 p.m.
   to 8:30 p.m.

The Libyan News Agency also received the news services of Associated Press, United Press International, and Agence-France Presse, and used them as sources for international news.  

The establishment of the Libyan News Agency was considered to be a national response to an important requirement, necessitated by the stage through which the country was passing. This establishment was for the purpose of meeting Libya's needs and for support of its existence as a nation situated in a continent on its way to enlightenment and in which the people are competing to affirm their personality in an international existence.

25. Report by the Director-General to the Minister of Information, LNA 2.5.2291, March 2, 1969.
The Libyan News Agency has as its first aim providing a news service not only for Libya but for the Arab and African nations in particular, and the family of mankind in general. 26

26. Interview with Abdulkader Bousiery, a senior editor in LNA, interviewed during his English language study in Athens, Ohio, in August, 1975.
Chapter 3
THE PRESENT LIBYAN NEWS AGENCY

Since the day it was created, the Libyan News Agency has always tried to improve and expand its services. Just like any new organization at its first stage, the Libyan News Agency faced many problems. These problems varied from a shortage of experienced Libyans to technical and financial problems. But eventually the Libyan News Agency began to overcome some of these problems.

Beginning in September, 1969, Libya went through a full and complete change in the whole system. This change came in the form of the Revolution Movement led by young officers in the Libyan Army which took over the leadership of the country.

The Revolutionary government realized the importance of the mass media especially in a vast country like Libya. The new government knew that it could reach the majority of the population in a short time only through mass media. Mass media were given the role of presenting a picture of Libya internally, and the news agency was assigned the role of presenting a picture of Libya to other nations.

The Libyan News Agency went through a number of changes. Immediately after the Revolution, the Ministry of Information
was replaced by the General Administration of Information. This change had its effect on the news agency. Its Director-General was appointed by the Council of Ministers instead of the Deputy Minister of Information automatically assuming the position. According to the resolution of December 17, 1969, the Director-General took over the responsibilities of the Administrative Board in cooperation with a new committee. This new committee was especially formed to study aspects and concerns of the Administrative Board.

In March, 1970, another resolution was adopted to transfer all departments under the supervision of the General Administration of Information to the General Administration of National Guidance. The Libyan News Agency was an exception to this resolution. Instead, the agency remained as a public corporation, but this time under the Ministry of Education and National Guidance. Because of these changes, (articles 4, 6, and 14 of the old law which created the agency had to be changed.) The changes in those articles are as follows:

Article 4

"The Administrative Board shall consist of:

"a. The Director-General as its chairman.

"b. The Director-General of the General Administration of National Guidance as the Deputy Chairman."
"c. The Director-General of Radio as a member.
"d. The Director-General of Television as a member.
"e. The Director-General of Press and Publication as a member.
"f. A representative of the Ministry of Communication appointed by its Minister.
"g. Three representatives of private newspapers appointed by the Minister of Education.

"The Council of Ministers shall adopt a resolution on forming the administrative Board and the term of office, which must not exceed three years. The resolution will also include the amount of the remuneration of the chairman and members of the Board. The Board shall meet, at the invitation of the chairman, at least once every two months.

"A meeting of the Board shall not be deemed legal unless a majority, including the chairman, are present." Decisions shall be by a majority vote of the members present, and the chairman will have a casting vote. The Board may invite anyone to a meeting, who in the opinion of the Board, can be of a help but without the right to vote.

"Decisions of the Board must reach the Minister of Education within seven days of the issuing date. These decisions will come to force only after their approval by the Minister of Education and National Guidance, who will
consult with the Council of Ministers. If the Minister does not give his approval or disapproval within fifteen days, the Board's decision shall be deemed approved and shall come into effect."

**Article 6**

"The agency's Director-General shall be appointed by a resolution from the Council of Ministry upon the recommendation of the Minister of Education and National Guidance. The Director-General shall have the authority to:

"1. Prepare questions to be submitted to the Board of Directors and implement decisions adopted by the Board.

"2. Prepare the draft budget and final accounts.

"3. Represent the agency in courts of law, as well as in the agency's contact with others.

"4. Supervise the staff of the agency.

"5. Submit semi-annual reports on the activities and financial position of the agency to the Minister of Education and National Guidance and to the Administrative Board.

"6. Authorize spending by the financial section of the agency. He also has the right to appoint other officials from the agency to do so."
"7. Manage executory affairs of the agency and improve the work routine in the agency.

"8. Supply competence provided in the regulations or vested in him by the Administrative Board. There will be a Deputy Director-General appointed by a resolution from the Council of Ministers upon the recommendation of the Minister of Education and National Guidance. The Deputy Director-General will help organize the administration of the agency and represent the Director-General in his absence."

**Article 14**

"The Agency shall be exempted from all kinds of taxes and fees, whether public or local."²⁷

The new law also made changes in titles. The title Minister of Information and Guidance was replaced by the title Minister of Education and National Guidance. Also the title Ministry of Information and Guidance was replaced by the title Ministry of Education and National Guidance. A new law was introduced in 1973 but has not been approved by the Council of Ministers.

These changes had a great effect on the news agency as an organization. The abolishment of the Ministry of Information, which had a direct effect on the agency's

structure, was one major change. This abolishment also included the office of the Deputy Minister of Information. The Deputy Minister of Information formerly was the Chairman of the Administrative Board for the news agency. It was recommended that the chairman should be the director general of the agency, as is true with many national news agencies such as the Middle East News Agency in Egypt and Tunis Afrique Press in Tunisia.  

The switch from the supervision of the Ministry of Information to the supervision of the Ministry of Education and National Guidance created a great confusion within the news agency. This confusion was noted in the complaints of the new Director-General in his correspondence with the Minister of Information. The financial problems were major ones.

In 1971 the Ministry of Information was reorganized. The Libyan News Agency was transferred back under the supervision of the Ministry of Information. Then in 1974 the Ministry of Information was replaced by the Ministry of State.

In spite of all this switching back and forth, the Libyan News Agency was able to continue its operation.

28. A letter from the Director-General to the Council of Ministers, LNA, 1/1/2782, November 12, 1969.

29. A letter from the Director-General of the agency to the Deputy Minister of National Guidance. LNA 1/1/3536, July 14, 1970.
According to a report by the Director-General, the agency:

1. Published a special mimeographed bulletin titled "Revolution in a Month." This special edition included all the new resolutions issued by the Revolution Command Council during the first month.

2. Published a booklet titled "Revolution in the First Year." This booklet dealt with the three Revolutionary principles: Freedom, Socialism, and Unity. This booklet was also published in both English and Arabic.

3. Offered news analysis and documentaries on events in Libya and the Arab World.

4. Bought new equipment to improve the listening section, monitoring foreign broadcasting, and to provide more news sources.

5. Concluded new news exchange agreements with Tanjug (Telegrafska Agencija Nova Jugoslawija) of Yugoslavia. The Libyan News Agency also reduced its subscription rate for Reuters services from 20,000 Libyan Dinars ($1=0.30) to 5,700 Libyan Dinars yearly. The agency also reduced the rate paid to UPI from 4,000 Libyan Dinars yearly to 2,800. It also renewed its subscription on the same basis as in the past with Agence
France Presse of France, Deutsch Presse Agentur of Federal Republic of Germany, Mahgreb Arab Presse of Morocco, Middle East News Agency of Egypt, and Tunis Afrique Presse of Tunisia. There were talks with the Algerian, Syrain, and Iraqi news agencies. There was also an offer by the Soviet News Agency TASS.

6. Provided a full coverage of events on the national level such as the Summit Meeting of the Three Federation States (Libya, Egypt, and Syria). The agency also provided a full coverage of the African Unity meeting which was held in Libya. The agency also provided coverage of events in different Arab and African States.

7. Rearranged different departments and introduced new personnel to different sections of the agency.

For a new years, the Libyan News Agency was able to continue its operation without any interruption. The agency was able to provide national and international news to the local media. The Libyan News Agency had affiliation with eight news agencies, some of them regional and some international. The agency also provided special economic news bulletins to the Ministry of Economics. During this period the agency introduced a resolution to establish a new

30. A report by the Director-General of the News Agency on the period between April, 1969 and December, 1969.
Wirephoto Service of the News Agency
transmission station which would enable the Libyan News Agency to transmit Libyan news to different part of the world. This new station was estimated to cost 400,000 Libyan dinars.

In June, 1973, the name of the agency was changed to be the Arab Revolution News Agency. This change came after the Libyan President announced the beginning of the Popular Revolution. In this announcement the President invited all the Libyan citizens to march on all government agencies, oil companies, and other organizations and to form popular committees to take over the responsibilities. The news agency was included. A popular Committee was formed to take over the responsibilities of the Administration Board of the news agency and of the Broadcasting Services. This committee was composed of twelve persons representing all different levels of the Libyan society. The popular committee is the highest authority.

The Popular Revolution was not as confusing as other events that took place during the preceding years. It was not long until the news agency had its own popular committee which met weekly to discuss all issues concerning the improvement of the agency's services. In a short time the Arab Revolution News Agency was able to:

1. Expand its foreign services into three languages: Arabic, English, and French.
2. Add a new photography section to provide visual coverage of events in Libya. This new section serves the local media and also foreign media. Photographs are sent to the AP office in Rome, where AP's office distributes them to other international media.

3. Conduct training courses for the agency's employees. The agency also sends a few personnel abroad for continuing higher education. The agency in addition sends employees on short-term training courses.

4. Strengthen its relations with regional news agencies on news exchange terms.

5. Build a new headquarters for the news agency, equipped with the latest telecommunications facilities.

6. Increase the agency's offices abroad and in Libya.

7. Introduce telex. (This step is one of the best, in the opinion of the author, who is a former ARNA United Nations correspondent.)

8. Add more international and national news agencies as sources of news, bringing the total to 20 news agencies.

9. Issue a monthly report which includes national and international news. These reports are distributed to all Ministries, Embassies, and
all information media. 31

Objectives of ARNA:

1. Providing full national and international news coverage, using still and motion pictures.

2. Stressing the Libyan stand on various international events in the Arab World.

3. Providing a true picture of events that take place in Libya.

4. Providing objective coverage of international events with special attention to the Freedom Movements in the Third World.

5. Providing news analysis and producing documentaries. 32

Sections of the Agency:

The news agency consists of four main sections:

1. Editorial and Translation section which includes:
   a. Translation unit.
   b. Reporters and correspondent unit.
   c. Editorial secretary unit.
   d. Photography unit.
   e. Transmission unit.


f. Political listening unit.
g. International news unit.
h. Archive and Library unit.

2. Administration and Public Relations section
   which includes:
   a. Public Service unit.
   b. Employees Affairs unit.
   c. Public Relations and Training unit.

3. Technical Affairs section, which includes maintenance and transmission units.

4. Financial section, which includes the salaries unit and the purchasing and storage unit.33

The News Media Situation:

Radio: The Popular Revolution Broadcasting Corporation has its main studies in Tripoli and Benghazi. It also has one studio in Beida and one in Sebha. The P.R.B.C. is dependent on ARNA for national and international news. Only on special occasions does the P.R.B.C. send correspondents abroad. News is broadcast from both Benghazi and Tripoli studios.

Television: The television station is also a part of the P.R.B.C. There are three newscasts daily. One, at 7:00 P.M., deals with updates, the second -- which is the only full coverage newscast -- is at 9:00 P.M., and the third is a summary at 11:00 P.M.

33. Ibid.
Newspapers: All newspapers are published in Tripoli. In 1976, there are only two dailies: Al-Fajar Al-Jadeed, published daily, and Al-Jihad, published daily except Saturday. There is also Al-Fatih which is published every Tuesday. Al-Asboo Athgafi is a weekly mainly concerned with cultural aspects of Libyan and Arab life.

News Sources:

On the national level, the Arab Revolution News Agency expanded its news sources. In addition to the original offices in Tripoli, Benghazi, and in Beida, the news agency added three more offices. These new offices were established in Sebha, in Messrata, and in Tobruk. In addition to these offices, ARNA has eight correspondents in different towns in Libya.

The branch offices, especially the one in Beida and the one in Sebha, faced many technical problems. Several people from the headquarters visited the Sebha office, and all reported the same problems. These technical problems were a result of the lack of electric current. (See report on following page.) These problems were the central concern of the Sebha's office Supervisor. 34

As pointed out in the second chapter, the Beida office was the center of government news during the old regime. As was also said, most of the officials of the old government

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34. Report made by the Sebha's office Supervisor to the Director-General of the agency, ARNA 176/7/674, July 14, 1974.
REPORT ON TECHNICAL PROBLEMS OF SEBHA OFFICE

Tripoli, July 24th 1969
Eng. and Maint. Div.

To Mr. Ben Zeiton
Director General

Report.

Dear Sir,

Since we have our new service to Sebha, the link is given us every day problems.

This are resulting from:
- No electric current,
- Faults in the line unit here by the L.N.A., and bad connections between our office and the transmitter station from the P.T.T.

Explaining the last two problems, we want to clear that the connection service was made by P.T.T. technician and we have been that this service was not well done.

For example on the tape transmitter the functions of:
- Paper end control,
- Paper current control
- Visual motor-speed control are not working.

We are not agreeing to take any responsibility for this service to Sebha if the P.T.T don't give us free hand to make the right service.

P.J. Steffens
were in that city. It was almost the capital of the county. But in 1971 a resolution was adopted to put the news agency's Beida office under the supervision of the Benghazi office.35

The ARNA local services were improving step by step. In 1973 the Benghazi office was equipped with wirephoto service. But this service is not being used as much now because of the transfer of the only Benghazi newspaper to Tripoli. This service is used in transmitting pictures to Tripoli. This service is used in transmitting pictures of events in Benghazi to news media in Tripoli, however.

International news agencies from other countries deal with newspapers, radio stations, and other information media on a commercial basis. Other types of businesses are based purely on financial profits which can be measured and evaluated. But there is a special market for news, whether it is political, economic, or social, because it has an effect on the minds of the people. So, it is not strange that government pays a lot of attention to the news media, and especially to news agencies.

It is also understood that international news agencies, in order to sell their products, might exaggerate news. These news agencies can mislead and misinform their customers, as may happen in other business.

In today's world, there is competition among nations. This competition comes in the areas of politics, economics, and the military. Propaganda plays a great role in this competition. Especially after the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War, the news agencies tended to reflect their governments' policies.

Many developing countries are aware of this fact. In Libya, for example, not everything reported by these commercial news agencies is accepted at face value. A country like Libya is going through a new experience which might not please many Western countries. The role set for the mass media is to secure themselves against biased information.

As Hussni Saleh, Director-General of the news agency, indicated in an interview with the author, "In the Arab Revolution News Agency, we are very careful in dealing with these news agencies. Sometimes we receive URGENT news bulletins, and a few hours later the same news agency "regrets" that they were not true. We are concerned with speed as much as with accuracy. We are not a commercial news agency which depends on excitement. It is our concern to see speed in our services but mostly to be accurate. 36

To avoid problems of depending on a single source, ARNA took many beneficial steps. For one, the agency

strengthened its relations with regional and national news agencies. ARNA is a member of the association of African News Agencies and is an active member in the Union of Arab News Agencies. Furthermore, ARNA started to develop a large network of correspondents in order to secure as complete a report as possible.

A special committee, headed by the Director-General, was formed. The job of this committee was to study and formulate a plan for establishing a network of correspondents. This committee divided the world into four different areas: The Arab World, Africa, Europe, and the Third World. The committee stressed the need for a large network of correspondents, but in the meantime warned of the technical problems. The committee conducted many meetings and finally decided on the following:

1. Starting two offices in Beruit and Cairo. Beruit was considered to be the connecting bridge between the Arab World and the West. It was also considered to be an open capital in which the correspondent could move freely. Cairo was considered to be the center for Arab activities. It also had the headquarters of the Arab League. The committee recommended the starting of office branches in Kuwait, Jiddah in Saudi Arabia, and in Rabat, Morocco. The committee recommended correspondents in Damascus, Iraq, in Algiers, Algeria, and in Nouakachott, Mauritania.
Editorial Section of the News Agency.
2. Starting offices in Belgrade, Paris, and in Rome. Paris was considered to be a center of news from West Europe. Belgrade is the capital of the country that played an important role in leading the Third World Nations. Rome was given a special attention due to its strategic location. Rome was considered to be very important technical location and served as a center for the Mediterranean area. The committee also recommended correspondents in Brussels, Geneva, London, Bonn, Valletta (Malta), and Vienna.

3. Starting an office in Kampala, Uganda. The committee recommended a correspondent in Dakar, Senegal.

4. Establishing correspondents in Ankara, Moscow, Karachi, and in Singapore.

5. Starting an office in Buenos Aires, Argentina, as a center of action in South America.

6. Assigning two correspondents in the United States of America, one in New York City because it contains the United Nations Headquarters and the second in Washington, D. C. 37

After the committee report, ARNA adopted a new policy of cooperative exchange with well-developed news agencies. During May, 1975, a delegation from ARNA visited France, ____________

37. Records of the Special Offices Committee meetings, March 1975.
England, and Spain to observe their news agencies' operations. During this visit, the Libyan delegation reached news exchange and training agreements. Upon returning to Libya, the news agency's delegation recommended:

1. That the news agency should adopt all the proposals presented by the delegation. The delegation urged the news agency to establish more direct lines with Europe, especially in Rome.

2. That ARNA should consider the training agreements which the delegation reached with different news agencies.

3. That ARNA should invite experts from different news agencies to help improve the situation in the agency.

4. That ARNA should consider an offer by Efe (Agencia Efe of Spain) to disseminate Libyan news.  

Even with a large network of correspondents and different agreements with national and regional news agencies, ARNA still depends on international news agencies as sources of international news.

The Arab Revolution News Agency receives the services of the following news agencies:

1. SANA, Syrian News Agency.

2. INA, Iraqi News Agency.

3. MENA, Middle East News Agency.
4. TAP, Tunis Afrique Press.
5. APS, Algerie Presse Service.
6. MAP, Mahgreb Arab Presse of Morroco.
7. SUNA, Sudan National News Agency.
8. Reuters News Agency (two services).
11. TASS of the Soviet Union.
12. PPI (Pakistan Press International).
13. Tanjug, of Yugoslavia.
14. ADN (Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst),
    of the German Democratic Republic.
15. Efe of Spain.
16. DPA (Deutsche Presse-Agentur), of Federal Repub-
    lic of Germany.
17. Agerpress (Agentia Romana de Pressa of Romania).
18. Telam (Telenoticiosa Americana of Argentina). 39

Some of these news agencies are on news exchange agree-
ments. There are ten news agencies on subscription bases.
They are: AP (2), UPI, Teuters (2), Tunis Afrique Presse,
MENA, AFP, DPA, and TASS (see Table I).

The Arab Revolution News Agency also depends on for-
eign broadcasting services. The agency's listening section
monitors different international broadcasting stations and

uses them as news sources.

The Arab Revolution News Agency, in spite of many problems, has made giant steps in the field of information. With its limited funds, the agency is trying to expand its services and to secure more foreign news sources. One major problem, though, has been the shortage of direct connections with Europe. The agency now is planning to establish additional direct lines with Rome and other European cities.

The New Transmission Station:

Among the national development plans, the Libyan government invested a large amount of money to establish a new transmission station for the national news agency. This new station is located in Tripoli on twenty-nine acres of land. The ground-level floor is used for storage of parts, offices, and residence rooms for the station's employees. The second floor contains the equipment section, maintenance, and additional offices for the technicians.

Each of the transmitters, which operate on high frequency radiation, has a power of 30 kilowatts. These transmitters operate on a radiation field ranging from four to 24 kilocycles.

The transmission station is connected with the headquarters through two micro-wave systems. The first one operates on Very High Frequency (VHF), as an audio carrier
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<th>Kind of Service</th>
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<tr>
<td>A.P</td>
<td>Wire services</td>
<td>$13,000.00 monthly</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.P</td>
<td>Photo-services</td>
<td>$10,000.00 monthly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reuters</td>
<td>Wire services</td>
<td>$15,000.00 yearly</td>
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<td>Agence France Presse</td>
<td>Wire services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASS</td>
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</table>
among the station, the headquarters, and the mobile units. The second micro-wave operates on Ultra-High Frequency (UNF) to provide an audio channel between the station and the headquarters. In addition, the station has three telegraphic channels to transmit news.

The new transmission station has four huge Log-periodic antennas:

1. Horizontal, directed to the West, which carries ARNA news in Arabic, to Western Arab Nations. It also carries ARNA news in French and English to West European and Latin American Nations.

2. Horizontal, directed to the East, which carries ARNA news in Arabic only.

3. Vertical, directed to the Far East, carries news in English and French to Asia and the Middle East.

4. Omni-directional, could be directed any way. This antenna is automatically operated.

This new station can be operated both automatically and manually. It has its own emergency electric-generator which is automatically operated in case of shortage of the city supply. This station is supposed to commence transmission in 1976.40

But until this new station starts, ARNA will continue to use other agencies for disseminating Libyan news abroad. ARNA has an agreement with AP to disseminate photographs

40. Interview with Daw Tajury, Director of Technical Affairs, October 16, 1975.
The LOG-Periodic OMNI-directional Antenna of the new Transmission Station
transmitted by ARNA to AP's office in Rome. The agency has
direct lines to Tunisia and the AP office in Rome. A few
lines are expected to be established to other Arab nations
and Spain. ARNA transmits Libyan news in Arabic, English,
and French. This transmission, which lasts for six hours
daily, covers the Arab World, and West Europe.41

The Arab REvolution News Agency also provides news
services to the local information media in both Arabic and
English. ARNA also provides monthly and yearly news reports.
Other reports are distributed daily to different information
offices abroad.

The Arab Revolution News Agency is still in its develop-
ing stage. It had and still has a large number of problems.
The agency's limited finances has handicapped all attempts
to improve its services. The shortage of trained locals,
needed to improve its activities, is another problem. This
does not mean that there are no locals in the new agency.
On the contrary, a large number of young Libyans are doing
most of the work which involves editing, reporting, and
technical affairs.

The Arab Revolution News Agency, without any doubt,
has made a great improvement and is still striving for
more. One of the important steps the agency made was
installing a telex system which enables all the agency's
foreign correspondents to contact the headquarters directly.

41. Ibid.
ARNA provides the local media, through a teleprinter service, with extensive coverage of events in Libya and abroad 18 hours a day.
Chapter 4

THE FLOW OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS INTO LIBYA

There are millions of events that occur daily around this world. Many of these events are reported by international news agencies. These news agencies depend on their own correspondents, stringers, radio stations, and national and regional news agencies to provide them with reports of the events.

These events also vary in importance from one nation to another depending on their relevancy to the specific nation. It is understood that most information flow from the developed countries to the developing ones. News agencies are major channels for this information flow. But what kind of information is reported and where does it originate? And how much of this information is being used by developing nations?

The purpose of this study is to analyze the flow of international news into one of the developing nations. The central concern of this study is the flow of international news into the Libyan Arab Republic. In Libya the Arab Revolution News Agency is the only source of international news for the mass media. This part of the
study is mainly a content analysis of what the four selected international news agencies send into Libya, and how much of this information is used by ARNA in a one week period.

It should be clear at the outset that it is not intended to be an indictment of the Arab Revolution News Agency. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to the betterment of the news agency. It should be clear that this is a study of only one week in one year.

Methodology:

This study was conducted in ARNA headquarters in Tripoli during the Autumn of 1975. It was to include six international news agencies: AP and UPI of USA, Reuters of England, Agence France Presse of France, TASS of the Soviet Union, and the Middle East News Agency of Egypt. The reason for including MENA was to compare it with non-Arab news agencies. The other five news agencies are internationally known for their news coverage. However, AFP and TASS were eliminated from this study. Agence France Presse has an Arabic service from Beruit, Lebanon, which provides news in Arabic. The news has already been edited and some of it screened out by the Beruit office before it is received in Libya. Consequently that service was excluded from the study because the author's object
was to study the gate-keeping process in Libya.

TASS was eliminated from this study because of the irregularity of its reception. It is not received in Libya on a regularly scheduled basis.

One week was chosen in the Autumn of 1975 (October 19-25). During this week each news item coming to ARNA headquarters from the above mentioned news agencies, was analyzed by the author and recorded by geographical origin, source, and subject. During the same period, the news that was selected to be passed on to the local media, was recorded in the same manner.

(Repeat transmission or updates within the same day's transmission were counted as one item.)

The following information about each story was recorded:

1. Subject:
   a. Political: government activities, elections, foreign relations, political meetings, heads of states activities, and riots.
   b. Economics: monetary systems, agriculture, oil, and industry.
   c. Armed conflicts: revolutions and wars.
   d. Disasters: earthquakes, floods, and famine.
   e. Sports: soccer, football, etc.
   f. Religion: news about religion activities.
g. Human interest: features on people.
h. Education and science.
i. Entertainment.

2. Country of Origin:
   a. The Middle East and the Arab World.
   b. Africa (non-Arab).
   d. United Nations.
   e. West Europe.
   f. East Europe.
   g. USSR.
   h. Asia.
   i. China.
   j. Latin America.
   k. Australia and New Zealand.

3. Source:
   a. Associated Press.
   b. Middle East News Agency.
   c. Reuters.
   d. United Press International.

Findings:

1. The Middle East News Agency:

   Tables 1 and 2 show the number of news items reported by MENA during the week of October 19-25, 1975, and the amount of this news used by ARNA. It should be mentioned
TABLE 1
ORIGIN OF INCOMING NEWS FROM MENA: NUMBER OF ITEMS, BY SUBJECT

(The data reported in all tables in this study are for October 19-25, 1975.)

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<th>Political</th>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Economics</th>
<th>Religion</th>
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here that MENA reported during that week a large number of political stories which were of interest in Egypt only, so they were not selected by ARNA for the local media.

From Table 1 it was calculated that MENA gave 79.5% of its total news coverage to the Middle East and the Arab World. MENA also gave 65.5% of its total coverage to political news. Economic news came second to political news with 17% of the total news coverage.

Political news constituted 63% of all items from the Middle East and the Arab World. Economic news was 20% of the items from the same area, and education coverage constituted 7%.

The table also shows that 100% of the news reported on Africa (non-Arab) was political news; 91% of the news reported on East Europe was political, and 68% of the news reported on West Europe was also political news.

MENA gave 89% of its total coverage of armed conflicts news to the Middle East and the Arab World. It should be pointed out that this high percentage of armed conflicts was due to the war in Lebanon. From the same table, one can notice that all MENA sports news came from the Middle East and the Arab World.

Table 2 shows the amount of news used by ARNA from MENA. The Arab Revolution News Agency used 11% of the total news reported by MENA on the Middle East and the Arab World and 33% of the total news on Africa, ARNA used
13% of the total news reported that week. ARNA used 100% of what MENA reported on the United Nations, 26% of news reported on West Europe, 17% of news reported on East Europe, 27% of news reported on USSR, 13% of news reported on Asia, and 25% of news reported on China. (It should be noticed, however, that those percentages are mostly based on small numbers and should be regarded with caution. For example, the 100% of United Nations news constituted a single story.)

It is important to report here that there were many technical problems in receiving MENA services in Tripoli. For example, on October 20 the MENA news transmission to Libya was out of order for almost 12 hours.

It was calculated from Table 2 that 80% of the total news used by ARNA from MENA service was political news. About 64% of this political news was from the Middle East and the Arab World. The calculations also show that 78% of the news from the Middle East and the Arab World used by ARNA was political news.

2. **The Associated Press**

The Associated Press during that week reported more news from the U.S.A. and Canada than from any other area. Thirty-three percent of all items transmitted by AP originated in the U.S.A. or Canada, 21% from West Europe, and 9% from the Middle East and the Arab World.
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<th>Political</th>
<th>Sports</th>
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Table 3 shows that political news ranked first in the AP's total news coverage for that week with 44%. Economics news came second with 20% of the total news coverage for that week, and human interest got 11%. The table also shows that 44% of the total news reported by AP from West Europe was political, and 67% of news reported on Africa was also political. The percentage of political news reported by AP from U.S.A. and Canada was only 26% of the total news reported from that area.

Sports ranked fourth with 10.5% of the total news reported for that week by AP. Sports news from U.S.A. and Canada composed 37.5% of the total sports reported by AP during the week.

Table 4 shows the number of news items used by ARNA from AP's service for the specified period. ARNA used 8% of the total news items reported by AP. It used 13% of news on the middle East and the Arab World, ARNA, during that week, used only 3% of the total news reported by AP from U.S.A. and Canada, 6% of the news items on West Europe, and 28% of the items on East Europe. ARNA also used 18% of the news items reported by AP on Africa, and 8% of the total news reported on Asia.

As to subject, political news used by ARNA from AP ranked first with 77% of the total news. Economic news came second with 10%.
Table 4 also shows that 14% of the news used by ARNA from AP was on U.S.A. and Canada, 18% on West Europe, and 18% on East Europe. It also shows that 16% of the news items used by ARNA from AP were on the Middle East and the Arab World.

3. The United Press International

Table 5 shows the amount of news reported by UPI during the selected week. West Europe was the origin of 31% of the news items reported by UPI. Following were U.S.A. and Canada with 21% and the Middle East and the Arab World with 17%.

Calculations from the table also show that 57% of the news items reported by UPI, during the study period, were political news, and 16% were economic news. Political news was 54% of the news items on West Europe, 50% of the news on U.S.A. and Canada, and 69% of the news on East Europe. The table also shows that 48% of the armed conflicts news originated in the Middle East and the Arab World. It must be noticed that UPI reported more economic news than political news from Africa (non-Arab) with 64% of the total news from that area.

Table 6 shows the amount of news used by ARNA from UPI for the one-week period. ARNA used 5% of the total news reported by UPI. The Arab Revolution News Agency used 2% of the total news reported by UPI on U.S.A. and
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Canada, 2% of the total news on Africa (non-Arab), 9% of the total news on the United Nations, 3% of the total news on West Europe, and 10% of the total news on East Europe. ARNA did not use any of the news reported by UPI on Asia and USSR. But ARNA used 33% of the total news reported by UPI on Latin America.

The Arab Revolution News Agency used 6% of the political news items reported by UPI, and 3% of the economic news items. Of the news selected by ARNA from UPI, 47% was on the Middle East and the Arab World. Of the total UPI news used by ARNA, 67% was political, and 10% was economic. The majority of UPI news used by ARNA on different areas of the world was political news. The percentage of armed conflicts news used by ARNA from UPI was 83% of the total news on that subject.

4. **Reuters**

Table 7 shows the amount of news reported by Reuters during the study period. It must be mentioned here that Reuters transmits a special economics service for Libya. Calculations from Table 7 show that West European news dominated the agency's reporting with 25% of the news items for that week. The Middle East and the Arab World came second with 23%, and Africa (non-Arab) was third with 16%. As was true of the rest of the news agencies in this study, Reuters reported a high percentage of political news, with 60% of the total news reported during
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that time. Economic news ranked second with 13% of the total news.

Table 7 also shows the 58% of the news items reported by Reuters on armed conflicts came from the Middle East and the Arab World. That is also a result of the war in Lebanon. As shown in Table 7, political news from different areas of the world seemed to dominate the picture. Of the news items reported by Reuters on the Middle East and the Arab World, 82% were political news. Similarly, political news was 80% of the news reported on China, and 69% of the news reported on Latin America.

Table 8 shows that ARNA used 9% of all news items reported by Reuters. Of the total news reported by Reuters on the Middle East and the Arab World, ARNA used 10%. The Arab Revolution News Agency used 12% of the news items reported by Reuters on Africa (non-Arab), 8% of the news items on West Europe, and 14% of the news items on Asia.

Of the total news used by ARNA, 78% was political and 4% was economic news. Also of the total news used by ARNA, 26% was on the Middle East and the Arab World, 22% on West Europe, and 21% on Africa (non-Arab).

Table 9 shows what percentage of all news items reported by each of the four news agencies during this study period was political news. Table 10 shows what percentage of all news items were reported by these agencies during the same period was economics.
Table 11 shows the political and economic news items used by ARNA from each of the four news agencies broken down by geographic origin.
Table 9
Political news items as a percentage of all items reported by the four news agencies: by geographical origin.

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<th>UPI</th>
<th>MENA</th>
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<td>(n=30)</td>
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<td>(n=9)</td>
</tr>
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<td>52%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=26)</td>
<td>(n=9)</td>
<td>(n=12)</td>
<td>(n=7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=42)</td>
<td>(n=55)</td>
<td>(n=6)</td>
<td>(n=8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A. &amp; Canada</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=44)</td>
<td>(n=98)</td>
<td>(n=64)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia &amp; New Zealand</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=10)</td>
<td>(n=5)</td>
<td>(n=5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>102%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=47)</td>
<td>(n=49)</td>
<td>(n=21)</td>
<td>(n=1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

Economics News Items as a percentage of all items reported by the four news agencies: by geographical origin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Origin</th>
<th>REUTERS</th>
<th>AP</th>
<th>UPI</th>
<th>MENA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. &amp; Canada</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=41)</td>
<td>(n=128)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=32)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.E. &amp; Arab World</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=31)</td>
<td>(n=4)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=85)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Europe</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=31)</td>
<td>(n=56)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=25)</td>
<td>(n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=6)</td>
<td>(n=6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=12)</td>
<td>(n=17)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa (non-Arab)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=20)</td>
<td>(n=7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=32)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Europe</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td>(n=3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=6)</td>
<td>(n=8)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n=1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 11
Political and Economic News Items as Percentages of all Items
By ARNA From Each of the Four News Agencies, By
Geographical Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geogr. Origin</th>
<th>MENA</th>
<th>A.B.</th>
<th>UPI</th>
<th>Reuters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle E. Arab World</td>
<td>78% (n=36)</td>
<td>17% (n=8)</td>
<td>93% (n=13)</td>
<td>7% (n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa non-Arab</td>
<td>100% (n=3)</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>87.5% (n=7)</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. &amp; Canada</td>
<td>00% (n=5)</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>42% (n=4)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.N.</td>
<td>100% (n=1)</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>80% (n=4)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Europe</td>
<td>75% (n=6)</td>
<td>25% (n=11)</td>
<td>69% (n=1)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Europe</td>
<td>100% (n=6)</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>87.5% (n=14)</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>33% (n=1)</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>100% (n=2)</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>100% (n=2)</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>62.5% (n=5)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>100% (n=1)</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>100% (n=4)</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>00% (n=2)</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>100% (n=1)</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia &amp; New Zealand</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It must be said again that this study of the gatekeeping process in the Arab Revolution News Agency was for only one week in one year. Findings of this study might be true for only that period. News agencies live on events, and events vary from one day to another. Even so, major emphasis in news selection tend to follow discernable patterns that will be observed most of the time.

From the previous chapter, the following are the main conclusions:

1. Political news dominated the reporting of the four news agencies in this study which provide service to ARNA. This category included 55% of all items provided by the four agencies. The news items that were used by ARNA were dominated by political to an even greater extent, constituting 77% of the ARNA reports. The fact that political news dominated the reporting of the four news agencies is due to the importance of politics around the world. Political news is attractive to the people everywhere, and it is constantly occurring.

2. Economic news ranked second after political news. Economic news constituted 16.5% of all items reported by
the four news agencies. Of the total news items used by ARNA, during the study period, 9% were economic news. On the other extreme, religion, and entertainment news were hardly mentioned.

3. Political news from Latin America was provided by only AP and UPI.

4. United Press International showed a great interest in economic news from Africa (non-Arab). Surprisingly, the Middle East and the Arab World, important sources of economic news on oils and energy, did not get any economic coverage from UPI during the study period. Such news was covered, however, by other agencies.

5. The Middle East News Agency did not report any political news from Latin America, U.S.A. and Canada, or Australia and New Zealand. Most such news concerned the Middle East and the Arab World or Europe. MENA did not report any economic news from U.S.A. and Canada, West Europe, USSR, Africa, or Latin America. Almost all such news concerned the Middle East and the Arab World.

6. Except for UPI, the news agencies in this study transmitted more news from the area in which their headquarters are located than from other areas. The United Press International reported more news from West Europe than from the U.S.A. and Canada. Also, the Associated Press reported somewhat more political news from West Europe than from U.S.A. and Canada.
7. Among the news items used by ARNA, political news ranked first and economic news second. ARNA did not use any economic news from East Europe. Only eight economic news items from East Europe were reported by the four news agencies combined.

8. ARNA depended heavily on MENA for political news from the Middle East and the Arab World.

9. The news used by ARNA from the USSR was mainly provided by MENA and AP. Most of the political news items used by ARNA from Africa were provided by Reuters.

It is worth mentioning here that ARNA relayed more international than national news items to the local media during the study period. For example, on the first day of this study (October 19, 1975) international news composed 60% of the total news items passed on by ARNA to the local media. (A study done by the author showed that 50% of the total news hole in Al-fajar Al-Jadeed, one of the two dailies in Libya, was given to international news.)

10. During this study, armed conflicts in the Middle East attracted the attention of all four news agencies. This was due to the war in Lebanon.

11. The visit of Henry Kissinger to China, the Moroccan Peace March on the Sahara, the visit of Sadat to the United States, and the death of Franco, Spain's Head of State, were the main events of the study week. They were covered repeatedly by all four news agencies. Many international news agencies label all freedom movements around the world as terrorist. For example, the Palestinian Liberation Organization is frequently called "terrorist" by Western news agencies.

The Libyan Arab Republic has been known for its support of all freedom movements around the world. The three Western news agencies which were studied presented a different picture of these movements. This kind of news is not accepted by ARNA or the Libyan mass media. That is why ARNA depended so heavily upon MENA and its own correspondents for news of these movements.

The Arab Revolution News Agency plays a major role in keeping an eye on biased information transmitted into Libya by international news agencies, thus serving as a safeguard against foreign propaganda. This important role should be recognized by the Libyan government and the Libyan people. Also the agency is providing the world with a picture of what is happening in Libya.
Finally, the author -- drawing upon information reported in Chapters 2 and 3 -- recommends the following:

1. The Arab Revolution News Agency should motivate its domestic employees more than it is doing now. The Popular Committee of ARNA should set a weekly requirement for local reporters. These reporters now receive a fixed amount of money monthly whether they report or do not. This practice should be changed. Working for a news agency requires competition and motivation. The proposed requirements should be carefully applied and the reporters closely supervised. If that is done, many important local events which are not now covered by ARNA will receive proper coverage.

2. The agency should recruit university graduates and try to attract them from other government departments.

3. The Council of Ministers should approve the proposed law which would provide ARNA greater freedom in its work.

4. The agency should increase the number of direct telephone and telex lines to its offices and correspondents abroad. This would enable the foreign offices to provide news services more rapidly.
5. The agency should improve its present communications equipment, especially in the branch offices.

6. The agency should conduct more training courses for its employees. It should also take advantage of the training agreements with other well-developed news agencies.

7. The agency should assign more Libyan correspondents abroad. Depending on non-Libyans as correspondents does not develop a sufficiently high degree of credibility.

8. The agency should have a substantial expense account for its operation and should provide special passports to its correspondents to avoid delays. ARNA should also negotiate a special rate for reporters with all airlines operating in and out of Libya.

The following recommendation is based on the content analysis reported in Chapter 4.

1. The agency should employ reporters and editors with a greater variety of backgrounds and interests. This would result in greater diversity of foreign news rather than the disproportional emphasis on politics.

It these proposed policies and practices were put into effect, the Arab Revolution News Agency would be able to provide even better service for the nation and its people than it does now.
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