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imagery analysis report

**The 10 August 1983  
Libyan-Chadian Dissident  
Assault on Faya Largeau, Chad (S)**

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# THE 10 AUGUST 1983 LIBYAN-CHADIAN DISSIDENT ASSAULT ON FAYA LARGEAU, CHAD (S)

## INTRODUCTION

1. During the morning hours of 10 August 1983, Libyan and Libyan-supported Chadian dissident forces launched a major assault on the government-held town of Faya Largeau, Chad. These forces dislodged government units from positions in the area and were able to quickly gain control of the town. Government units were forced to withdraw south toward the towns of Koro Toro and Oum Chalouba. This is the second time Faya Largeau has fallen to Libyan and Chadian dissident forces recently. The town was captured in late June 1983 and held for approximately five weeks until recaptured by government forces on 30 July. (S/WN/NOFORN)

2. Faya Largeau was imaged four times between 0611Z and 1200Z (twice with U-2 imagery and twice with satellite imagery) on [redacted]. This imagery permitted an assessment of the assault on Faya Largeau, including the composition, disposition, and strength of the Libyan and dissident forces involved. This report provides imagery-derived information on this operation and includes eight photographs and three maps depicting the positions of military forces during the assault. (S/WN/NOFORN)

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## Initial Movement of Libyan and Dissident Forces

3. With the Chadian government's recapture of Faya Largeau on 30 July, Libyan and dissident units began preparations for a major assault to retake the town. These preparations included deployment of additional combat aircraft (both FITTER and Mirage F-1 fighter bombers) and HIND attack helicopters to Aozou Airfield [redacted] a major Libyan airfield in the Libyan-claimed territory of northern Chad, approximately 300 nautical miles (nm) north of Faya Largeau (Figure 1). Libyan light-strike aircraft and helicopters were also moved to forward airfields at Ogoui and Ounianga Kebir, which enhanced air

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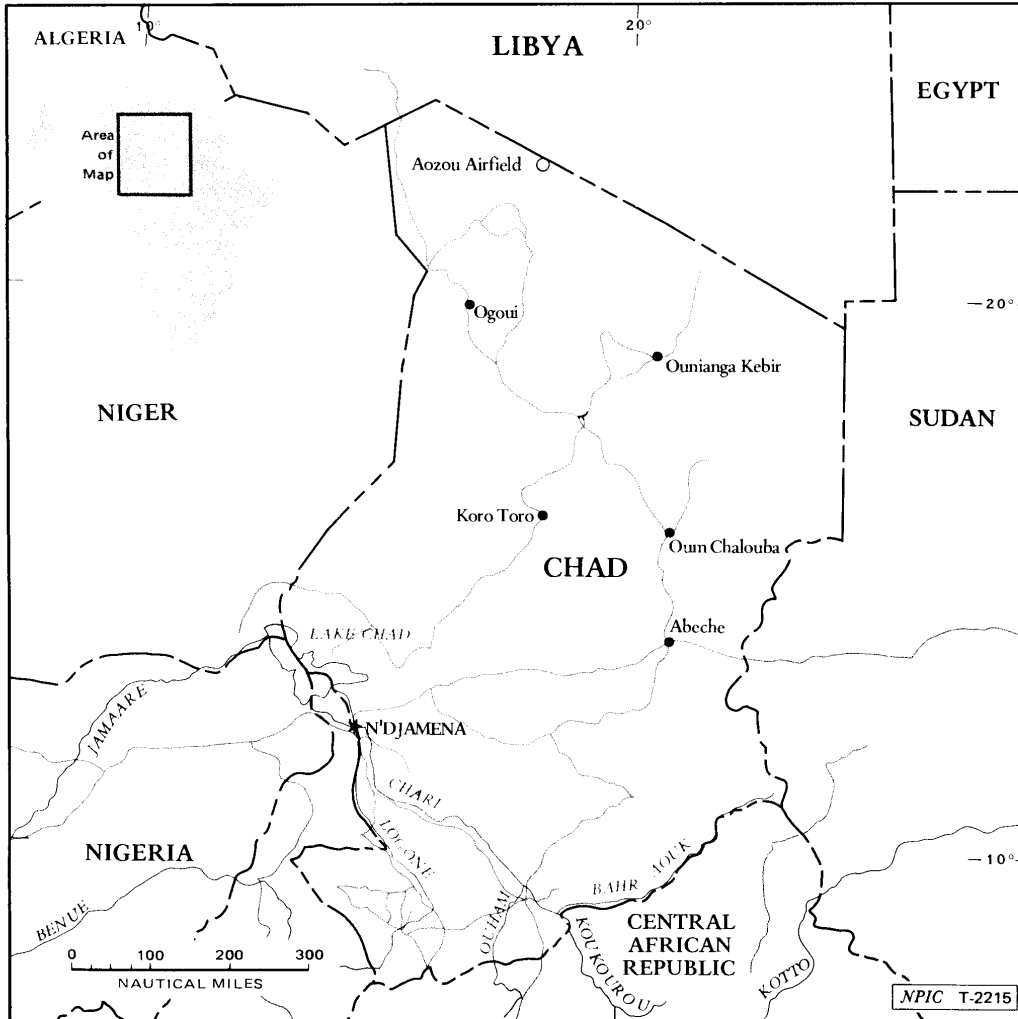


FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF FAYA LARGEAU, CHAD

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support for Libyan and dissident forces operating against Faya Largeau. Coverage of [ ] revealed at least eight probable fighter aircraft in flight in the vicinity of Faya Largeau and the presence of scattered crates near the town, indicating Libyan air strikes against government positions there. (S/WN/NOFORN)

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4. In early August, at least two ground force units were observed moving south along two routes toward Faya Largeau. A battalion-sized Libyan-dissident infantry unit departed from the Ounianga Kebir area, approximately 100 nm northeast of Faya Largeau, between [ ] This unit was equipped with a company of six BTR-60 armored personnel carriers (APC), a battery of four BM-21 multiple rocket launchers (MRL), two 122mm howitzers D-30, approximately 35 cargo trucks, and approximately 35 land rover-type vehicles. While the movement of this unit south toward Faya Largeau was not actually observed on imagery, this unit was later identified on [ ] on the outskirts of Faya Largeau. (S/WN/NOFORN)

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5. The second military unit identified moving towards Faya Largeau was observed in the vicinity of Ogoui, approximately 180 nm northwest of Faya Largeau, on [ ] On that day, major elements of a BTR-60-equipped mechanized infantry battalion supported by a tank company were identified there; the majority of this equipment was being moved by heavy-lift transporters. On [ ] this unit was identified moving south along the Faya Largeau-Ogoui road, approximately 150 nm from Faya Largeau. On [ ] this convoy was again seen on this same road, 35 nm west of Faya Largeau, and by [ ] the unit had reached a point approximately 25 nm west of the town. On [ ] coverage, this unit had been offloaded from the heavy-lift transporters and had formed a defensive perimeter in the area. With the arrival of this armor unit, Libyan and dissident forces were prepared to launch an assault on Chadian government positions at Faya Largeau. (S/WN/NOFORN)

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#### Assault Forces at 0611Z on [ ]

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6. Initial coverage of the Faya Largeau area on [ ] was acquired at 0611Z (Figure 2). At that time, a sizeable military force of both Libyan and dissident units was deployed northeast and west of the city and the assault was already underway. Artillery fire was in progress; units were advancing from the east, northeast, and west; and fires were burning within the town. (S/WN/NOFORN)

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7. Forces to the northeast were dispersed in several main groups. A logistical base had been established 11 nm northeast of Faya Largeau Airfield [ ] Equipment at the base included one tank, three possible Cascavel armored scout cars, eight heavy-lift transporters, eight POL/water trucks, 22 trucks, three land rover-type vehicles, eight unidentified vehicles, and one HIP helicopter. This logistical base supported the main assault force composed of infantry units. These units overlooked the town from a ridgeline, approximately 4 nm northeast of Faya Largeau Airfield (Positions A and B, Figure 2). The

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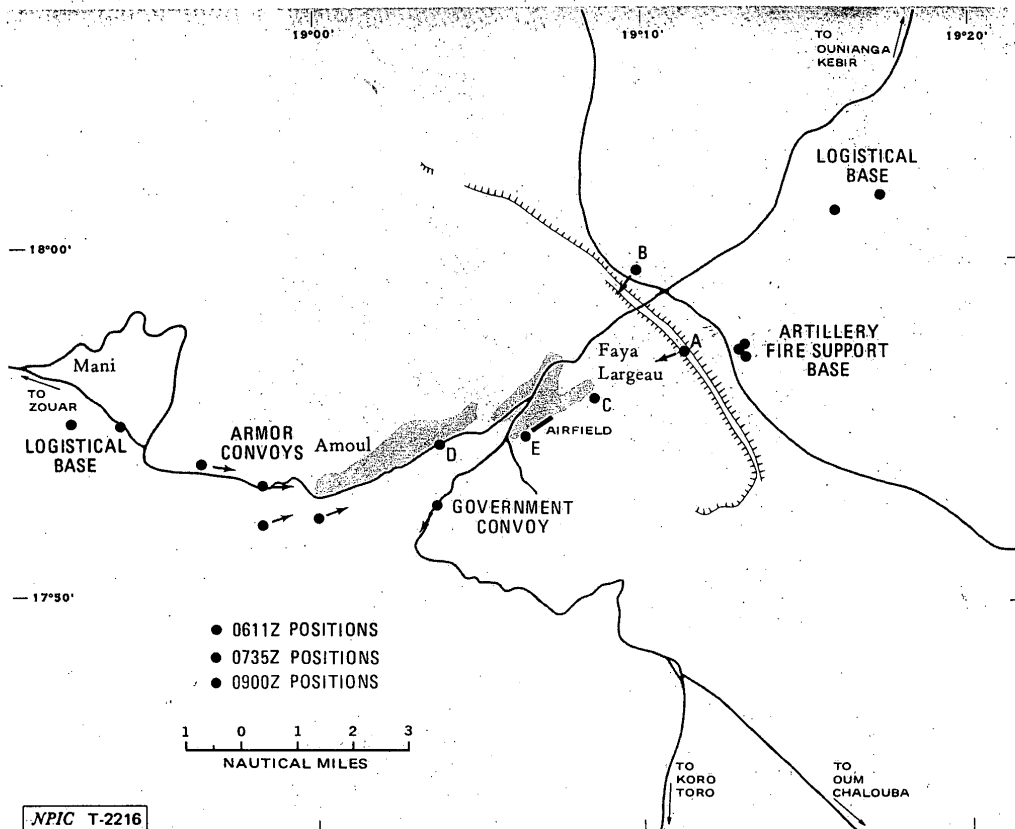


FIGURE 2. LIBYAN/CHADIAN DISSIDENT ASSAULT ON FAYA LARGEAU

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numbers and types of equipment comprising the assault unit in this northeast sector indicated that this was the same Libyan-Chadian dissident force that had departed Ounianga Kebir between [redacted] with additional dissident units having joined the force. Figure 3 depicts a portion of this infantry assault force, supported by BTR-60 APCs and armored vehicles, advancing in a southwesterly direction toward Faya Largeau. Artillery support for this force was being provided by an artillery unit of two 122mm howitzer D-30 and four BM-21 MRL (Figure 4). (S/WN/NOFORN)

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8. To the west, the Libyan mechanized infantry battalion that had moved south on the Ogouï-Faya Largeau road between [redacted] was also moving into position at 0611Z on [redacted]. At this time, a convoy of 60 armored vehicles and trucks was observed approximately 11 nm west of Faya Largeau Airfield and was advancing toward the town. The logistical base for this battalion was identified approximately 10 nm west of the airfield. Twenty-seven empty heavy-lift transporters and approximately 37 other vehicles were observed in this area. (S/WN/NOFORN)

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9. No evidence of Chadian government forces within Faya Largeau could be identified. Fires, probably a result of the artillery shelling, were burning in the town (Figure 5). (S/WN/NOFORN)

**Assault Forces at 0735Z on [redacted]**

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10. By 0735Z, elements of the Libyan-dissident force that had been advancing on Faya Largeau from the east and northeast had moved into positions near the airfield and on the eastern and southwestern outskirts of the town (Positions C and D, Figure 2). At least 170 vehicles were in these two areas. The BTR-60 APC-supported infantry unit that had been advancing on the town at 0611Z (Position A, Figure 2) was deployed on the eastern edge of town at 0735Z (Position C, Figures 2 and 6). The logistical base northeast of Faya Largeau had also been moved forward and was now deployed approximately 10 nm northeast of the town. The majority of the equipment that had been deployed with this logistical base at 0611Z was no longer present and was probably part of the vehicle concentrations on the outskirts of Faya Largeau. While the MRLs and howitzers remained in position at the fire support base east of the town, many of the support vehicles that had been deployed within this area at 0611Z were no longer present. These vehicles were also probably part of the vehicle concentrations on the outskirts of Faya Largeau. (S/WN/NOFORN)

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11. Also west of Faya Largeau, the convoy of armored vehicles and trucks that had been observed moving toward the town at 0611Z had split into several columns. These columns continued to advance on Faya Largeau from the west and southwest. One column of five tanks was within 6 nm of Faya Largeau Airfield (Figure 7). The western logistical base had also been moved forward and was positioned 2 nm closer to the town since 0611Z. (S/WN/NOFORN)

12. With the arrival of Libyan and dissident forces within Faya Largeau, Chadian government forces began to withdraw from the town. A convoy of four possible armored vehicles and 30 trucks was moving south, approximately 4 nm south of the airfield (Figure 8). (S/WN/NOFORN)

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**Assault Forces From 0900Z to 1200Z on** [redacted]

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13. By 0900Z, elements of the tank columns that had been advancing on Faya Largeau from the west had arrived in the vicinity of Faya Largeau Airfield, and four tanks were in position just south of the runway (Position E, Figure 2). Several trucks were observed along the runway, an indication that repairs may have been underway. A probable HIP helicopter, probably the same helicopter that was at the northeast logistical base at 0611Z, had arrived near the fire support base east of the town. No other significant changes to the disposition of Libyan or dissident forces was observed on the 0900Z coverage. (S/WN/NOFORN)

14. Coverage acquired at 1200Z showed no significant change in the status of the Libyan-Chadian dissident assault forces occupying Faya Largeau. (S/WN/NOFORN)

**Assault Forces on** [redacted]

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15. On [redacted] Libyan and dissident units consolidated their forces in the immediate vicinity of the town. On [redacted] three HIND attack helicopters and one HIP helicopter were observed at Faya Largeau Airfield. The four MRLs and two howitzers that had occupied the fire support base east of the town on [redacted] had been moved into positions just south of the airfield (Figure 9). On [redacted] three HIND helicopters remained at the airfield and vehicles and equipment continued to be concentrated on the northwest and eastern edges of Faya Largeau (Figure 10). Equipment along the northwest edge of the town on [redacted] included two tanks, 14 BTR-60 APCs, three 122mm howitzers D-30, and 30 heavy-lift transporters (Figure 11). Four BTR-60 APCs, five 122mm howitzers D-30, four BM-21 MRLs, and eight heavy-lift transporters were dispersed along the eastern edge of town and at the airfield. (S/WN/NOFORN)

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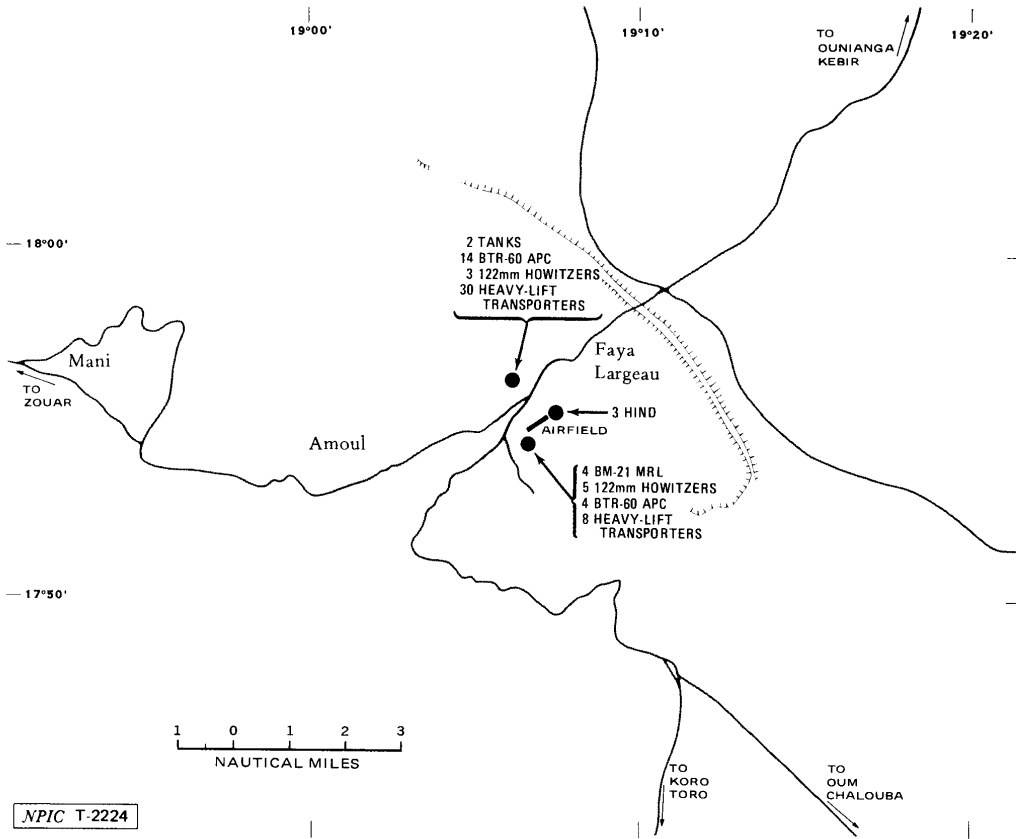


FIGURE 10. LIBYAN DISSIDENT VEHICLE CONCENTRATIONS

REFERENCES

IMAGERY

All available satellite and aircraft (U-2) imagery acquired from [redacted] was used in the preparation of this report. (S/WN/NOFORN) 25X1

Comments and queries regarding this report are welcome. They may be directed to [redacted] 25X1  
[redacted] Third World Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, NPIC, [redacted] 25X1  
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