

ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT

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CHAD/LIBYA/
U.S.

JENNINGS: Overseas today, and for most accounts, the civil war in Chad is going very badly for the government. It is the Libyan connection with the rebels which is causing concern in Washington. As ABC's Barrie Dunsmore reports, the government of Chad needs help and urges its friends to hurry.

DUNSMORE: American analysts are predicting that unless someone comes to the rescue, the government forces in Chad will be defeated by Libyan-backed rebels within the next couple of days. The 'someone to the rescue' would have to be the French air force--with a little back-up from the U.S. Sixth Fleet. According to American intelligence, the Libyan air force continues to pound the forces of President Habre in northern Chad. Chad has no air force at all, and the 30 Red-Eye anti-aircraft missiles the U.S. sent earlier this week are not sufficient to hold off the Libyan air force. JOHN HUGHES (State Department Spokesman): The situation is serious and we are concerned about it. We've seen the reports that Oum Chalouba has been captured by the Libyan-backed rebels.

MANKIEWICZ: President Reagan decided yesterday to increase military aid from 10 to \$25 million. But something more

immediate is needed. As Chad is a former French colony, and it's other neighboring former French colonies are terrified at the prospect of Libya's Khadafy taking over Chad, France is the obvious country to intervene. American officials say French Jaguar fighter bombers, currently based in central Africa, could make a major difference in northern Chad. They also hint that the U.S. could create a diversion, so to speak, by stepping up air operations of the carrier task force Eisenhower in the Gulf of Sidra off Libya. The American AWAC surveillance planes now in Egypt are already involved in monitoring Libyan air operations. The U.S. is hesitant to publicly urge France to move, as the French traditionally balk at the notion of responding to American pressure. However, the two sides are in close consultation and it's likely to be, as one official here put it, a Chad weekend. Barrie Dunsmore, ABC News, the State Department.