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ANNEX 9.96

Backgrounder: Profile of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi

TRIPOLI, March 20 (Xinhua) -- French, U.S. and British forces started their attacks at the Libyan capital of Tripoli and more than 20 coastal targets in Libya Saturday night.

Shortly after the multinational military intervention, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, in a televised speech, urged Libyans to "fight against aggression," saying he would open the arms depots to equip civilians so as to defend the country's independence, territorial integrity and glory.

The following is a brief profile of Gaddafi:

Muammar Gaddafi was born to nomadic parents in the desert region of Sirte in 1942. He went to study history at the University of Libya in 1961 and then entered the Benghazi Military Academy.

After graduating in 1965, Gaddafi served in the Libyan army and he was sent to Britain Royal Military Academy Sandhurst for training in 1966.

On Sept. 1 1969, the "Free Officers Movement," a small group of military officers led by Gaddafi, staged a bloodless coup that toppled King Idris and established the Libyan Arab Republic.

From then on, Gaddafi became chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council and commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of Libya.

He served as Libya's prime minister and minister of defense from 1970 to 1972 and in 1977, he became the revolutionary leader and supreme commander of the Armed Forces.

Gaddafi relinquished all his administration positions in March 1979, only retaining the title of "Revolutionary Leader of Libya."

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