

WE DIDN'T FIRE LONDON SHOTS: LIBYA

# Khadafy's 'Green Guards'

While much of the civilized world is denouncing Libya for the shooting at its London Embassy, the Libyans still stoutly deny any responsibility.

In a telephone interview from Tripoli with the Sun, Libya's Foreign Minister, Dr. Ali T'reiki, told me: "We had nothing to do with the shooting."

According to him, the shots came from outside the embassy and may have been "a provocation designed to damage British-Libyan relations."

These relations could not now be much worse. British police and Special Air Service commandos are ringing the London Embassy — or "People's Bureau" as it is termed by the Libyans.

The British Embassy in Tripoli was briefly besieged in retaliation for the temporary arrest of three departing Libyans at London's Heathrow Airport.

"We are in close contact with the British and are making rapid progress to resolving this unfortunate dispute," T'reiki said.

He may be overly optimistic. Libya's leader, Col. Moammar Khadafy, has announced that the British police will not

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be allowed into the London embassy to search for arms or to apprehend the suspected gunman.

The outraged British insist on apprehending the assailant and searching the embassy for arms and explosives.

T'reiki sounded unusually cheerful and high-spirited for a man whose country is being condemned as an international pariah.

If British accounts of the shooting are correct, and we have no reason to dispute them, why did the Libyans commit this high-profile outrage?

The probable cause lies in the recent takeover of many Libyan foreign missions by Khadafy's home-grown version of the Red Guards.

Khadafy, ever the revolutionary, has been encouraging a "popular uprising" in Libya aimed at replacing "undemo-

cratic" government with "people's representatives."

This fuzzy-headed campaign seems to be a small-scale version of Mao Tse Tung's Red Guards — young, idealistic students intent on ridding the government of bourgeois elements.

Libya's Red Guards — or more accurately, Green Guards — have thus seized control of "People's Bureaux" abroad.

Such a takeover occurred last year in London, leaving the Libyan Embassy staffed by a bizarre combination of polite, traditional diplomats and wild, gun-toting revolutionary students.

I suspect that one of these wild men may have fired from the window of the embassy.

Libyan sources tell me that diplomats and government members regard these revolutionaries with fear and dismay, but are powerless to prevent their growing acts of terrorism because of Khadafy's support.

Ballistic tests by Scotland Yard will soon confirm whether the shots came from inside the embassy or outside.

Whatever the case, we can expect more incidents from Khadafy's rampaging Green Guards.