

The CIA's Libya Rebels: The Same Terrorists who Killed US, NATO Troops in Iraq

2007 West Point Study Shows Benghazi-Darnah-Tobruk Area was a World Leader in Al Qaeda Suicide Bomber Recruitment

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"Serpents, thirst, heat, and sand ... Libya alone can present a multitude of woes that it would beseech men to fly from." Lucan, Pharsalia

Washington DC, March 24, 2011 — The current military attack on Libya has been motivated by UN Security Council resolution 1973 with the need to protect civilians. Statements by President Obama, British Prime Minister Cameron, French President Sarkozy, and other leaders have stressed the humanitarian nature of the intervention, which is said to aim at preventing a massacre of pro-democracy forces and human rights advocates by the Qaddafi regime.

But at the same time, many commentators have voiced anxiety because of the mystery which surrounds the anti-Qaddafi transitional government which emerged at the beginning of March in the city of Benghazi, located in the Cyrenaica district of north-eastern Libya. This government has already been recognized by France and Portugal as the sole legitimate representative of the Libyan people. The rebel council seems to be composed of just over 30 delegates, many of whom are enveloped in obscurity. In addition, the names of more than a dozen members of the rebel council are being kept secret, allegedly to protect them from the vengeance of Qaddafi. But there may be other reasons for the anonymity of these figures. Despite much uncertainty, the United Nations and its several key NATO countries, including the United States, have rushed forward to assist the armed forces of this rebel regime with air strikes, leading to the loss of one or two coalition aircraft and the prospect of heavier losses to come, especially if there should be an invasion. It is high time that American and European publics learned something more about this rebel regime which is supposed to represent a democratic and humanitarian alternative to Gaddafi.

The rebels are clearly not civilians, but an armed force. What kind of an armed force?

Since many of the rebel leaders are so difficult to research from afar, and since a sociological profile of the rebels cannot be done on the ground in the midst of warfare, perhaps the typical methods of social history can be called on for help. Is there a way for us to gain deeper insight into the climate of opinion which prevails in such northeastern Libyan cities as Benghazi, Tobruk, and Darnah, the main population centers of the rebellion?

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HARMONY PROJECT
COMBATING TERRORISM CENTER
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It turns out that there is, in the form of a December 2007 West Point study examining the background of foreign guerrilla fighters — jihadis or mujahedin, including suicide bombers — crossing the Syrian border into Iraq during the 2006-2007 timeframe, under the auspices of the international terrorist organization Al Qaeda. This study is based on a mass of about 600 Al Qaeda personnel files which were captured by US forces in the fall of 2007, and analyzed at West Point using a methodology which we will discuss after having presented the main findings. The resulting study¹ permits us to make important findings about the mentality and belief structures of the northeastern Libyan population that is furnishing the basis for the rebellion, permitting important conclusions about the political nature of the anti-Qaddafi revolt in these areas.

Darnah, northeast Libya: World Capital of Jihadis

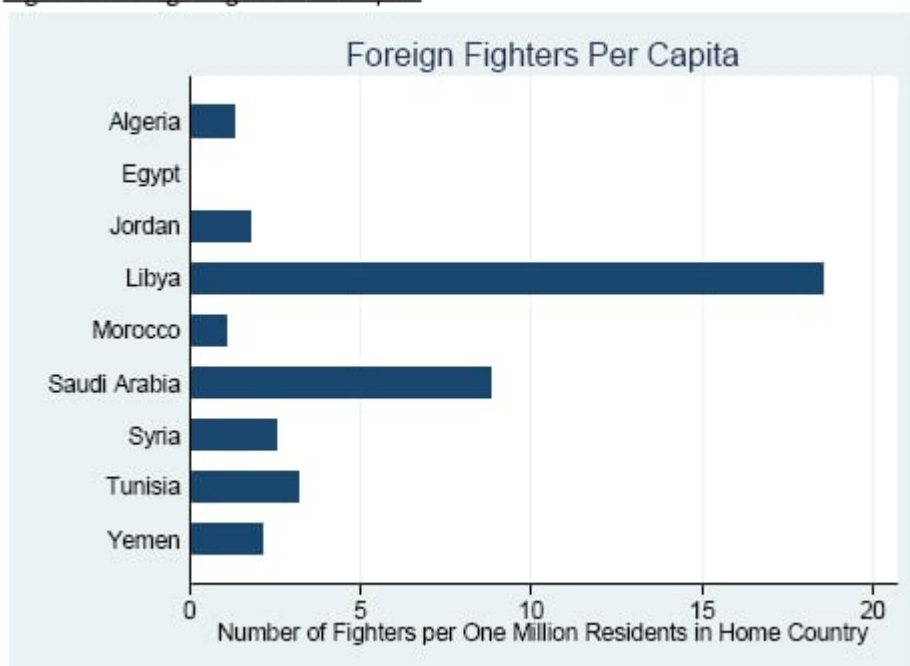
The most striking finding which emerges from the West Point study is that the corridor which goes from Benghazi to Tobruk, passing through the city of Darnah (also transliterated as Derna) them represents one of the greatest concentrations of jihadi terrorists to be found anywhere in the world, and by some measures can be regarded as the leading source of suicide bombers anywhere on the planet. Darnah, with one terrorist fighter sent into Iraq to kill Americans for every 1,000 to 1,500 persons of population, emerges as suicide bomber heaven, easily surpassing the closest competitor, which was Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



According to West Point authors Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, Saudi Arabia took first place as regards absolute numbers of jihadis sent to combat the United States and other coalition members in Iraq during the time frame in question. Libya, a country less than one fourth as populous, took second place. Saudi Arabia sent 41% of the fighters. According to Felter and Fishman, “Libya was the next most common country of origin, with 18.8% (112) of the fighters listing their nationality stating they hailed from Libya.” Other much larger countries were far behind: “Syria, Yemen, and Algeria were the next most common origin countries with 8.2% (49), 8.1% (48), and 7.2% (43), respectively. Moroccans accounted for 6.1% (36) of the records and Jordanians 1.9% (11).”

This means that almost one fifth of the foreign fighters entering Iraq across the Syrian border came from Libya, a country of just over 6 million people. A higher proportion of Libyans were interested in fighting in Iraq than any other country contributing mujahedin. Felter and Fishman point out: “Almost 19 percent of the fighters in the Sinjar Records came from Libya alone. Furthermore, Libya contributed far more fighters per capita than any other nationality in the Sinjar Records, including Saudi Arabia.” (See the chart from the West Point report, page 9)

Figure 4: Foreign Fighters Per Capita

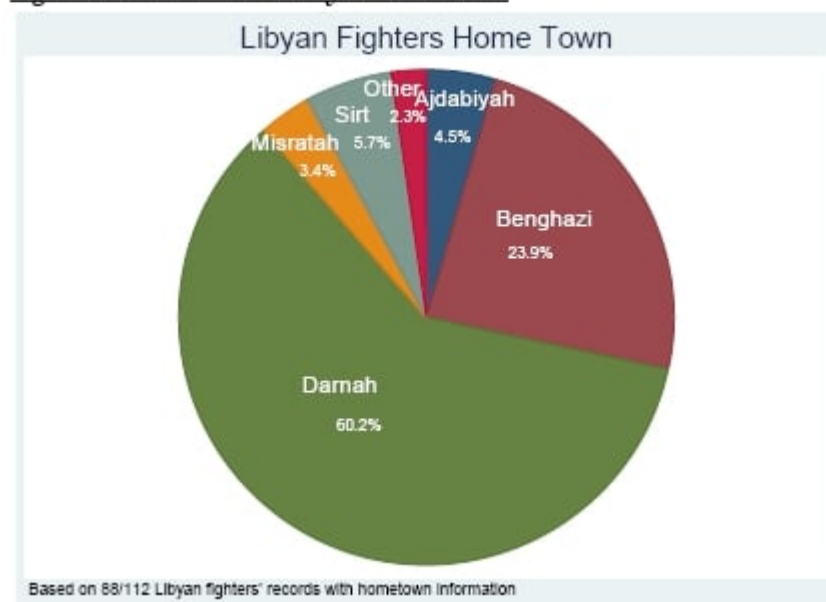


But since the Al Qaeda personnel files contain the residence or hometown of the foreign fighters in question, we can determine that the desire to travel to Iraq to kill Americans was not evenly distributed across Libya, but was highly concentrated precisely in those areas around Benghazi which are today the epicenters of the revolt against Colonel Gaddafi which the US, Britain, France, and others are so eagerly supporting.

As Daya Gamage of the *Asia Tribune* comments in a recent article on the West Point study, "...alarmingly for Western policymakers, most of the fighters came from eastern Libya, the center of the current uprising against Muammar el-Qaddafi. The eastern Libyan city of Darnah sent more fighters to Iraq than any other single city or town, according to the West Point report. It noted that 52 militants came to Iraq from Darnah, a city of just 80,000 people (the second-largest source of fighters was Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, which has a population of more than 4 million). Benghazi, the capital of Libya's provisional government declared by the anti-Qaddafi rebels, sent in 21 fighters, again a disproportionate number of the whole."⁴ Obscure Darnah edged out metropolitan Riyadh by 52 fighters to 51. Qaddafi's stronghold of Tripoli, by contrast, barely shows up in the statistics at all. (See chart from West Point report, page 12)

What explains this extraordinary concentration of anti-American fighters in Benghazi and Darnah? The answer seems related to extremist schools of theology and politics which flourished in these areas. As the West Point report notes: "Both Darnah and Benghazi have long been associated with Islamic militancy in Libya." These areas are in theological and tribal conflict with the central government of Colonel Gaddafi, in addition to being politically opposed to him. Whether such a theological conflict is worth the deaths of still more American and European soldiers is a question which needs urgently to be answered.

Figure 6: Most Common Libyan Hometowns



Felter and Fishman remark that “The vast majority of Libyan fighters that included their hometown in the Sinjar Records resided in the country’s northeast, particularly the coastal cities of Darnah 60.2% (52) and Benghazi 23.9% (21). Both Darnah and Benghazi have long been associated with Islamic militancy in Libya, in particular for an uprising by Islamist organizations in the mid-1990s. The Libyan government blamed the uprising on ‘infiltrators from the Sudan and Egypt’ and one group—the Libyan Fighting Group (jama-ah al-libiyah al-muqatilah)—claimed to have Afghan veterans in its ranks. The Libyan uprisings became extraordinarily violent.”⁵

Northeastern Libya: Highest Density of Suicide Bombers

Another remarkable feature of the Libyan contribution to the war against US forces inside Iraq is the marked propensity of the northeastern Libyans to choose the role of suicide bomber as their preferred method of struggle. As the West Point study states, “Of the 112 Libyans in the Records, 54.4% (61) listed their ‘work.’ Fully 85.2% (51) of these Libyan fighters listed “suicide bomber” as their work in Iraq.”⁶ This means that the northeastern Libyans were far more apt to choose the role of suicide bomber than those from any other country: “Libyan fighters were much more likely than other nationalities to be listed as suicide bombers (85% for Libyans, 56% for all others).”⁷

The anti-Qaddafi Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) Merges with al Qaeda, 2007

The specific institutional basis for the recruitment of guerrilla fighters in northeastern Libya is associated with an organization which previously called itself the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). During the course of 2007, the LIFG declared itself an official subsidiary of al Qaeda, later assuming the name of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). As a result of this 2007 merger, an increased number of guerrilla fighters arrived in Iraq from Libya. According to Felter and Fishman, “The apparent surge in Libyan recruits traveling to Iraq may be linked the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group’s (LIFG) increasingly cooperative relationship with al-Qaeda, which culminated in the LIFG officially joining al-Qaeda on November 3, 2007.”⁸ This merger is confirmed by other sources: A 2008 statement attributed to Ayman al-Zawahiri claimed that the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group has joined

al-Qaeda.⁹

Terrorist “Emir” Touts Key Role of Benghazi, Darnah in al Qaeda

The West Point study makes clear that the main bulwarks of the LIFG and of the later AQIM were the twin cities of Benghazi and Darnah. This is documented in a statement by Abu Layth al-Libi, the self-styled “Emir” of the LIFG, who later became a top official of al Qaeda. At the time of the 2007 merger, “Abu Layth al-Libi, LIFG’s Emir, reinforced Benghazi and Darnah’s importance to Libyan jihadis in his announcement that LIFG had joined al-Qa’ida, saying: ‘It is with the grace of God that we were hoisting the banner of jihad against this apostate regime under the leadership of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, which sacrificed the elite of its sons and commanders in combating this regime whose blood was spilled on the mountains of Darnah, the streets of Benghazi, the outskirts of Tripoli, the desert of Sabha, and the sands of the beach.’”¹⁰

This 2007 merger meant that the Libyan recruits for Al Qaeda became an increasingly important part of the activity of this organization as a whole, shifting the center of gravity to some degree away from the Saudis and Egyptians who had previously been most conspicuous. As Felter and Fishman comment, “Libyan factions (primarily the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group) are increasingly important in al-Qa’ida. The Sinjar Records offer some evidence that Libyans began surging into Iraq in larger numbers beginning in May 2007. Most of the Libyan recruits came from cities in northeast Libya, an area long known for jihadi-linked militancy.”¹¹

The December 2007 West Point study concludes by formulating some policy options for the United States government. One approach, the authors suggest, would be for the United States to cooperate with existing Arab governments against the terrorists. As Felter and Fishman write, “The Syrian and Libyan governments share the United States’ concerns about violent salafi-jihadi ideology and the violence perpetrated by its adherents. These governments, like others in the Middle East, fear violence inside their borders and would much rather radical elements go to Iraq rather than cause unrest at home. U.S. and Coalition efforts to stem the flow of fighters into Iraq will be enhanced if they address the entire logistical chain that supports the movement of these individuals—beginning in their home countries — rather than just their Syrian entry points. The U.S. may be able to increase cooperation from governments to stem the flow of fighters into Iraq by addressing their concerns about domestic jihadi violence.”¹² Given the course of subsequent events, we are on firm ground in concluding that this option was not the one selected, neither in the closing years of the Bush administration nor during the first half of the Obama administration.

The West Point study also offers another, more sinister perspective. Felter and Fishman hint that it might be possible to use the former LIFG components of Al Qaeda against the government of Colonel Qaddafi in Libya, in essence creating a de facto alliance between the United States and a segment of the terrorist organization. The West Point report notes: “The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group’s unification with al-Qa’ida and its apparent decision to prioritize providing logistical support to the Islamic State of Iraq is likely controversial within the organization. It is likely that some LIFG factions still want to prioritize the fight against the Libyan regime, rather than the fight in Iraq. It may be possible to exacerbate schisms within LIFG, and between LIFG’s leaders and al-Qa’ida’s traditional Egyptian and Saudi power-base.”¹³ This suggests the US policy we see today, that of allying with the obscurantist and reactionary al Qaeda fanatics in Libya against the Nasserist modernizer

Qaddafi.

Arming the Rebels: The Experience of Afghanistan

Looking back at the tragic experience of US efforts to incite the population of Afghanistan against the Soviet occupation in the years after 1979, it should be clear that the policy of the Reagan White House to arm the Afghan mujahedin with Stinger missiles and other modern weapons turned out to be highly destructive for the United States. As current Defense Secretary Robert Gates comes close to admitting in his memoirs, Al Qaeda was created during those years by the United States as a form of Arab Legion against the Soviet presence, with long-term results which have been highly lamented.

Today, it is clear that the United States is providing modern weapons for the Libyan rebels through Saudi Arabia and across the Egyptian border with the active assistance of the Egyptian army and of the newly installed pro-US Egyptian military junta.¹⁴ This is a direct violation of UN Security Council resolution 1973, which calls for a complete arms embargo on Libya. The assumption is that these weapons will be used against Gaddafi in the coming weeks. But, given the violently anti-American nature of the population of northeast Libya that is now being armed, there is no certainty that these weapons will not be soon turned against those who have provided them.

A broader problem is represented by the conduct of the future Libyan government dominated by the current rebel council with its large current majority of northeastern Islamists, or of a similar government of a future Cyrenaica rump state. To the extent that such regimes will have access to oil revenues, obvious problems of international security are posed. Gamage wonders: "If the rebellion succeeds in toppling the Qaddafi regime it will have direct access to the tens of billions of dollars that Qaddafi is believed to have squirreled away in overseas accounts during his four-decade rule."¹⁵ Given the northeast Libyan mentality, we can imagine what such revenues might be used for.

What is al Qaeda and Why the CIA Has Used It

Al Qaeda is not a centralized organization, but rather a gaggle or congeries of fanatics, dupes, psychotics, misfits, double agents, provocateurs, mercenaries, and other elements. As noted, Al Qaeda was founded by the United States and the British during the struggle against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Many of its leaders, such as the reputed second-in-command Ayman Zawahiri and the current rising star Anwar Awlaki, are evidently double agents of MI-6 and/or the CIA. The basic belief structure of Al Qaeda is that all existing Arab and Moslem governments are illegitimate and should be destroyed, because they do not represent the caliphate which Al Qaeda asserts is described by the Koran. This means that the Al Qaeda ideology offers a ready and easy way for the Anglo-American secret intelligence agencies to attack and destabilize existing Arab and Muslim governments as part of the ceaseless need of imperialism and colonialism to loot and attack the developing nations. This is precisely what is happening in Libya today.

Al Qaeda emerged from the cultural and political milieu of the Moslem Brotherhood or *Ikhwan*, itself a creation of British intelligence in Egypt in the late 1920s. The US and the British used the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood to oppose the successful anti-imperialist policies of Egyptian President Nasser, who scored immense victories for his country by nationalizing the Suez Canal and building the Aswan High Dam, without which modern Egypt would be simply unthinkable. The Muslim brotherhood provided an active and capable fifth

column of foreign agents against Nasser, in the same way that the official website of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb is trumpeting its support for the rebellion against Colonel Qaddafi.

I have discussed the nature of Al Qaeda at some length in my recent book entitled *9/11 Synthetic Terrorism: Made in USA*, and that analysis cannot be repeated here. It is enough to say that we do not need to believe in all the fantastic mythology which the United States government has spun around the name of Al Qaeda in order to recognize the basic fact that militants or patsies who spontaneously join al Qaeda are often sincerely motivated by a deep hatred of the United States and a burning desire to kill Americans, as well as Europeans. The Bush administration policy used the alleged presence of Al Qaeda as a pretext for direct military attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq. The Obama administration is now doing something different, intervening on the side of a rebellion in which Al Qaeda and its co-thinkers are heavily represented while attacking the secular authoritarian government of Colonel Gaddafi. Both of these policies are bankrupt and must be abandoned.

Rebel Leaders Jalil and Younis, Plus Most of Rebel Council are Members of the al Qaeda-linked Harabi Tribe

The result of the present inquiry is that the Libyan branch of Al Qaeda represents a continuum with the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group centered in Darnah and Benghazi. The ethnic base of the Libyan Islamic fighting group is apparently to be found in the anti-Qaddafi Harabi tribe, the tribe which makes up the vast majority of the rebel council including the two dominant rebel leaders, Abdul Fatah Younis and Mustafa Abdul Jalil. The evidence thus suggests that the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, the elite of the Harabi tribe, and the rebel council supported by Obama all overlap for all practical purposes. As the late Foreign Minister of Guyana Fred Wills, a real fighter against imperialism and neo-colonialism, taught me many years ago, political formations in developing countries (and not just there) are often a mask for ethnic and religious rivalries; so it is in Libya. The rebellion against Qaddafi is a toxic brew compounded of fanatical hatred of Qaddafi, Islamism, tribalism, and localism. From this point of view, Obama has foolishly chosen to take sides in a tribal war.

When Hillary Clinton went to Paris to be introduced to the Libyan rebels by French President Sarkozy, she met the US-educated Libyan opposition leader Mahmoud Jibril, already known to readers of Wikileaks document dumps as a favorite of the US.[16](#)

While Jibril might be considered presentable in Paris, the real leaders of the Libyan insurrection would appear to be Jalil and Younis, both former ministers under Qaddafi. Jalil seems to be the *primus inter pares*, at least for the moment: "Mustafa Abdul Jalil or Abdul-Jalil (Arabic: مصطفى عبد الجليل, also transcribed Abdul-Jelil, Abd-al-Jalil, Abdel-Jalil or Abdeljalil; and frequently but erroneously as Abud Al Jeleil) (born 1952) is a Libyan politician. He was the Minister of Justice (unofficially, the Secretary of the General People's Committee) under Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi.... Abdul Jalil has been identified as the Chairman of the National Transitional Council based in Benghazi... although this position is contested by others in the uprising due to his past connections to Gaddafi's regime."[17](#)

As for Younis, he has been closely associated with Qaddafi since the 1968-9 seizure of power: "Abdul Fatah Younis (Arabic: عبد الفتاح يونس) is a senior military officer in Libya. He held the rank of General and the post of Minister of Interior, but resigned on 22 February 2011...."[18](#)

What should concern us most is that both Jalil and Younis come from the Harabi tribe, the dominant one in northeast Libya, and the one that overlaps with al Qaeda. According to Stratfor, the "...Harabi tribe is a historically powerful umbrella tribe in eastern Libya that saw their influence wane under Col. Gadhafi. The Libyan leader confiscated swaths of tribal members' land and redistributed it to weaker and more loyal tribes.... Many of the leaders now emerging in eastern Libya hail from the Harabi tribe, including the head of the provisional government set up in Benghazi, Abdel Mustafa Jalil, and Abdel Fatah Younis, who assumed a key leadership role over the defected military ranks early in the uprising."¹⁹ This is like a presidential ticket where both candidates are from the same state, except that Libya's ferocious tribal rivalries make the problem infinitely worse.

The Rebel Council: Half the Names Are Kept Secret; Why?

This picture of a narrow, sectarian tribal and regional base does not improve when we look at the rebel council as a whole. According to one recent version, the rebel council is "chaired by the well-spoken former justice minister for Libya, Mustafa Abdul Jalil, [and] consists of 31 members, ostensibly representatives from across Libya, of whom many cannot be named for "security reasons".... "The key players on the council, at least those who we know about, all hail from the north-eastern Harabi confederation of tribes. These tribes have strong affiliations with Benghazi that date back to before the 1969 revolution which brought Gaddafi to power."²⁰ Other accounts agree about the number of representatives: "The council has 31 members; the identities of several members has not been made public to protect their own safety."²¹ Given what we know about the extraordinary density of LIFG and all Qaeda fanatics in northeast Libya, we are authorized to wonder as to whether so many members of the council are being kept secret in order to protect them from Qaddafi, or whether the goal is to prevent them from being recognized in the west as al Qaeda terrorists or sympathizers. The latter seems to be a more accurate summary of the real state of affairs.

Names released so far include: Mustafa Abduljaleel; Ashour Hamed Bourashed of Darna city; Othman Suleiman El-Megyrahi of the Batnan area; Al Butnan of the Egypt border and Tobruk; Ahmed Abduraba Al-Abaar of Benghazi city; Fathi Mohamed Baja of Benghazi city; Abdelhafed Abdelkader Ghoga of Benghazi city; Mr. Omar El-Hariri for Military Affairs; and Dr. Mahmoud Jibril, Ibrahim El-Werfali and Dr. Ali Aziz Al-Eisawi for foreign affairs.²²

The State Department needs to interrogate these figures, starting perhaps with Ashour Hamed Bourashed, the delegate from the terrorist and suicide bomber stronghold of Darnah.

How Many al Qaeda Members, Veterans, or Sympathizers are on the Rebel Council?

Seeing as clearly as we can in the fog of war, it looks like slightly more than a dozen of the members of the rebel council have had their names officially published — in any case, not more than half of the reported 31 members. The US and European media have not taken the lead in identifying for us the names that are now known, and they above all have not called attention to the majority of the rebel council who are still lurking in the shadows of total secrecy. We must therefore demand to know how many LIFG and/or al Qaeda members, veterans, or sympathizers currently hold seats on the rebel council.

We are thus witnessing an attempt by the Harabi tribe to seize dominance over the 140 tribes of Libya. The Harabi are already practically hegemonic among the tribes of Cyrenaica. At the center of the Harabi Confederation is the Obeidat tribe, which is divided into 15 sub-

tribes.²³ All of this might be of purely academic ethnographic interest, were it not for the fact of the striking overlap between the Harabi tribe and the LIFG and al Qaeda.

The Senussi Movement of Libya — Monarchist Democracy?

The political-religious tradition of northeast Libya makes this area such fertile ground for the more extreme Muslim sects and also predisposes it to monarchism rather than to the more modern forms of government favored by Qaddafi. The relevant regional tradition is that of the Senussi or Sanussi order, an anti-western Moslem sect. In Libya the Senussi order is closely associated with monarchism, since King Idris I, the ruler installed by the British in 1951 who was overthrown by Gaddafi in 1969, was also the leader of the Senussi order. The Senussi directed the rebellion against Italian colonialism in the person of Marshal Rodolfo Graziani and his army in the 1930s. Today, the rebels use the monarchist flag, and may advocate the return to the throne of one of the two pretenders to the Idris line. They are far closer to monarchism than to democracy

King Idris, Revered by the Libyan Rebels of Today

Here is the Stratfor view of King Idris and the Senussi: “King Idris came from a line of rulers of the Sanussi order, a Sufi religious order founded in 1842 in Al Bayda, that practices a conservative and austere form of Islam. The Sanussiyah represented a political force in Cyrenaica that preceded the creation of the modern state of Libya, and whose reverberations continue to be felt to this day. It is no coincidence that this region is the home of Libyan jihadism, with groups like the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). The Gadhafi family has thus been calling the current uprising an elaborate Islamist plot....”²⁴ Under the monarchy, Libya was by some estimates absolutely the poorest country in the world. Today, Libya ranks 53 on the UN Human Development Index and qualifies as the most developed country in Africa, ahead of Russia, Brazil, Ukraine, and Venezuela. Qaddafi’s stewardship has objective merits which cannot be seriously denied.

Glen Ford’s *Black Agenda Report* has correctly sought to show the racist and reactionary character of the Libyan insurrection. The tribes of southern Libya, known as the Fezzan, are dark skinned. The tribal underpinning of the Gaddafi regime has been an alliance of the tribes of the West, the center, and the southern Fezzan, against the Harabi and the Obeidat, who identify with the former monarchist ruling class. The Harabi and Obeidat are known to nurture a deep racist hatred against the Fezzan. This was expressed in frequent news reports from the pro-imperialist media at the beginning of the rebellion evidently inspired by Harabi accounts, according to which black people in Libya had to be treated as mercenaries working for Gaddafi — with the clear implication that they were to be exterminated. These racist inventions are still being repeated by quackacademics like Dean Slaughter of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton. And in fact, large numbers of black Africans from Chad and other countries working in Libyan have been systematically lynched and massacred by the anti-Gaddafi forces. The Obama White House, for all its empty talk of not wanting to repeat the massacre in Rwanda, has conveniently ignored this shocking story of real genocide at the hands of its new racist friends in Cyrenaica.

Against the obscurantism of the Senussi, Qaddafi has advanced the Moslem equivalent of the priesthood of all believers, arguing that no caliphate is necessary in order to discover the meaning of the Koran. He has supplemented this with a pan African perspective. Gerald A. Pereira of the *Black Agenda Report* writes the following about the theological division between Gaddafi and the neo-Senussi of northeast Libya, as well as other obscurantists: “Al

Qaeda is in the Sahara on his borders and the International Union of Muslim Scholars is calling for [Qaddafi] to be tried in a court.... [Qaddafi] has questioned the Islam of the Muslim Brotherhood and Al Qaeda from a Quranic/theological perspective and is one of the few political leaders equipped to do so.... Benghazi has always been at the heart of counter-revolution in Libya, fostering reactionary Islamic movements such as the Wahhabis and Salafists. It is these people who founded the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group based in Benghazi which allies itself with Al Qaeda and who have, over the years, been responsible for the assassination of leading members of the Libyan revolutionary committees.”[25](#) And what would be for example the status of women under the neo-Senussi of the Benghazi rebel council?

Al Qaeda from Demon to US ally in Libya

For those who attempt to follow the ins and outs of the CIA’s management of its various patsy organizations inside the realm of presumed Islamic terrorism, it may be useful to trace the transformation of the LIFG-AQIM from deadly enemy to close ally. This phenomenon is closely linked to the general reversal of the ideological fronts of US imperialism that marks the divide between the Bush-Cheney-neocon administrations and the current Obama-Brzezinski-International Crisis Group regime. The Bush approach was to use the alleged presence of Al Qaeda as a reason for direct military attack. **The Obama method is to use Al Qaeda to overthrow independent governments, and then either Balkanize and partition the countries in question, or else use them as kamikaze puppets against larger enemies like Russia, China, or Iran.** This approach implies a more or less open fraternization with terrorist groups, which was signaled in a general way in Obamas famous Cairo speech of 2009. The links of the Obama campaign to the terrorist organizations deployed by the CIA against Russia were already a matter of public record three years ago.[26](#)

But such a reversal of field cannot be improvised overnight; it took several years of preparation. On July 10, 2009, The *London Daily Telegraph* reported that the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group had split with Al Qaeda. This was when the United States had decided to de-emphasize the Iraq war, and also to prepare to use the Sunni Moslem Brotherhood and its Sunni Al Qaeda offshoot for the destabilization of the leading Arab states preparatory to turning them against Shiite Iran. Paul Cruikshank wrote at that time in the *New York Daily News* about one top LIFG honcho who wanted to dial back the relation to al Qaeda and the infamous Osama Bin Laden; this was “Noman Benotman, a former leader of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. While mainstream Muslim leaders have long criticized Al Qaeda, these critics have the jihadist credentials to make their criticisms bite.”[27](#) But by this time some LIFG bosses had moved up into al Qaeda: the *London Daily Telegraph* reported that senior Al Qaeda members Abu Yahya al-Libi and Abu Laith al-Libi were LIFG members. Around this time, Qaddafi released some LIFG fighters in an ill-advdsided humanitarian gesture.

Northeast Libyan Jihadis Killing US, NATO Forces in Afghanistan Right Now

One of the fatal contradictions in the current State Department and CIA policy is that it aims at a cordial alliance with Al Qaeda killers in northeast Libya, at the very moment when the United States and NATO are mercilessly bombing the civilian northwest Pakistan in the name of a total war against Al Qaeda, and US and NATO forces are being killed by Al Qaeda guerrillas in that same Afghanistan-Pakistan theater of war. The force of this glaring contradiction causes the entire edifice of US war propaganda to collapse. The US has long

since lost any basis in morality for military force.

In fact, terrorist fighters from northeast Libya may be killing US and NATO troops in Afghanistan right now, even as the US and NATO protect their home base from the Qaddafi government. According to this account, a top Al Qaeda commander in northwest Pakistan was killed by US action as recently as October 2010: "A senior al Qaeda leader who serves as al Qaeda's ambassador to Iran, and is wanted by the US, is reported to have been killed in a Predator air strike in Pakistan's Taliban-controlled tribal agency of North Waziristan two days ago.... [This was] Atiyah Abd al Rahman, a Libyan national who has been based in Iran and served as Osama bin Laden's ambassador to the mullahs. Unconfirmed press reports indicate that Rahman was killed in an airstrike...."²⁸ The US State Department's Rewards for Justice page for Atiyah Abd al Rahman notes that he was al Qaeda's "emissary in Iran as appointed by Osama bin Ladin." Atiyah "recruited and facilitated talks with other Islamic groups to operate under" al Qaeda and was "also a member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and Ansar al Sunna."²⁹ Rahman was ranked high enough in al Qaeda to be able to give orders to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the head of al Qaeda in Iraq, in 2005.

Also killed in Pakistan was another apparent northeast Libyan going by the name of Khalid al Harabi, whose choice of a *nom de guerre* may well link him to the jihadi farm among the Harabi tribe in Cyrenaica. According to one account, "Khalid al Harabi is an alias for Khalid Habib, al Qaeda's former military commander who was killed in a US Predator strike in October 2008."³⁰

The Scenario Uncovered by the 1995 Shayler Affair is Operative Today

In 1995, David Shayler, an official of the British counterintelligence organization MI-5, became aware that his counterpart at the British foreign espionage organization MI-6 had paid the sum of £100,000 to an Al Qaeda affiliate in exchange for the attempt to assassinate Qaddafi. The assassination attempt did occur, and killed several innocent bystanders, but failed to eliminate the Libyan ruler. As Shayler understood the MI-6 scenario, it included the liquidation of Gaddafi, followed by the descent of Libya into chaos and tribal warfare, with a possible option for a direct seizure of power by al Qaeda itself. This situation would then provide a pretext for Britain, probably but not necessarily acting together with the United States or other countries, to invade Libya and seize control of the oil fields, probably establishing a permanent protectorate over the oil regions, the pipelines, and the coast.³¹ This remains the goal today.

Timed to coincide with the attempt to assassinate Qaddafi, MI-6 and other Western secret intelligence agencies fomented a considerable insurrection in northeast Libya, almost precisely in the same areas which are in rebellion today. Its insurrection was successfully crushed by Qaddafi's forces by the end of 1996. The events of 2011 are simply a *reprise* of the imperialist attack on Libya 15 years ago, with the addition of outside intervention..

The War Against the Nation State

Today's attack on Libya comes in the context of a broad attack on the institution of the sovereign nation state itself, as it has existed since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. The United States and the British are deeply concerned by the large number of nations which are seeking to escape from Anglo-American hegemony by actively pursuing large-scale cooperation with Russia on security, with China on economic questions, and with Iran for geopolitical considerations. The CIA/MI-6 response has been a wild orgy of destabilizations, people power coups, color revolutions, and palace putsches, signaled by the document

dumps by the CIA limited hangout operation known as Wikileaks, which has targeted names of the CIA hit list from Ben Ali to Qaddafi. The Obama strategy would have preferred an exclusive reliance and the illusion that the Arab Spring was really a matter of youthful visionary idealists gathering in the public square to praise democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. This was never the reality: the actual decisions were being made by brutal cliques of generals and top officials bribed or blackmailed by the CIA who were moving behind the scenes to oust such figures as Ben Ali or Mubarak. Whatever else Qaddafi has done, he has undoubtedly forced the CIA and NATO to drop the pleasant mask of youthful idealism and human rights, revealing a hideous visage of Predator drones, terror bombing, widespread slaughter, and colonialist arrogance underneath. Qaddafi has also ripped the mask of “Yes We Can” off Obama, revealing a cynical warmonger intent on the continuation of Bush’s infamous “Dead or Alive” and “Bring it on” policies, although by other means.

A Distant Mirror for Imperialists in Libya: Lucan’s *Pharsalia*

Modern imperialists eager to rush into Libya should ponder Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, which treats of warfare in the Libyan desert during the contest between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great at the end of the Roman Republic. A critical passage in this Latin epic is the speech by Cato of Utica, a follower of Pompey, who urges his soldiers to undertake a suicide mission into Libya, saying: “Serpents, thirst, heat, and sand ... Libya alone can present a multitude of woes that it would beseem men to fly from.” Cato goes forward, and finds “a little tomb to enclose [his] hallowed name, Libya secured the death of Cato....”³²

Let us not imitate this folly.

Investigative leads from the West Point Study: An Appeal to Scholars

The West Point study, as noted, was conducted on the basis of almost 700 Al Qaeda personnel files captured by coalition forces in Iraq.³³ The authors of the study have promised to keep available online the documentary basis of this investigation, both in the form of the raw Arabic language al Qaeda personnel files³⁴, and also of the same file cards in English translation.³⁵ Assuming that this material remains available, it might be possible for researchers and reporters, and especially those with capabilities in Arabic not possessed by the present writer, to investigate the Libyan fighters who went into Iraq with a view to determining whether any of them are family members, neighbors, or even political associates of the known members of the Benghazi rebel council or of other anti-Qaddafi forces. Such a procedure could contribute to allowing the European and American public as well as others around the world to better understand the nature of the military adventure currently unfolding in Libya by gaining a more specific knowledge of who the Libyan rebels :

Notes

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4 Daya Gamage, “Libyan rebellion has radical Islamist fervor: Benghazi link to Islamic

militancy, U.S. Military Document Reveals," *Asian Tribune*, March 17, 2011, at <http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/03/17/libyan-rebellion-has-radical-islamist-fervor-benghazi-link-islamic-militancy-us-milit>

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6 West Point Study, p. 19.

7 West Point Study, p. 27.

8 West Point Study, p. 9.

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11 West Point Study, p. 27.

12 West Point Study, p. 29.

13 West Point Study, p. 28.

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