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Who are the Libyan Freedom Fighters and Their Patrons? Peter Dale Scott's Libyan Notebook (Updated March 27)　リビアの自由の闘士とその後援者とは--ピーター・デール・スコットのリビア・ノート（３月27日更新）

Peter Dale Scott

Who are the Libyan Freedom Fighters and Their Patrons? ***Spanish translation available; Portuguese translation available; Swedish translation available; German translation available; Farsi (Persian) translation available; Serbian translation available; Turkish translation available; Czech translation available***

Peter Dale Scott's Libyan Notebook ***Updated April 3, 2011***

Preface

The world is facing a very unpredictable and potentially dangerous situation in North Africa and the Middle East. What began as a memorable, promising, relatively nonviolent achievement of New Politics - the Revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt - has morphed very swiftly into a recrudescence of old habits: America, already mired in two decade-long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and sporadic air attacks in Yemen and Somalia, now bombing yet another Third World Country, in this case Libya.

USS Barry launches a Tomahawk missile in support of Operation Odyssey Dawn in the Mediterranean Sea, March 19, 2011. ***US government handout***

The initially stated aim of this bombing was to diminish Libyan civilian casualties. But many senior figures in Washington, including President Obama, have indicated that the US is gearing up for a quite different war for regime change, one that may well be protracted and could also easily expand beyond Libya.[1] If it does expand, the hope for a nonviolent transition to civilian government in Tunisia and Egypt and other Middle East nations experiencing political unrest, may be lost to a hard-edged militarization of government, especially in Egypt. All of us, not just Egyptians, have a major stake in seeing that that does not happen.

The present article does not attempt to propose solutions or a course of action for the United States and its allies, or for the people of the Middle East. It attempts rather to examine the nature of the forces that have emerged in Libya over the last four decades that are presently being played out.

To this end I have begun to compile what I call my Libyan Notebook, a collection of relevant facts that underlie the present crisis. This Notebook will be judgmental, in that I am biased towards collecting facts that the US media tend to ignore, facts that are the product in many instances of investigative reporting that cuts to the heart of power relations, deep structures, and economic interests in the region including the US, Israel, and the Arab States as these have played out over the last two decades and more. But I hope that it will be usefully objective and open-ended, permitting others to draw diverse conclusions from the same set of facts.[2]

I wish to begin with two ill-understood topics: I. Who Are the Libyan Opposition, and II. Where Are the Libyan Rebel Arms Coming From?

I. Who Are the Libyan Opposition

1) Historically:

"If Muammar Al Gaddafi behaved paranoid, it was for good reason. It wasn't long after he reached the age of 27 and led a small group of junior military officers in a bloodless coup d'état against Libyan King Idris on September 1, 1969, that threats to his power and life emerged - from monarchists, Israeli Mossad, Palestinian disaffections, Saudi security, the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL), the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition (NCLO), British intelligence, United States antagonism and, in 1995, the most serious of all, Al Qaeda-like Libyan Islamic fighting group, known as Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah bi-Libya. The Colonel reacted brutally, by either expelling or killing those he feared were against him."[3]

Gaddafi and Nasser in a 1969 Photo. ***Getty image***

2) National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL)

"With the aim of overthrowing Libyan strongman Muammar Khadafy, Israel and the U.S. trained anti-Libyan rebels in a number of West and Central African countries. The Paris-based African Confidential newsletter reported on January 5th, 1989, that the US and Israel had set up a series of bases in Chad and other neighboring countries to train 2000 Libyan rebels captured by the Chad army. The group, called The National Front for the Salvation of Libya, was based in Chad."[4]

"US official records indicate that funding for the Chad-based secret war against Libya also came from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Israel and Iraq. The Saudis, for instance, donated $7m to an opposition group, the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (also backed by French intelligence and the CIA). But a plan to assassinate Gadafi and take over the government on 8 May 1984 was crushed. In the following year, the US asked Egypt to invade Libya and overthrow Gadafi but President Mubarak refused. By the end of 1985, the Washington Post had exposed the plan after congressional leaders opposing it wrote in protest to President Reagan."[5]

"The FNSL [National Front for the Salvation of Libya] was part of the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition held in London in 2005, and British resources are being used to support the FNSL and other 'opposition' in Libya.... The FNSL held its national congress in the USA in July 2007. Reports of 'atrocities' and civilian deaths are being channeled into the western press from operations in Washington DC, and the opposition FNSL is reportedly organizing resistance and military attacks from both inside and outside Libya."[6]

3) National Conference for the Libyan Opposition (NCLO),

"The main group leading the insurrection is the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition which includes the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL). The NFSL, which is leading the violence, is a U.S.-sponsored armed militia of mostly Libyan expatriates and tribes opposed to al-Qaddafi."[7]

4) Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah bi-Libya (Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, LIFG)

"The LIFG was founded in 1995 by a group of mujahideen veterans who had fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Upon their return to Libya they grew angry about what they viewed as the corruption and impiety of the Libyan regime and formed the LIFG to create a state that would show what they believed to be the true character of the Libyan people.
The most significant LIFG attack was a 1996 attempt to assassinate Gadhafi; LIFG members led by Wadi al-Shateh threw a bomb underneath his motorcade. The group also stages guerilla-style attacks against government security forces from its mountain bases. Although most LIFG members are strictly dedicated to toppling Gadhafi, intelligence reportedly indicates that some have joined forces with al-Qaida to wage jihad against Libyan and Western interests worldwide. ....
As recently as February 2004, then-Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet testified before the Senate Intelligence Committee that "one of the most immediate threats [to U.S. security] is from smaller international Sunni extremist groups that have benefited from al-Qaida links. They include ... the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group."[8]

"In recent days Libyan officials have distributed security documents giving the details of Sufiyan al-Koumi, said to be a driver for Osama bin Laden, and of another militant allegedly involved in an "Islamic emirate" in Derna, in now-liberated eastern Libya. Koumi, the documents show, was freed in September 2010 as part of a "reform and repent" initiative organised by Saif al-Islam, Gaddafi's son....
The LIFG, established in Afghanistan in the 1990s, has assassinated dozens of Libyan soldiers and policemen. In 2009, to mark Gaddafi's 40 years in power, it apologised for trying to kill him and agreed to lay down its arms. MI6 [British Intelligence] has been accused in the past of supporting it. Six LIFG leaders, still in prison, disavowed their old ways and explained why fighting Gaddafi no longer constituted "legitimate" jihad. Abdul-Hakim al-Hasadi, another freed LIFG member, denied the official claims. "Gaddafi is trying to divide the people," he told al-Jazeera. "He claims that there is an Islamist emirate in Derna and that I am its emir. He is taking advantage of the fact that I am a former political prisoner."
Derna is famous as the home of a large number of suicide bombers in Iraq. It is also deeply hostile to Gaddafi. "Residents of eastern Libya in general, and Derna in particular, view the Gaddadfa (Gaddafi's tribe) as uneducated, uncouth interlopers from an inconsequential part of the country who have 'stolen' the right to rule in Libya," US diplomats were told in 2008, in a cable since released by WikiLeaks.
The last 110 members of the LIFG were freed on 16 February, the day after the Libyan uprising began. One of those released, Abdulwahab Mohammed Kayed, is the brother of Abu Yahya Al Libi, one of al Qaida's top propagandists. Koumi fled Libya and is said to have ended up in Afghanistan working for Bin Laden. Captured in Pakistan, he was handed over to the US and sent to Guantánamo Bay in 2002. In 2009 he was sent back to Libya.[9] US counter-terrorist experts have expressed concern that al-Qaida could take advantage of a political vacuum if Gaddafi is overthrown. But most analysts say that, although the Islamists' ideology has strong resonance in eastern Libya, there is no sign that the protests are going to be hijacked by them.[10]

Libyan Islamic Fighting Group Members released

"Fierce clashes between [Qadhafi's] security forces and Islamist guerrillas erupted in Benghazi in September 1995, leaving dozens killed on both sides. After weeks of intense fighting, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) formally declared its existence in a communiqué calling Qadhafi's government "an apostate regime that has blasphemed against the faith of God Almighty" and declaring its overthrow to be "the foremost duty after faith in God." [3] This and future LIFG communiqués were issued by Libyan Afghans who had been granted political asylum in Britain.... The involvement of the British government in the LIFG campaign against Qadhafi remains the subject of immense controversy. LIFG's next big operation, a failed attempt to assassinate Qadhafi in February 1996 that killed several of his bodyguards, was later said to have been financed by British intelligence to the tune of $160,000, according to ex-MI5 officer David Shayler. [4] While Shayler's allegations have not been independently confirmed, it is clear that Britain allowed LIFG to develop a base of logistical support and fundraising on its soil. At any rate, financing by bin Laden appears to have been much more important. According to one report, LIFG received up to $50,000 from the Saudi terrorist mastermind for each of its militants killed on the battlefield." [2005][11]

"Americans, Britons and the French are finding themselves as comrades in arms with the rebel Islamic Fighting Group, the most radical element in the Al Qaeda network [to bring down Gaddhafi]. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton admitted the risks of the unholy alliance in a congressional hearing, saying that the Libyan opposition is probably more anti-American than Muammar Gaddhafi. A decade ago, this very same delusion of a Western-Islamist partnership in Kosovo, Bosnia and Chechnya ended abruptly in the 9/11 attacks."[12]

5) Transitional National Council

"A RIVAL transitional government to the regime of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi looks set to win US and other international support as momentum builds to oust the longtime dictator.
US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton confirmed yesterday that the Obama administration was reaching out to opponents of Colonel Gaddafi. She said the US was willing to offer 'any kind of assistance' to remove him from power.
Protest leaders who have taken control in Libya's eastern cities claim to have established a transitional "national council" that amounts to rival rule. They have called on the country's army to join them as they prepare for an attack on the capital, Tripoli, where the Libyan leader retains control.
Confident the Libyan leader's 42-year rule was coming to an end, Mrs Clinton said yesterday: 'We are just at the beginning of what will follow Gaddafi.'"[13]

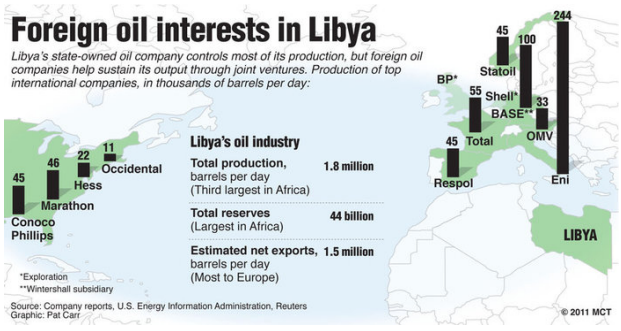
6) Facebook

"He [Omar El- Hariri, Chief of Armed Forces for the Transitional National Council] remained under close surveillance by the security forces until Feb. 17, when the revolution started. It was not initiated by prominent figures of the older generation, he said, but began spontaneously when Tunisia and Egypt inspired the youth. 'Children of Facebook!' he declared, in English, with a broad smile."[14]

7) Oil

"Libyan rebels in Benghazi said they have created a new national oil company to replace the corporation controlled by leader Muammar Qaddafi whose assets were frozen by the United Nations Security Council.
The Transitional National Council released a statement announcing the decision made at a March 19 meeting to establish the 'Libyan Oil Company as

supervisory authority on oil production and policies in the country, based temporarily in Benghazi, and the appointment of an interim director general" of the company.
The Council also said it "designated the Central Bank of Benghazi as a monetary authority competent in monetary policies in Libya and the appointment of a governor to the Central Bank of Libya, with a temporary headquarters in Benghazi."[15]



Peter Dale Scott's Libyan Notebook

II. Where Are the Libyan Rebel Arms Coming From?

Robert Fisk, "Libya in turmoil: America's secret plan to arm Libya's rebels; Obama asks Saudis to airlift weapons into Benghazi," Independent, March 7, 2011:

"Desperate to avoid US military involvement in Libya in the event of a prolonged struggle between the Gaddafi regime and its opponents, the Americans have asked Saudi Arabia if it can supply weapons to the rebels in Benghazi. The Saudi Kingdom, already facing a "day of rage" from its 10 per cent Shia Muslim community on Friday, with a ban on all demonstrations, has so far failed to respond to Washington's highly classified request, although King Abdullah personally loathes the Libyan leader, who tried to assassinate him just over a year ago.

Washington's request is in line with other US military co-operation with the Saudis. The royal family in Jeddah, which was deeply involved in the Contra scandal during the Reagan administration, gave immediate support to American efforts to arm guerrillas fighting the Soviet army in Afghanistan in 1980 ....

But the Saudis remain the only US Arab ally strategically placed and capable of furnishing weapons to the guerrillas of Libya. Their assistance would allow Washington to disclaim any military involvement in the supply chain - even though the arms would be American and paid for by the Saudis.

The Saudis have been told that opponents of Gaddafi need anti-tank rockets and mortars as a first priority to hold off attacks by Gaddafi's armour, and ground-to-air missiles to shoot down his fighter-bombers.

Supplies could reach Benghazi within 48 hours but they would need to be delivered to air bases in Libya or to Benghazi airport. If the guerrillas can then go on to the offensive and assault Gaddafi's strongholds in western Libya, the political pressure on America and Nato - not least from Republican members of Congress - to establish a no-fly zone would be reduced.

US military planners have already made it clear that a zone of this kind would necessitate US air attacks on Libya's functioning, if seriously depleted, anti-aircraft missile bases, thus bringing Washington directly into the war on the side of Gaddafi's opponents.

For several days now, US Awacs surveillance aircraft have been flying around Libya, making constant contact with Malta air traffic control and requesting details of Libyan flight patterns, including journeys made in the past 48 hours by Gaddafi's private jet which flew to Jordan and back to Libya just before the weekend.

Officially, Nato will only describe the presence of American Awacs planes as part of its post-9/11 Operation Active Endeavour, which has broad reach to undertake aerial counter-terrorism measures in the Middle East region.

US Awacs monitor Libya

The data from the Awacs is streamed to all Nato countries under the mission's existing mandate. Now that Gaddafi has been reinstated as a super-terrorist in the West's lexicon, however, the Nato mission can easily be used to search for targets of opportunity in Libya if active military operations are undertaken.

Al Jazeera English television channel last night broadcast recordings made by American aircraft to Maltese air traffic control, requesting information about Libyan flights, especially that of Gaddafi's jet.

An American Awacs aircraft, tail number LX-N90442 could be heard contacting the Malta control tower on Saturday for information about a Libyan Dassault-Falcon 900 jet 5A-DCN on its way from Amman to Mitiga, Gaddafi's own VIP airport.

Nato Awacs 07 is heard to say: "Do you have information on an aircraft with the Squawk 2017 position about 85 miles east of our [sic]?"

Malta air traffic control replies: "Seven, that sounds to be Falcon 900- at flight level 340, with a destination Mitiga, according to flight plan."

But Saudi Arabia is already facing dangers from a co-ordinated day of protest by its own Shia Muslim citizens who, emboldened by the Shia uprising in the neighbouring island of Bahrain, have called for street protests against the ruling family of al-Saud on Friday.

After pouring troops and security police into the province of Qatif last week, the Saudis announced a nationwide ban on all public demonstrations.

Shia organisers claim that up to 20,000 protesters plan to demonstrate with women in the front rows to prevent the Saudi army from opening fire.

If the Saudi government accedes to America's request to send guns and missiles to Libyan rebels, however, it would be almost impossible for President Barack Obama to condemn the kingdom for any violence against the Shias of the north-east provinces.

Thus has the Arab awakening, the demand for democracy in North Africa, the Shia revolt and the rising against Gaddafi become entangled in the space of just a few hours with US military priorities in the region. "[16]

"Libya rebels coordinating with West on air assault," Los Angeles Times, March 24, 2011

"Reports from the region suggest that the Saudis and Egyptians have been providing arms. Though U.S. officials could not confirm that, they say it is plausible."[17]

"Egypt Said to Arm Libya Rebels," Wall Street Journal, March 17, 2011:

"CAIRO-Egypt's military has begun shipping arms over the border to Libyan rebels with Washington's knowledge, U.S. and Libyan rebel officials said.

The shipments-mostly small arms such as assault rifles and ammunition-appear to be the first confirmed case of an outside government arming the rebel fighters. Those fighters have been losing ground for days in the face of a steady westward advance by forces loyal to Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

The Egyptian shipments are the strongest indication to date that some Arab countries are heeding Western calls to take a lead in efforts to intervene on behalf of pro-democracy rebels in their fight against Mr. Gadhafi in Libya. Washington and other Western countries have long voiced frustration with Arab states' unwillingness to help resolve crises in their own region, even as they criticized Western powers for attempting to do so.

The shipments also follow an unusually robust diplomatic response from Arab states. There have been rare public calls for foreign military intervention in an Arab country, including a vote by the 23-member Arab League last week urging the U.N. to impose a no-fly zone over Libya.

The vote provided critical political cover to Western powers wary of intervening militarily without a broad regional and international mandate. On Thursday evening, the U.N. Security Council voted on a resolution endorsing a no-fly zone in Libya and authorizing military action in support of the rebels.

Within the council, Lebanon took a lead role drafting and circulating the draft of the resolution, which calls for "all necessary measures" to enforce a ban on flights over Libya. The United Arab Emirates and Qatar have taken the lead in offering to participate in enforcing a no-fly zone, according to U.N. diplomats.

Libyan rebel officials in Benghazi, meanwhile, have praised Qatar from the first days of the uprising, calling the small Gulf state their staunchest ally. Qatar has consistently pressed behind the scenes for tough and urgent international action behind the scenes, these officials said.

Qatari flags fly prominently in rebel-held Benghazi. After pro-Gadhafi forces retook the town of Ras Lanuf last week, Libyan state TV broadcast images of food-aid packages bearing the Qatari flag.

Anti-Gadhafi fighters in Benghazi

The White House has been reluctant to back calls from leaders in Congress for arming Libya's rebels directly, arguing that the U.S. must first fully assess who the fighters are and what policies they will pursue if they succeeded in toppling Col. Gadhafi. U.S. officials believe the opposition includes some Islamist elements. They fear that Islamist groups hostile to the U.S. could try to hijack the opposition and take any arms that are provided.

The Egyptian weapons transfers began ‘a few days ago' and are ongoing, according to a senior U.S. official. ‘There's no formal U.S. policy or acknowledgement that this is going on,' said the senior official. But ‘this is something we have knowledge of.'

Calls to Egypt's foreign ministry and the spokesman for the prime minister seeking comment went unanswered. There is no means of reaching Egypt's military for comment. An Egyptian official in Washington said he had no knowledge of weapon shipments.

The U.S. official also noted that the shipments appeared to come "too little, too late" to tip the military balance in favor of the rebels, who have faced an onslaught from Libyan forces backed by tanks, artillery and aircraft.

"We know the Egyptian military council is helping us, but they can't be so visible," said Hani Souflakis, a Libyan businessman in Cairo who has been acting as a rebel liaison with the Egyptian government since the uprising began.

"Weapons are getting through," said Mr. Souflakis, who says he has regular contacts with Egyptian officials in Cairo and the rebel leadership in Libya. "Americans have given the green light to the Egyptians to help. The Americans don't want to be involved in a direct level, but the Egyptians wouldn't do it if they didn't get the green light."

Western officials and rebel leaders in Libya said the U.S. has wanted to avoid being seen as taking a leadership role in any military action against Mr. Gadhafi after its invasions of Iraq and Afganistan fueled anger and mistrust with Washington throughout the region.

But the U.S. stated clearly it wants Mr. Gadhafi out of power and has signaled it would support those offering help to the rebels militarily or otherwise.

A spokesman for the rebel government in Benghazi said arms shipments have begun arriving to the rebels but declined to specify where they came from.

"Our military committee is purchasing arms and arming our people. The weapons are coming, but the nature of the weapons, the amount, where it's coming from, that has been classified," said the spokesman, Mustafa al-Gherryani.

The U.S. official said Egypt wanted to keep the shipments covert. In public, Egypt has sought to maintain a neutral stance toward the rebel uprising in Libya. Egypt abstained during the Arab League's vote calling for the U.N. to impose a no-fly zone on Mr. Gadhafi, according to people familiar with the internal Arab League deliberations.

Hundreds of thousands of Egyptian laborers are believed to still be in Libya.

On the other hand, the Egyptian military's covert support for the rebels suggests that it has calculated that Mr. Gadhafi is unlikely to remain in power, at least in the eastern half of the country, and therefore Egypt is eager to begin to build good relations with the rebels.

Rebel forces in the past 24 hours appeared to make some progress fending off pro-Gadhafi forces' assaults and have rolled out new weapons for the first time since the uprising began last month. Among them are rebel tanks that have taken up positions on the front lines in recent days. Rebels also launched fighter-jet attacks on government positions on Wednesday for the first time so far.

The tanks and fighter jets are believed to have been among the weapons seized by rebels from defected units of the Libyan army in the eastern half of the country, but they have received spare parts or trained mechanics from outside the country to help them deploy them, some rebel officials have speculated.
-Sam Dagher and Adam Entous contributed to this article.[18]

Benjamin Gottlieb, "Egypt Arms Libyan Rebels As Gaddafi's Conquest Continues," NeonTommy Annenberg Digital News, March 17, 2011:

Arms shipments from Egypt's military have begun flowing across the border into Libya with U.S. knowledge, Libyan rebels and U.S. officials said Thursday.

Made up mostly of small arms, such as assault rifles and ammunition, the shipments are the first confirmed reports of an outside government supporting rebel fighters with weapons. Rebels have been loosing ground for days against pro-Gaddafi forces aiming to end the conflict before foreign intervention plans are finalized.

Although the U.N. approved a "no-fly zone" over Libya late Thursday, rebel forces fear that any planned foreign intervention would be too little to late.

The shipment of arms indicated an unusually bold response by an Arab nation intervening in a conflict outside its borders. There have also been rare public decrees for the West to intervene in the conflict - the Arab League voted 23-0 last week encouraging the U.N. to impose the "no-fly zone" over Libya.

No-Fly Zone

In spite of reports of arms flowing across the Egyptian boarder, Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Menha Bakhoum told Reuters that Egypt would not be involved in any military intervention in neighboring Libya.

"Egypt will not be among those Arab states. We will not be involved in any military intervention. No intervention period," Bakhoum said.

Bakhoum was responding to comments by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who said Thursday that discussions were on the table regarding Arab involvement in U.S. and European intervention in the conflict.

Clinton has said repeatedly that the U.S. desires involvement from a neighboring Arab nation in any planned intervention.

A Libyan rebel government spokesman in Benghazi, Mustafa al-Gherryani, said rebels have begun receiving arms shipments from neighboring nations, however he declined to reveal their origin.

"Our military committee is purchasing arms and arming our people. The weapons are coming, but the nature of the weapons, the amount, where it's coming from, that has been classified," he said.[19]

Yoichi Shimatsu, "Mideast Revolutions and 9-11 Intrigues Created in Qatar," New America Media, March 1, 2011

"It may puzzle and perhaps dismay young protesters in Benghazi, Cairo and Tunisia that their democratic hopes are being manipulated by an ultra-conservative Arab elite which has underhandedly backed a surge of militant Islamist radicals across North Africa. Credible U.S. intelligence reports have cited evidence pointing to Qatar's long-running support for the Muslim Brotherhood, Al Qaeda and jihadist fighters returning from Afghanistan.

The links to Qatar uncovered by anti-terrorism investigators in the wake of 9-11 need to be reexamined now that the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), an on-and-off affiliate of Al Qaeda, has seized armories across half of the North African country. Libya's well-stocked arsenals contain high-power explosives, rocket launchers and chemical weapons. LIFG is on the State Department's terrorist list.

Most worrying, according to a U.S. intelligence official cited by CNN, is the probable loss of chemical weapons. The Federation of American Scientists reports that, as of 2008, only 40 percent of Libya's mustard gas was destroyed in the second round of decommissioning. Chemical canisters along the Egyptian border were yet to be retrieved and are now presumably in the hands of armed militants.

After initially letting slip that the earliest Libyan protests were organized by the LIFG, Al Jazeera quickly changed its line to present a heavily filtered account portraying the events as 'peaceful protests'. To explain away the gunshot deaths of Libyan soldiers during the uprising, the Qatar-based network presented a bizarre scenario of 150 dead soldiers in Libya having been executed by their officers for 'refusing to fight'. The mysterious officers then miraculously vacated their base disappearing into thin air while surrounded by angry protesters! Off the record, one American intelligence analyst called these media claims an 'absurdity' and suggested instead the obvious: that the soldiers were gunned down in an armed assault by war-hardened returned militants from Iraq and Afghanistan....
According to a Congressional Research Service report of January 2008, 'Some observers have raised questions about possible support for Al Qaeda by some Qatari citizens, including members of Qatar's large ruling family. According to the 9/11 Commission Report, Qatar's Interior Minister provided a safe haven to 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed during the mid-1990s, and press reports indicate other terrorists may have received financial support or safe haven in Qatar after September 11, 2001.'

The national security chief, Interior Minister Abdullah bin Khalid al-Thani, is further mentioned as paying for a 1995 trip by Khalid Shaikh Mohammed 'to join the Bosnia jihad.' The report recalls how after the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, FBI officials "narrowly missed an opportunity to capture" the suspect in Qatar. 'Former U.S. officials have since stated their belief that a high-ranking member of the Qatari government alerted him to the impending raid, allowing him to flee the country.'"[20]

III. Postscript: U.S. Intelligence, March 26, 2011

***Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 2011**:

> "Reporting from Washington-
>
> Despite fears that Islamic extremists may be playing a hidden role in the rebellion against Moammar Kadafi, **the U.S. intelligence community has found no organized presence of Al Qaeda or its allies among the Libyan opposition,** American officials say.
>
> A U.S. intelligence-gathering effort that began shortly after anti-Kadafi forces started seizing towns in eastern Libya last month has not uncovered a significant presence of Islamic militants among the insurgents.
>
> 'We're keeping an eye out for extremist activity in Libya, but we haven't seen much, if any, to date,' said a U.S. counter-terrorism official. A Defense official added that the U.S. had not seen a direct link between the opposition and extremists." [21]

***New York Times*, March 7, 2011:**

> "DARNAH, Libya-
>
> This fiercely independent port city on the Mediterranean coast, once the center of a simmering Islamist insurgency in the 1990s, is now branded by Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi as an Islamic emirate infiltrating his embattled country....
>
> But Darnah offers a more complex reality: a mélange where secular currents are intersecting with religious ones, drawn together by nationalist opposition to Colonel Qaddafi's four decades of often bizarre rule. This old Barbary port, with a reputation as one of Libya's most pious cities and, in the words of a WikiLeaks cable, a "wellspring for foreign fighters in Iraq," suggests a more nuanced picture of what role militant Islam may play in a city and country fumbling to forge a body politic in a land without one....

Here, leaders of tribes like the Obeidat, Zliten, Tajjoura and Misratah already exercise authority, along with judges and a three-member council: Mr. Abu Rashed, a judge and a former diplomat, all secular figures.

Other than them, only the Muslim Brotherhood and more militant strands thought to number in the hundreds show signs of organization, many having forged bonds in prison or fighting the government in the 1990s. **One of those men is Abdul-Hakim al-Hasidi, who fought for five years in Afghanistan, ended up in Colonel Qaddafi's jails for four years and now, with hundreds of armed men, runs the defenses of Darnah and its hinterland.**

He helps run much of the city's rump bureaucracy as well, drawing on a formidable talent for logistics recognized by many in the town." [22]

***Daily Telegraph* [London] March 25, 2011:**

"In an interview with the Italian newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*, **Mr al-Hasidi admitted that he had recruited 'around 25' men from the Derna area in eastern Libya to fight against coalition troops in Iraq. Some of them, he said, are 'today are on the front lines in Adjabiya.**

Mr al-Hasidi insisted his fighters 'are patriots and good Muslims, not terrorists,' but added that the 'members of al-Qaeda are also good Muslims and are fighting against the invader'.

His revelations came even as Idriss Deby Itno, Chad's president, said al-Qaeda had managed to pillage military arsenals in the Libyan rebel zone and acquired arms, 'including surface-to-air missiles, which were then smuggled into their sanctuaries'.

Mr al-Hasidi admitted he had earlier fought against 'the foreign invasion' in Afghanistan, before being 'captured in 2002 in Peshwar, in Pakistan'. He was later handed over to the US, and then held in Libya before being released in 2008.

US and British government sources said Mr. al-Hasidi was a member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, or LIFG, which killed dozens of Libyan troops in guerrilla attacks around Derna and Benghazi in 1995 and 1996." [23]

Wikileaks Cable extract "Die Hard in Derna," June 2, 2008:

"Rejecting the idea that Derna was uniformly extremist, xxxxxxxxxxxx and his business partner described the town as being divided between religiously conservative and secular residents. A "large number" of Derna's citizens were not happy about the increasingly conservative religious atmosphere that had prevailed since the 1980's, he claimed. Elaborating, [XXXXXXX] attributed adherence to more extreme iterations of Islam to "unnatural foreign influences" on religious practices in Derna. A number of Libyans who had fought and in some cases undergone "religious and ideological training" in Afghanistan, Lebanon and the West Bank in the late 1970's and early 1980's had returned to eastern Libya, including Derna, in the mid to late 1980's. Claiming their return was "not coincidental", he described a deliberate, coordinated campaign to propagate more conservative iterations of Islam, in part to prepare the ground for the eventual overthrow by the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) of Muammar Qadhafi's regime, which is "hated" by conservative Islamists. (Note: After taking pains to curry favor with the 'ulema' in Libya in the years immediately after the 1969 revolution, Qadhafi broke with them in the late 1970's, criticizing aspects of Islam as "un-revolutionary". Although he renewed efforts to cultivate Muslim leaders in the 1990's, deep suspicions remain....).... Most young men watched a mix of al-Jazeera news, religious sermons and western action films on English language satellite channels broadcast from the Gulf. The result was a heady mixture of violence, religious conservatism and hatred of U.S. policy in Iraq and Palestine. The consensus view in Derna is that the U.S. blindly supports Israel and has invaded Iraq to secure oil reserves and position itself to attack Iran, he said. He dismissed P/E Chief's attempts to clarify U.S. policy, stressing that most people base their judgments on information they receive from satellite television and at the mosque. PRIDE IN DERNA'S HISTORY AS A TOWN OF FIGHTERS 11. (C) xxxxxxxxxxxx attributed the flow of foreign fighters from Derna in part to local pride in the town's reputation as a historical locus of resistance to occupation. While many of the town's citizens were uncomfortable with the town's increasingly conservative Islamist bent, the fact that young men from Derna traveled to Iraq in disproportionate numbers to fight against coalition forces was viewed through a different lens. Not everyone liked the "bearded ones" (a reference to conservative imams) or their message, xxxxxxxxxxxx said, but the duty of a Muslim in general - and of a son of Derna in particular - was to resist occupation of Muslim lands through jihad. "It's jihad - it's our duty, and you're talking about people who don't have much else to be proud of." Derna's residents might take issue with attempts to ban smoking or restrict social activities, but there was consensus on "basic issues" like jihad. Depictions on al-Jazeera of events in Iraq and Palestine fueled the widely-held view in Derna that resistance to coalition forces was "correct and necessary".[24]

Webster Tarpley, citing West Point Study, March 24, 2011:

[West Point Study]:
"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." [25]

Peter Dale Scott, a former Canadian diplomat and English Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, is the author of Drugs Oil and War, The Road to 9/11, The War Conspiracy: JFK, 9/11, and the Deep Politics of War. *His most recent book is* American War Machine: Deep Politics, the CIA Global Drug Connection and the Road to Afghanistan.
His website, which contains a wealth of his writings, is here.

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Notes

[1] "Defense Secretary Gates, who recently warned against any further protracted US ground war, said on March 23 that the end of military action in Libya is unknown and could last longer than a few weeks. 'I think there are any number of possible outcomes here and no one is in a position to predict them,' Gates

told reporters in Egypt" (C-Span, March 24, 2011).

[2] Interested readers may wish to consult my first exploration, "Googling 'Revolution' in North Africa."

[3] Dan Lieberman, "Muammar Al Gaddafi Meets His Own Rebels," CounterCurrents.org, March 9, 2011.

[4] Joel Bainerman, *Inside the Covert Operations of the CIA & Israel's Mossad* (New York: S.P.I. Books, 1994), 14.

[5] Richard Keeble, "The Secret War Against Libya," MediaLens, 2002.

[6] "Petroleum and Empire in North Africa. NATO Invasion of Libya Underway," By Keith Harmon Snow, 2 March 2011.

[7] Ghali Hassan, "U.S. Love Affair with Murderous Dictators and Hate for Democracy." Axis of Logic, Mar 17, 2011.

[8] Center for Defense Information, "In the Spotlight: The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)," January 18, 2005

[9] Qadhafi was concerned about Al Qaeda terrorism in Libya, and in 1996 Libya became the first government to place Osama bin Laden on Interpol's Wanted List (Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* [New York: Columbia UP, 2002], 142). Thereafter American and Libyan intelligence collaborated closely for some years against Al Qaeda. Beginning when?

[10] Ian Black, "Libya rebels rejects Gaddafi's al-Qaida spin," *Guardian*, March 1, 2011.

[11] Gary Gambill, "The Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), Jamestown Foundation," *Terrorism Monitor*, May 5, 2005,; citing *Al-Hayat* (London), 20 October 1995 ["communiqué"]; "The Shayler affair: The spooks, the Colonel and the jailed whistle-blower," *The Observer* (London), 9 August 1998; Jean-Charles Brisard and Guillaume Dasquié, *Ben Laden: La Verite interdite* (*Bin Ladin: The Forbidden Truth*). Cf. also Annie Machon, *Spies, Lies and Whistleblowers: MI5, MI6 And the Shayler Affair* (Book Guild Publishing, 2005) [Shayler].

[12] Yoichi Shimatsu, "Attack on Libya: Why Odyssey Dawn Is Doomed," New America Media, March 20, 2011.

[13] "US reaches out to Libyan insurgents," *The Australian*, March 1, 2011,

[14] "How a onetime friend to Gadhafi became his rival," *Globe and Mail* [Toronto], March 4, 2011.

[15] Libyan Rebel Council in Benghazi Forms Oil Company to Replace Qaddafi's," Bloomberg, March 22, 2011.

[16] Robert Fisk, "America's secret plan to arm Libya's rebels," *Independent*, March 7, 2011.

[17] "Libya rebels coordinating with West on air assault," *Los Angeles Times*, March 24, 2011.

[18] "Egypt Said to Arm Libya Rebels," *Wall Street Journal*, March 17, 2011,

[19] Benjamin Gottlieb, "Egypt Arms Libyan Rebels As Gaddafi's Conquest Continues," NeonTommy Annenberg Digital News, March 17, 2011.

[20] Yoichi Shimatsu, "Mideast Revolutions and 9-11 Intrigues Created in Qatar," New America Media, March 1, 2011. The al-Thani family's protection of Khalid Shaikh Mohammed is confirmed by former CIA officer Robert Baer (*Los Angeles Times*, March 23, 2003). Cf. Robert Baer, *Sleeping with the Devil* (New York: Crown, 2003); Peter Lance, *Triple Cross* (New York: Regan/HarperCollins, 2006), 234-37.

[21] Ken Dilanian, "U.S. finds no organized Al Qaeda presence in Libya opposition, officials say," Los Angeles Times, March 24, 2011

[22] Anthony Shadid, "Diverse Character in City Qaddafi Calls Islamist," New York Times, March 7, 2011.

[23] "Libyan rebel commander admits his fighters have al-Qaeda links," Daily Telegraph [London], March 25, 2011.

[24] Wikileaks cable, "Die Hard in Derna," June 2, 2008, 08TRIPOLI 430, CONF/NOFORN. (Cached copy available here)

[25] Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, "Al Qa'ida's Foreign Fighter in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records," (West Point, NY: Harmony Project, Combating Terrorism Center, Department of Social Sciences, US Military Academy, December 2007), 9, quoted in Webster Tarpley, "The CIA's Libya Rebels: The Same Terrorists who Killed US, NATO Troops in Iraq," Tarpley.net, March 24, 2011.