

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE*Form Approved*
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Washington Headquarters Service, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC 20503.

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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 3-23-2012	2. REPORT TYPE Master of Military Studies Research Paper	3. DATES COVERED (From - To) September 2011 - April 2012
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Libyan Former Foreign Fighters and Their Effects on the Libyan Revolution	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER N/A	
	5b. GRANT NUMBER N/A	
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER N/A	
6. AUTHOR(S) Shaw, Dallas E., Maj, USMC	5d. PROJECT NUMBER N/A	
	5e. TASK NUMBER N/A	
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER N/A	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street Quantico, VA 22134-5068	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER N/A	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) N/A	
	11. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER N/A	
12. DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Unlimited		
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES N/A		
14. ABSTRACT Libyan former foreign fighters, veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan against the former USSR, the US and its coalition partners, were instrumental in the success of the Libyan Revolution (1991-2011). While Libyan foreign fighters had dubious impacts on the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, these former foreign fighters have had a decisive effect on the Libyan revolt through all three phases from 1991-2011. In Phase I, "Covert Organization," Libyan former foreign fighter combat experience gained against the former Soviet Union allowed them to clandestinely develop a resistance force, recruit from the local populace, and prepare for overt guerilla warfare. In Phase II, "Overt Guerilla Warfare," Libyan former foreign fighters employed their tactical experience gained on foreign battlefields as well as the international connections with the western nations and Al Qaeda to conduct a guerilla war against the Qaddafi regime while supporting jihadist efforts against the US in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Phase III, "General Uprising," Libyan former foreign fighters provided the tactical, operational and strategic acumen, planning, and command and control that allowed them to lead the Libyan masses in their combined defeat the Qaddafi regime. These same former foreign fighters will continue to play a pivotal role in the post-Qaddafi era through their political posturing, occupation of key governmental billets, access to substantial financing and their influence throughout the Middle East.		
15. SUBJECT TERMS Foreign Fighters; Libyan Revolution; Eastern Libya's Support for Islamist and Jihadist Movements; Bleedout Effect of Foreign Fighters from US and USSR wars; Libyan Islamic Fighting Group; Libyan support for Syrian Fighters; Iraq; Afghanistan; US Global War on Terror; The "Corrective Studies"; Extraordinary Rendition; Sanussi Islam; National Transitional Council; Derna, Benghazi; Darna; Attiya Allah; Libyan Revolution ; Qaddafi; Gaddafi; Tripoli Military Council;		

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING SF 298

Abdul Hakim Al Belhaj; Glocal organizations; Arab Spring; Sinjar Papers; CJSOTF 120;

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 52	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Marine Corps University / Command and Staff College
a. REPORT Unclass	b. ABSTRACT Unclass	c. THIS PAGE Unclass	19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include area code) (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)		

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING SF 298

1. REPORT DATE. Full publication date, including day, month, if available. Must cite at least the year and be Year 2000 compliant, e.g., 30-06-1998; xx-08-1998; xx-xx-1998.

2. REPORT TYPE. State the type of report, such as final, technical, interim, memorandum, master's thesis, progress, quarterly, research, special, group study, etc.

3. DATES COVERED. Indicate the time during which the work was performed and the report was written, e.g., Jun 1997 - Jun 1998; 1-10 Jun 1996; May - Nov 1998; Nov 1998.

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5b. GRANT NUMBER. Enter all grant numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 1F665702D1257.

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER. Enter all program element numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. AFOSR-82-1234.

5d. PROJECT NUMBER. Enter all project numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 1F665702D1257; ILIR.

5e. TASK NUMBER. Enter all task numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 05; RF0330201; T4112.

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER. Enter all work unit numbers as they appear in the report, e.g. 001; AFAPL30480105.

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7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES). Self-explanatory.

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER. Enter all unique alphanumeric report numbers assigned by the performing organization, e.g. BRL-1234; AFWL-TR-85-4017-Vol-21-PT-2.

9. SPONSORING/MONITORS AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES). Enter the name and address of the organization(s) financially responsible for and monitoring the work.

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13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES. Enter information not included elsewhere such as: prepared in cooperation with; translation of; report supersedes; old edition number, etc.

14. ABSTRACT. A brief (approximately 200 words) factual summary of the most significant information.

15. SUBJECT TERMS. Key words or phrases identifying major concepts in the report.

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION. Enter security classification in accordance with security classification regulations, e.g. U, C, S, etc. If this form contains classified information, stamp classification level on the top and bottom of this page.

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United States Marine Corps
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2076 South Street
Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE: LIBYAN FORMER FOREIGN FIGHTERS AND THEIR EFFECTS
ON THE LIBYAN REVOLUTION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Date: 9 April 2012

Executive Summary

Title: Libyan Former Foreign Fighters and Their Effects On The Libyan Revolution

Author: Major Dallas Shaw, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: Libyan former foreign fighters, veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan against the former USSR, the US and its coalition partners, were instrumental in the success of the Libyan Revolution (1991-2011).

Discussion: While Libyan foreign fighters had dubious impacts on the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, these former foreign fighters have had a decisive effect on the Libyan revolt through all three phases from 1991-2011. In Phase I, “Covert Organization,” Libyan former foreign fighter combat experience gained against the former Soviet Union allowed them to clandestinely develop a resistance force, recruit from the local populace, and prepare for overt guerilla warfare. In Phase II, “Overt Guerilla Warfare,” Libyan former foreign fighters employed their tactical experience gained on foreign battlefields as well as the international connections with the western nations and Al Qaeda to conduct a guerilla war against the Qaddafi regime while supporting jihadist efforts against the US in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Phase III, “General Uprising,” Libyan former foreign fighters provided the tactical, operational and strategic acumen, planning, and command and control that allowed them to lead the Libyan masses in their combined defeat the Qaddafi regime. These same former foreign fighters will continue to play a pivotal role in the post-Qaddafi era through their political posturing, occupation of key governmental billets, access to substantial financing and their influence throughout the Middle East.

Conclusion: While Libyan foreign fighters have had dubious impacts on the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, these same Libyans had a decisive effect on the Libyan revolt from 1991-2011.

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Preface

In April 7-10, 2003, when I was serving with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines (B 1/4), we had seen 2 to 3 days of the heaviest fighting in the war up to that point. During the fighting locals turned over to us a Tunisian sniper who had shot two of our Marines the day before. The next day B 1/4 captured a Syrian who had been conducting a reconnaissance of our position for an attack and who was also turned over to us by local Iraqis. B 1/4 turned the Tunisian and the Syrian over to higher and that was a last that we heard of them.

Years later, after another deployment to Iraq and one to Afghanistan, I was captivated by the events that unfolded during the Arab Spring. As I watched these events unfold, I could not help wondering what had happened to the Tunisian and the Syrian that we captured as well as the numerous foreign fighters from all over the world that had deployed to and fought against us in Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, when I listened to a book review about *Counterstrike: The Untold Story of the US's Secret Fight Against Al Qaeda*, it spoke at length about General Dell Dailey's (ret) travels around the Middle East based on the information gleaned from the capture of what came to be known as the "Sinjar Papers." These papers were captured by CJS0TF121 in November 2007 and articulated the administrative records of all of the foreign fighters entering Iraq to fight for Al Qaeda in Iraq from 2006-2007. General Dailey deployed with these figures to confront the countries who were supplying the largest portions of the foreign fighters in Iraq and to warn them that these same men would later plague their own regimes when the war in Iraq ended.

In light of this, I began to wonder what became of the foreign fighters B 1/4 had captured. They almost certainly were too low a level of fighters to still be Iraqi custody. They were too low level of a fighter to be in US custody in Guantánamo Bay Cuba. So I wondered if these men had been repatriated to their home countries and, if they had, what impact did these men play on the Arab Spring in their own countries.

I wrote this thesis from a perspective of a Marine potentially deploying back to the Middle East or back to the Mediterranean area than operations. This thesis focuses on what I would want to know and understand about the foreign fighter situation not only in Libya but in all the countries that supplied foreign fighters to the Iraqi and Afghan insurgencies.

By way of acknowledgment, I want to thank first and foremost my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, without whom I am lost. Next, I want to thank Dr. Pauletta Otis my thesis mentor for her patience and guidance. I want to thank Dr Norman Cigar, Special Agent Paul Gomez of the FBI and Major Scott Cuomo for their insight and advice. I want to thank my wife Jeanette for her love, her support, her wisdom, her insight, her understanding, her encouragement and her strength in supporting me in writing this and in my everyday life. Lastly, I want to thank my sons-Hithem and Sami for their love and patience with the long hours that this took.

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FORMER FOREIGN FIGHTERS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE LIBYAN REVOLUTION

Introduction

Libyan former foreign fighters, veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan against the former USSR, the US and its coalition partners, were instrumental in the success of the Libyan Revolution (1991-2011). While Libyan foreign fighters had dubious impacts on the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, these former foreign fighters have had a decisive effect on the Libyan revolt through all three phases from 1991-2011. In Phase I, “Covert Organization,” Libyan former foreign fighter combat experience gained against the former Soviet Union allowed them to clandestinely develop a resistance force, recruit from the local populace, and prepare for overt guerilla warfare. In Phase II, “Overt Guerilla Warfare,” Libyan former foreign fighters employed their tactical experience gained on foreign battlefields as well as the international connections with the western nations and Al Qaeda to conduct a guerilla war against the Qaddafi regime while supporting jihadist efforts against the US in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Phase III, “General Uprising,” Libyan former foreign fighters provided the tactical, operational and strategic acumen, planning, and command and control that allowed them to lead the Libyan masses in their combined defeat the Qaddafi regime. These same former foreign fighters will continue to play a pivotal role in the post-Qaddafi era through their political posturing, occupation of key governmental billets, access to substantial financing and their influence throughout the Middle East.

Method of Analysis

This paper will analyze the impact of Libyan former foreign fighters on the Libyan Revolution.⁽¹⁾ The paper first considers the foreign fighter phenomenon and identifies where these fighters have had the greatest impact. Next, it examines eastern Libya as a provenance for

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opposition, resistance and the origin for the majority of Libyan foreign fighters. The paper then analyzes the manner and effectiveness of Libyan former foreign fighters' ability to covertly organize to overthrow the Qaddafi regime in Phase I as well as the effects of their experiences in fighting the USSR in Afghanistan. After this, the paper examines ; Phase II-1995-2010, in which Libyan former foreign fighters conducted overt guerilla war against the Qaddafi regime; and Phase III-2011, in which Libyan former foreign fighters led the general uprising that toppled the Qaddafi regime. Lastly, this paper examines how Libyan former foreign fighters have been able to exploit the effects of the Libyan Revolution in post-Qaddafi Libya and the potential impacts of former foreign fighters on other countries affected by the Arab Spring.

Modern Historical Context for Foreign Fighters

Foreign fighters and mercenaries have fought alongside regular armies throughout history. However, the source for the modern context of the term "foreign fighter" is the Soviet-Afghan War, which is the benchmark against which all other efforts to internationalize and attract foreign volunteers, is measured against.⁽²⁾ This foreign fighter mobilization came as a result of the Soviet 40th Army's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 where Muslims deployed and fought a *faridat al-jihad* (an obligatory defensive jihad) to recapture Islamic lands from Soviet infidels.⁽³⁾

The groundwork for the Islamist movement in Afghanistan began in the 1960's and 1970's as key, future mujahidin leaders like Burhanuddin Rabbani, 'Abdu'l-Rabb Rasul Sayyaf and Sibghatullah Mujaddidi built relationships with *al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn* (the Muslim Brotherhood), Arab Muslim scholars, and leaders at Egypt's al-Azhar University. When the Soviet-Afghan War broke out, these leaders were able to rely on the networks developed during

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their studies at al-Azhar University. It took several years to mobilize worldwide Muslim support and, in fact, the peak of Arab participation did not take place until after the Soviets had withdrawn in February 1989. By the end of the war, according to Vahid Brown, a Harmony Fellow and FBI Instructor at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, anywhere from 25,000 to 40,000 Arabs had fought in Afghanistan with 3,000 to 4,000 of the ground at any given time according to Pakistani intelligence.⁽⁴⁾

When journalist Jamal Khashoggi was invited by Osama Bin Laden to visit the Jaji, Afghanistan camp complex in 1987, he noted that largest contingents of foreign fighters were from seven principal countries: Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Algeria, Libya, and Morocco.⁽⁵⁾ In comparison, captured Al Qaeda documents, the Sinjar Papers (2007), identified that these same seven countries also provided the largest contingents of foreign fighters to the Iraqi insurgency.⁽⁶⁾ Still, in spite of Arab contributions of manpower, financial support and technical skills to the Soviet-Afghan War, the principal impact of foreign, Arab fighters was not experienced in Afghanistan; rather, the most potent impact was realized in later battles upon repatriation to their home countries-on secondary battlefields.

Foreign Fighter Phenomenon Life Cycle and Impacts on ‘First’ and ‘Second’ Battlefields

According to Stephanie Kaplan, a Ph.D. candidate in MIT’s Political Science department and a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the life cycle of the modern foreign fighter phenomenon is comprised of “the pre-war phase, the war phase, and the post-war phase...” Kaplan asserts that a foreign fighter has his or her most decisive impact on their second battlefield, or in their “post-war phase.”⁽⁷⁾ Also, during a conference in April 2011 on the problem of recent foreign fighter trends, Terrance Ford, Director of Intelligence and Knowledge Development for U.S. Africa Command, noted that, “(G)lobalization has changed

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how foreign fighter networks operate throughout the world enabling these networks to be far more efficient, lethal, and clandestine. ‘Motivated by ideology, religion, oppression and social injustice, these fighters take up arms to further what they consider a noble cause and bring a fervor to the battlefield that is lacking in mercenaries and combatants.’”(8)

Foreign fighters provide a unique degree of combat power, “enablers,” material, money, leadership, experience and technical skill training.⁽⁹⁾ These “enablers” improve the existing capacity of the resistance. These former foreign fighters support the resistance movement which does the bulk of the fighting in the same way a US special forces A-Team supports local resistance forces when conducting unconventional warfare. The key difference is that these former foreign fighters are more effective because they are operating among and inspiring their own people. Therefore in the “war phase” of the foreign fighter life cycle, the fighter’s impact on the first battlefield may be negligible.⁽¹⁰⁾ However, with the experience gained on this first battlefield and the networks developed there, the impact on the foreign fighters’ second battlefield, in their home countries, may be exponential as can be seen today in the wake of the Libyan Revolution.⁽¹¹⁾ Unique to Libyan former foreign fighters however, is their intrinsic connection to Cyrenaica, or eastern Libya, as the home to both a disproportionate number of global jihadists and the Libyan Revolution.

“Cyrenaica-Locus of Opposition”⁽¹²⁾

Clinton Watts, a Managing Director for Innovative Analytics and Training (IAT) has analyzed the foreign fighter phenomenon as a global dynamic and claims, “that while the places change, the process stays the same...most of the foreign fighter recruits come from maybe two dozen towns around the globe and because these towns are known for terrorist recruitment, anti-

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radicalization and anti-recruitment tactics should be focused there.”⁽¹³⁾ On September 11, 2007, Combined Joint Special Operations Team 121 (CJSOTF 121) conducted a raid in northern Iraq near the Syrian town of Sinjar. The documents recovered from this raid identified the nationalities, hometowns and other elements of personally identifiable information of Islamic foreign fighters in Iraq and exposed the significant contribution Libya made to Al Qaeda in Iraq and Al Qaeda’s fight against the US and its coalition partners.⁽¹⁴⁾ According to these documents, the “Sinjar Papers,” Libya was the largest per capita supplier of foreign fighters to the Iraqi insurgency in the world. Libya alone accounted for nearly twenty percent of all Muslim foreign fighters in Iraq. Additionally, there was a better than one in ten chance that any Muslim foreign fighter in Iraq in 2006-2007 was specifically from one of two eastern Libyan cities: Derna or Benghazi.⁽¹⁵⁾

Among the three major cultural and geographic regions of Libya, Tripolitania, Phasania (Arabized-Fezzan) and Cyrenaica, Cyrenaica is home to both Derna and Benghazi and is unique among these regions due to its geography, religious conservatism, and its unified devotion to independence and resisting occupation (at home and abroad). Eastern Libya is separated from the western portion of the country (Tripolitania) by a 300-mile wide portion of the Sahara Desert called the Sirtica which also provides significant isolated and difficult terrain.⁽¹⁶⁾ This physical separation has encouraged Cyrenaica’s spirit of independence and facilitated the anti-Qaddafi forces’ ability to organize, train, recruit and to operate outside of the direct influence from the regime. Further isolating Cyrenaica spiritually, was its unique and strict adherence to the Sanussi religious order in Islam with its comprehensive religious and political system.

These factors of geographic and religious isolation were instrumental in enabling Cyrenaica to exploit the general uprising in 2011, and to develop the National Transition Council

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(NTC) to govern rebel held areas almost overnight. According to Lucas Winter, a Middle East analyst for the Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, “Cyrenaica’s unity in rebellion against the Italians provides a (historical) precedent to its uprising against Qaddafi in 2011.”⁽¹⁷⁾ Mr. Winter also suggested that the region’s ability to maintain a semblance of unified rule without comprising the independence of its constituent parts goes some way toward explaining the Libyan Transitional Council’s ability to fill the vacuum after Qaddafi’s regional strongmen either switched sides, fled, or were killed.⁽¹⁸⁾

Cyrenaica in general, and Benghazi and Derna specifically, have been extraordinary in their support for independence, support for global jihad, and unified resistance to occupation. Audra K. Grant, a political scientist at the Rand Corporation, pointed to an alarming number of North African fighters that were returning from Afghanistan who had originated from eastern Libya and two cities specifically-Derna and Benghazi.⁽¹⁹⁾ Eastern Libya was also home to Umar al-Mukhtar, Libya’s most famous historical military figure who fought the Italians in the 1930’s. These cities (Derna and Benghazi), “are revered among local residents for their historic resistance and rebellion, being former sites of Islamic rebellion.”⁽²⁰⁾ The Libyan general uprising began in Benghazi, the first city captured by the rebels was Benghazi, and Benghazi was also the location for the establishment of the National Transition Council (NTC) days after the revolt began. This was not an accident.

Phases of the Libyan Revolution

The Libyan Revolution began two decades before the general uprising that took place in 2011 and can be divided into three phases: Phase I-“Covert Organization,” Phase II-“Overt Guerilla Warfare,” and Phase III-“General Uprising.”⁽²¹⁾ Phase I, “Covert Organization”, took

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place from 1991-1995. Phase I consisted of the clandestine organization of opposition to the Qaddafi regime by Libyan former foreign fighters. Phase II, “Overt Guerilla Warfare,” took place from 1995-2010 and consisted of overt assassination attempts against Qaddafi, terrorist attacks inside Libya, battles with security forces and effective suppression of the LIFG by Qaddafi’s regime. Phase III, “General Uprising,” began in February 2011 in the conservative, Sanussi Muslim dominated region that had been the perennial enemy of the regime and culminated with the death of Muammar Qaddafi in October 2011 by Libyan former foreign fighters combined with the masses of Libyan civilians involved in the uprising.

Libyan Former Foreign Fighters in Phase I, Covert Organization, 1991-1995

Phase I-Overview

Phase I, or “Covert Organization” of the Libyan Revolution consisted of Libyan foreign fighters returning home after the Soviet-Afghan War, the formation of the LIFG and the continuance of relationships between Al Qaeda and Libyan former foreign fighters. Phase I began in 1991 with the repatriation of Libyan former foreign fighters from the Afghan-Soviet War. Many of these Libyan former foreign fighters deployed from and returned to eastern Libya, or Cyrenaica, an area renowned for its spirit of independence and resistance as well as its support for global jihadist movements.⁽²²⁾ From Cyrenaica, Libyan former foreign fighters formed the LIFG and maintained relationships with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Sudan. Phase I ended in 1995 when opposition forces were discovered by Libyan security forces and began overt guerilla attacks on regime targets.

Formation of the LIFG by Libyan Foreign Fighters

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Vahid Brown, examined the “bleed-out effect” of foreign fighters and foreign trained fighters from the Soviet-Afghan War and the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and noted that, “The bulk of those associated with Islamic extremism in Libya are former members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), a movement that was established in the camps of Afghanistan in 1990 and sought to overthrow the ‘Paraoh Qadhafi.’”⁽²³⁾ These veterans, who had been trained during their deployments to Afghanistan, returned to Libya and believed that they had the experience and opportunity to depose what they saw as another apostate, secular regime.⁽²⁴⁾ As many as (500) Libyans are estimated to have served in Afghanistan during the Soviet war from 1984 until the Soviet withdrawal in February 1989.⁽²⁵⁾ With the conclusion of the Soviet-Afghan War, some of the Libyan veterans joined Al Qaeda, some emigrated to Great Britain and some returned to Libya and formed the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG).⁽²⁶⁾

While the former foreign fighters who constituted the LIFG had limited impact on their initial battlefields in Afghanistan, they did, however, have a persistent and painful impact on the Qaddafi regime. These Libyan “Afghan-Arabs” were the backbone of the resistance to the Qaddafi regime in Phase I. These initial fighters formed the leadership core, the recruiting apparatus and the training cadres of the anti-Qaddafi resistance. Later, these same core members also recruited fighters in Phase II to fight against the US in Iraq and Afghanistan. Though secretly formed in 1991, it was not until 1993 that the LIFG began its clandestine efforts in earnest to topple the Qaddafi regime that culminated in a rebellion by Libyan army units in 1995. In 1995 the LIFG was exposed by the Qaddafi regime and began to be specifically targeted.⁽²⁷⁾

LIFG and Al Qaeda Connections: A “Glocal” Operation⁽²⁸⁾

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From the start, Osama Bin Laden's organization has had many Libyans in it like Abu al-Laith al-Libi, one of Al-Qaeda's military chiefs who was killed in Afghanistan in 2008.⁽²⁹⁾ Many experts dispute Al Qaeda's and the LIFG's collaboration in the Libyan Revolution due to the former's global focus and the latter's local focus. Still, others like Dr. Jean-Luc Marret, a professor at the Johns Hopkins University, School for Advanced International Studies and a Senior Fellow at the Center for Transatlantic Relations sees the potential for organizations to form "glocal" (global/local) operations and take advantage of one organization's global capacity (such as finance and global infrastructure) and the other organization's understanding of the local culture and geography. Dr. Marret notes that, "The current literature on terrorist groups has neglected to analyze this phenomenon of the coexistence of internationalization and local roots.... The link between local and global is not always clear-cut. A member of a clandestine and illegal group like the GSPC does not always demonstrate clear and obvious alliance to that group. A membership card never concretely demonstrates such an allegiance... They are influenced by specific, and often local, historical, ethnic, and socioeconomic factors."⁽³⁰⁾ In a similar fashion, while scale of the LIFG's and Al Qaeda's goals do not appear to be aligned, there is some evidence that the two organizations have collaborated as a "glocal" operation compensating for each other's weaknesses.

In a much disputed announcement, Ayman Al Zawahiri, Bin Laden's second in command announced in November 2007, that the LIFG had been rolled into the Al Qaeda network.⁽³¹⁾ Some experts cast doubts on the veracity of this claim and contend that the LIFG always had a specifically nationalist agenda that did not align with Al Qaeda's global agenda. Moreover, some current and former LIFG members also deny the connection. Still, there is

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evidence of a connection between the groups, to some lesser or greater degree, that assisted the LIFG in previous decades and which will become more important in the years to come. This connection may be indicative of Dr. Marret's concept of a "Glocal" organization.

The Libyan connections to Al Qaeda can be traced back to 1984 when Arab foreign fighters began to become a more obvious presence in the Soviet-Afghan War through Abdullah Azzam's establishment of the Afghan Services Bureau. After Azzam was assassinated in 1989, Osama Bin Laden assumed control and the Afghan Services Bureau morphed into what became known as Al Qaeda. Osama Bin Laden pioneered the use of training camps in Afghanistan after the Soviet War ended in order to train fighters for global missions in camps like Al Masada (the Lion's Den) near Jaji, Afghanistan and others like Khaldan and Darunta.⁽³²⁾ Many of the Libyan jihadists that served in Afghanistan during the 1980's were trained in these camps and many of those that did not return home or emigrate to Great Britain stayed on with Al Qaeda.⁽³³⁾ Later, LIFG fighters set up their own camps in Afghanistan and trained LIFG fighters after the Al Qaeda model. The CIA was very interested in one particular camp prior to September 11, 2001 called Shahid Cheikh Abu Yahya, located about nineteen miles north of Kabul where the LIFG welcomed volunteers who had links with Al Qaeda.⁽³⁴⁾ In addition to similar and shared facilities, LIFG members and other unaffiliated Libyans rose to key billets in the Al Qaeda organization.

Among the number of LIFG operatives to be associated with Al Qaeda, Abu Yahya al Libi, Attiya Allah, and Abdel Hakim Belhaj are among the most prominent. Abu Yahya al Libi escaped from an Afghan prison in 2005, to become one of Al Qaeda's most influential ideologues. Though now deceased, al Libi was a prominent Al Qaeda and LIFG *emir*

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(commander) and he facilitated Al Qaeda's relationship and ultimate alliance with the LIFG in November 2007.⁽³⁵⁾ Attiya Abd al Rahman or Attiya Allah (gift from God) began as an LIFG fighter and then sought out Al Qaeda in Heart, Afghanistan when he was eighteen years old. He later became a leading Al Qaeda spokesman and advisor to Ayman al Zawahiri and Abu Musab al Zarqawi. Attiya Allah's advice to jihaisits concerning *takfir* and *tartara'us* operations have also had an impact on the conduct of the Libyan revolt.⁽³⁶⁾ Lastly, Abdel Hakim Belhaj, the man who acted as the rebel military commander for the assault on Tripoli, and who is now the de facto military governor of the capital, was a founding member of the LIFG, and is believed to also have been close to Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) leader al-Zarqawi.⁽³⁷⁾ While Belhaj has publicly distanced himself from Al-Qaeda, there remains some doubt about the veracity of this claim as he has already been caught in lies on at least two occasions in reference to killing off opponents since Qaddafi's death and due to his violation of his renouncement of violence. Al Qaeda's connection to the LIFG and its revolution in Libya was not limited to personnel but also extended to support for infrastructure and operations.

Osama Bin Laden, while headquartered in Sudan in 1992, worked closely with the Sudanese government to support LIFG cells that had aligned themselves with Al Qaeda. In 1992, these LIFG cells sought to overthrow the Qaddafi regime, but were prevented by Sudan's radical Islamist leader, Hassan Turabi who, at that time, sought a lucrative relationship with Muammar Qaddafi.⁽³⁸⁾ When that relationship no longer appeared lucrative, and after a Libyan army rebellion in 1995, Turabi saw an opportunity to depose a weak leader. President Turabi allowed Al Qaeda to facilitate LIFG attacks against the Qaddafi regime using Sudan as a sanctuary. In addition to facilitating LIFG cross-border operations into Libya, Al Qaeda also provided financial support to the revolution. Al Qaeda reportedly provided up to \$50,000 to the

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families of LIFG fighters who were killed on the battlefield.⁽³⁹⁾ In 1995, when Qaddafi discovered the LIFG he also discovered that the LIFG were being supported financially and logistically by Al Qaeda operating out of Sudan.⁽⁴⁰⁾

As a result of Al Qaeda's alleged support of LIFG attacks in Derna and Benghazi in 1995 and 1996, Qaddafi made the unsubstantiated, but not completely ridiculous claim, that Al Qaeda that was behind the 2011 revolt that ultimately deposed him.⁽⁴¹⁾ Tom Malinowski, director of the Human Rights Watch, in his April 2011 testimony before the US Senate, somewhat corroborated Qaddafi's claim saying, "On the al-Qaeda issue, absolutely, there has been al-Qaeda recruitment in eastern Libya over the years. There is also a domestic group, called the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, which was set up to fight Qaddafi. And there's controversy about whether it had ties to al-Qaeda, whether they were broken or not, which is complicated."⁽⁴²⁾ Malinowski and others like Dr. Winters acknowledge that at least on the individual or small group level, militants in Libya may be open to the Al Qaeda ideology. This was a genuine concern within the Qaddafi regime-that the younger Libyan generation would be attracted to Al Qaeda. According to Dr. Winters, this was the driving impetus to open dialogue with the Libyan youth as evidenced in the youth conventions held by Qaddafi's son Saif al Islam in the final years of Qaddafi's regime.⁽⁴³⁾

Ultimately, the principle records that demonstrate to degree of Libyan participation in Al Qaeda and the Iraqi insurgency are the Sinjar Papers which specifically detail those foreign fighters exclusively working with Al Qaeda in Iraq. This does not prove a connection with the Libyan Revolution, but it clearly demonstrates that, per capita, no other region or state in the world supported Al Qaeda more aggressively. Additionally, whether or not Al Qaeda had any

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direct role in the Libyan Revolution, it is clear that the organization has been crucial to the LIFG's operations since 1992 and has been quick to realize an opportunity when it saw one.

Libyan Former Foreign Fighters in Phase II, Overt Guerilla Warfare, 1995-2010

Phase II-Overview

Phase II, or "Overt Guerilla Warfare," consisted of the LIFG's overt attacks on the Qaddafi regime, the regime's successful diminution of the LIFG's capacity and the effect of the US's Global War on Terror (USGWOT) on the regime and LIFG. This phase began in 1995 with guerilla attacks on the regime in and ended with the advent of the Arab Spring in December 2010 in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia. Phase II of the Libyan Revolution initiated a fifteen year period of overt, though only mildly successful insurgency. Those fifteen years saw significant clashes between the regime and the LIFG and resulted in relegating the LIFG to acting strictly as an opposition force in exile. Still, the overreaction by the Qaddafi regime and the networks established by Libyan former foreign fighters during this same period directly contributed to the conditions that brought about the general uprising in 2011.

1996-1998 Initial Operations and Regime Successes

After the LIFG's clandestine organization in Phase I, the LIFG conducted an overt guerilla war against the Qaddafi regime with some degree of support from Al Qaeda and western sources. Phase II began with violent battles between the LIFG and Qaddafi's security forces in Benghazi in 1995 and in February 1996. In 1995 the LIFG conducted a bold, well planned operation to free detained LIFG members. The LIFG stormed a prison in Benghazi that succeeded in freeing their comrades but also led to weeks of clashes with security forces that left many dead on both sides. In 1996 the LIFG facilitated another prison break and continued to

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battle regime forces for weeks resulting in the deaths of eight regime police officers in Derna, Libya. These 1996 battles led Qaddafi to shut down Libya's eastern border and conduct follow-on security force operations that resulted in severe casualties for both the LIFG and government forces. In 1996, the LIFG escalated the guerilla war and attempted, possibly with British support, to assassinate Colonel Qaddafi himself.

In February 1996, the LIFG attempted an unsuccessful attack against Colonel Muammar Qaddafi and it appears that there is evidence that the historic relationship between Cyrenaica and Great Britain may have been a facilitator in the attempt on Qaddafi's life.⁽⁴⁴⁾ British support for Cyrenaica, as a separate region of Libya dates back to the 1930's and Cyrenaica's revolution against Italian occupation. Great Britain entered into a treaty with Cyrenaica in 1933 in order to quash Italian efforts to exploit the region.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Then in 1998, Gary C. Gambill, a political analyst for Freedom House and adjunct professor at College of Mount Saint Vincent, analyzed an episode reported on by the *London Observer* called, "The Shyler Affair." Mr. Gambill suggested that,

"The involvement of the British government in the LIFG campaign against Qadhafi (*Observer's* spelling) 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-M15 officer David Shayler. 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."⁽⁴⁶⁾

After its failed assassination in February 1996, the LIFG tried once more to kill Qaddafi in a grenade attack and failed again. The LIFG would continue infrequent attacks against the regime until the turn of the millennium with limited success.

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One key success for Libyan foreign fighters during Phase II was the successful recruitment of Libyans to fight against the USGWOT in Iraq and Afghanistan. As previously mentioned, Libya disproportionately supplied foreign fighters to the Iraqi insurgency compared to the other provider nations. Moreover, according to an analysis of the Sinjar Papers edited by Brian Fishman, a Senior Associate at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, “(j)ihadists headed to Iraq were recruited predominately through local networks, rather than through the Internet and foreign fighters who ended up in Iraq appear overwhelmingly to have joined the jihad through local jihadist sympathizers (33.5%) and personal social networks (29%) rather than through detached and impersonal means such as the internet.”⁽⁴⁷⁾ This intense recruitment effort was conducted primarily by Libyan veterans of the Soviet-Afghan War and veterans of LIFG battles with the Qaddafi regime in eastern Libya through these local, personal and social networks.

From 1996-1998, much of the LIFG had been forced into exile and many ended up back in Afghanistan along with Al Qaeda. During this period the Qaddafi regime had continued its intense pressure on the LIFG and forced the LIFG to seek refuge in Afghanistan. By 1996, Osama Bin Laden had been pressured by the US and was forced out of Sudan and back into Afghanistan also. Though the LIFG would continue some operations until 2009, it operated primarily in exile and mostly as an ideological movement without the ability to force its will on the government. More importantly, by 1999 the LIFG still lacked the support of the general population which caused LIFG spokesman Omar Rashid to lament “that the Libyan people had not ‘passed beyond the stage of sentiments to the stage of action,’ and he hinted at a shift in focus, as bin Laden had done, from regime change at home to international jihad.”⁽⁴⁸⁾

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Ironically, while the LIFG attacks in Phase II had not succeeded, the Qaddafi regime's over-reactions to these attacks created the conditions that would ultimately result in his overthrow.

9/11, the United State's Global War on Terror (GWOT), Rendition and Changes in US-Libyan Relations

By 1998 Colonel Muammar Qaddafi had all but decimated the LIFG and Islamist factions within the country of Libya and, with the advent of the United States' GWOT after the 9/11 attacks, the Libyan regime was enthusiastic in its assistance to US counter-terror efforts against their shared enemies-the LIFG and Al Qaeda.⁽⁴⁹⁾ First, the US's invasion of Iraq in order to counter Iraq's proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), caused Libya to take notice lest it be the next target of invasion. As Libya retreated from its WMD proliferation efforts it lost some of its pariah status. Moreover, as the US declared the LIFG as a terrorist group, Qaddafi had an opportunity to ingratiate himself with the US by turning over the names of those Libyan's affiliated with the LIFG who were fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

As a result of this new spirit of mutual benefit between the US and Libya, the sharing of intelligence between the two countries further diminished the LIFG's already impaired capabilities. First, Musa Kusa, Colonel Qaddafi's head of intelligence, gave the US and Great Britain the names of LIFG operatives and other Libyan Islamists who had been trained in Afghanistan. Ironically, Musa Kusa is also believed to have planned the bombing of PanAm Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland and has, since the start of the rebellion, joined the rebel forces and been allowed access to funds previously frozen by the US.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Next, from 2007-2008, Lieutenant General (ret) Dell Dailey, a former Combined Joint Special Operations Forces

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Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) commander, was engaged in a diplomatic mission to confront countries providing the bulk of foreign fighters to AQI.⁽⁵¹⁾

During contentious sessions in Libya, General Dailey disclosed the number of Libyan jihadists from Derna and Benghazi who traveled to Iraq and fought the US and coalition forces as part of AQI. According to one of General Dailey's diplomatic team, "The Sinjar bonanza, which Dailey described as "super intelligence," was tailor-made for his diplomatic offensive, which initially focused on the countries that had supplied most of the foreign fighters and suicide bombers to Iraq: Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and, in a startling destination for a former Special Operations commander, Libya."⁽⁵²⁾ Additionally, when referring to Darnah, Libya, one counterterrorism expert who worked on the Sinjar project remarked that Libyan officials acknowledged that, "...we had problems there, too. We've brought troops in there twice before, for other reasons not necessarily tied to terrorism but it's not necessarily an area that's easy for us to control ourselves."⁽⁵³⁾ Libyan security forces, armed with the personally identifiable information derived from the captured Sinjar Papers, were able to engage the families of these individuals and monitor their circle of friends and associates. This allowed Libya to target these former foreign fighters upon their return to Libya and denuded the ability of the Libyan social recruiting networks that had been so effective. The combination of Libyan security forces targeting and the US government's policy of "extraordinary rendition" led LIFG fighters who were incarcerated to submit to deprogramming by the Libyan regime.

Extraordinary rendition refers to the capture of foreign nationals abroad by or with the assistance of US agents or allies, and the transfer of these individuals back to their home countries for prosecution and/or intelligence exploitation.⁽⁵⁴⁾ This policy of extraordinary rendition forced the LIFG further underground and allowed the US to extradite potential or

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suspected terrorists back to Libya where the Qaddafi regime could then assume control of them and continue interrogations and investigations. As these individuals, captured by US agents or allies, also posed a threat to the Qaddafi regime, Libya took great interest in their questioning and eventual deprogramming.

It was during this time that current Libyan rebel leaders like Abdel Hakim Belhaj, AKA Abu Abdallah al-Sadek, and Abdel-Hakim al-Hasidi were tracked down and captured by the CIA or US allies. Belhaj, who was born in May 1966, was captured in Bangkok, Thailand in 2003. By the time of his capture he had already served in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan after starting his life as a foreign fighter in Afghanistan in 1988. Belhaj was also a close associate of Abu Musab al Zarqawi and was extradited back to Libya in 2004.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Abdel-Hakim al-Hasidi was also a key rebel leader in the Libyan revolt and had been previously captured in Peshwar, Pakistan in 2002 after fighting the US and Northern Alliance in Afghanistan. After capture in Pakistan, Hasidi was first handed over to the US and then was extradited back to Libya. From his rendition in 2002 until 2008, al-Hasidi, who was also a history teacher, was imprisoned twice. The first instance resulted in a three year prison sentence from 2004-2007 for his connection to a fire fight with regime security forces almost immediately after his return to Libya. The second imprisonment occurred in 2008, according to former regime officials for, “conspiring to overthrow the regime.”⁽⁵⁶⁾ Belhaj and Hasidi are just two high profile examples of the nearly (400) LIFG or jihadist fighters that were held and eventually released by the Qaddafi regime immediately preceding the Libyan revolt.⁽⁵⁷⁾ The mechanism that allowed the Qaddafi regime to release these LIFG members was a deprogramming policy called the “Corrective Studies.” The “Corrective Studies,” required LIFG members to renounce violence against the Qaddafi regime in order to secure their release from prison.

The “Corrective Studies”

Saif al-Islam, Qaddafi’s son, convinced his father and the Libyan jihadists to begin a reconciliation policy that would require the LIFG to renounce violence. This reconciliation policy, called the “Corrective Studies,” signaled a suspension to organized resistance by the LIFG against the regime until the beginning of the Arab Spring. From 2007-2009, Saif al Islam began negotiations with the LIFG and youth conventions with the Libyan youth who were vulnerable to Al Qaeda’s message. Qaddafi’s son, received a great deal of praise from western governments for his efforts and these negotiations culminated in a declared renouncement of violence by those LIFG members in Libya.

The “Corrective Studies” consisted of a (400) page document whereby the LIFG renounced violence against the Qaddafi regime and went so far as to say that violence against the Qaddafi regime was un-Islamic. Jihadists, who were in jail at the time, had to sign these “Corrective Studies,” in order to secure their release from jail. It is difficult to determine the motive of these LIFG members who signed the “Studies” and whether they truly believed that violence against the regime was un-Islamic, or if they signed them in order to secure their release from prison.

At a minimum, it is clear that the LIFG who signed the “Corrective Studies” were negotiating under significant duress. The negotiations that created the “Corrective Studies” were conducted when (400) LIFG fighters were in prison along with the LIFG’s first commander Muftah Mabrouk al-Wadi and the brother of senior al-Qa`ida operative Abu Yahya al-Libi, Abd al-Wahhab Muhammad Qaid. According to an interview conducted by Alison Pargeter, a Middle East and North Africa analyst at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, with a

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Libyan human rights activist, “The regime put enormous pressure on the prisoners to agree to the revisions. It brought the families of some LIFG members into the prison as a means of persuading them, and the government also used bribery, offering to provide their families with cars and other perks if they signed up to the revisions....Many had spent long, harsh years in prison;”⁽⁵⁸⁾ It seems reasonable to doubt the veracity of the LIFG’s renouncement of violence based not only on the evidence of duress but also in light of the participation in many of these Islamists in the general uprising in 2011. A January 2011 report, examining the veracity of the “Corrective Studies,” was prepared for the US Congress by Michael S. Smith II, a counterterrorism adviser for Kronos LLC, contended that the LIFG’s repudiation of violence was, “Misinterpreted by both the media and policymakers in the West, and that [this misinterpretation] helped foster support for the revolution in 2011.”⁽⁵⁹⁾ There is significant evidence that some percentage of those released under the “Corrective Studies” have since returned to violence against the regime. Moreover, a significant number of rebel leaders who have been identified on the front lines of the revolt were released as a result of signing the “Corrective Studies.” Some of these include Hasidi and Belhaj as well as rebel leader Khalid al-Tagdi, and Abdelmonem Mukhtar, commander of (160) fighters in the Omar Mukhtar Battalion.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Whether or not the LIFG and Libyan Islamists actually believed in the “Corrective Studies,” it is clear that these negotiations were effective at temporarily suppressing the LIFG within Libya proper. The LIFG continued to exist strictly as an extra-national organization in Afghanistan. Within Libya though, while the former leaders of the LIFG had disavowed the group, they maintained their own militias and a loose affiliation that was able to rapidly coalesce under the NTC immediately following the extraordinary events in Tunisia in December 2011.

The Arab Spring

Despite twenty years of struggle beforehand, the LIFG and other Libyan former foreign fighters were unable to inspire decisive support from the population at large. Then, on 19 December 2010, a young man named Mohamed Bouaziz, from the small Tunisian city of Sidi Bouzid, set fire to himself and the rest of the Arab World. Bousziz's extreme act was in protest to police confiscation of the fruit and vegetables he was selling from a street stall. This one incident set off a chain of events that led to riots in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain. Mohamed Bouaziz's self-immolation set conditions for the ouster of three autocratic regimes in the Middle East and on 20 October 2011, it ultimately led to Muammar Qaddafi's capture in vicinity of Sirte, Libya and his death while in captivity.

Libyan Former Foreign Fighters in Phase III, General Uprising, 2011

Phase III-Overview

In Phase III, the "General Uprising" of the Libyan Revolution began in February 2011, and ended with the capture of Colonel Qaddafi in October 2011. During Phase III Libyan former foreign fighters, veterans of wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Bosnia, had their most direct and decisive impact on the revolution. In Phase III, the "General Uprising" of the Libyan Revolution, Libyan former foreign fighters brought forth the organizational infrastructure, political organization and tactical, operational and strategic lessons learned to lead the mass uprising. This force of former foreign fighters leading inexperienced civilians executed the initial seizure of Benghazi, Libya, facilitated the establishment of the National Transitional Council (NTC) in Benghazi and exploited the chaotic environment that ensued after Qaddafi's

death to maneuver politically and assume key military and political billets. The Libyan former foreign fighters provided experienced leadership to the inexperienced common forces recruited from among the populace at large.⁽⁶¹⁾ The success of these combined units (experienced guerillas with inexperienced civilians) in the early days of the “General Uprising,” added to the eventual contribution of the NATO air and SOF forces, led to the mass desertion of many of Qaddafi’s forces to the rebel side. These defecting Qaddafi forces were more that the Qaddafi regime could defend itself against. Still, it was not until the Arab Spring came to Libya during the “Day of Rage,” that this “General Uprising” was possible.

Catalyst-“The Day of Rage”

From 15 February 2011, a “Day of Rage” was declared to commemorate the anniversary of an historic riot and massacre that took place in front of the Italian consulate in Benghazi, Libya where security forces killed several protesters in 2006.⁽⁶²⁾ When Libyan security forces were called in again in 2011 to put down these renewed demonstrations, riots ensued from 15-17 February 2011. The riots were sparked by the arrest of lawyer and human rights activist Fethi Tarbel in Benghazi and were further intensified by the revolts in Tunisia and Egypt. By the 17th of February 2011, fifteen protesters were killed in connection to the “Day of Rage” riots with dozens more Libyans injured over the next few days. As tensions increased, rebels led by former foreign fighters, seized Benghazi on 23 February 2011. On 24 February 2011, rebels also seized the city of Misrata, only nine days after demonstrations began.⁽⁶³⁾

In response to the “Day of Rage” protests and riots, Qaddafi ruthlessly cracked down on protestors across Libya. On February 26, 2011, the UN Security Council authorized sanctions

against the Qaddafi regime and forwarded a case against Muammar Qaddafi to the International Criminal Court (ICC). From 24-27 February rebels, consisting of many former foreign fighters, formed the National Transition Council (NTC) in Benghazi, Libya as the head of the rebellion and immediately reached out to western powers for recognition.⁽⁶⁴⁾ After nearly one month of riots and fighting, Colonel Qaddafi directed his forces to retake the city of Benghazi on March 16, 2011. As a result of the impending humanitarian crisis, NATO ignored UNSECRES 1973 and began its first air strikes in support of the Libyan rebels on 19 March 2011 by attacking the Libyan security forces who were maneuvering to retake Benghazi.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Observation 1: Libyan Former Foreign Fighters-in General

From the beginning of the fighting in Libya, Libyan former foreign fighters had a leavening effect on the general guerilla movement. The experienced former foreign fighters who had previously fought the US and Coalition partners in Iraq and Afghanistan tended to be at the fore front of all the fighting. These same experienced fighters also tended to bear the brunt of the most difficult urban combat. This was due to the relative lack of training and experience of the rebels recruited from the civilian masses.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Moreover, once NATO committed itself to supporting the rebels through air support, NATO special operations forces appear to have leveraged these experienced former foreign fighters to facilitate air strikes that had a decisive effect on defeating Qaddafi's security forces.⁽⁶⁷⁾ The prison releases of the last of the four hundred LIFG fighters who had signed the "Corrective Studies" was completed just days before the start of the 2011 general uprising. The infusion of manpower caused by the prison releases, the combination of former foreign fighters working with NATO SOF, and the NATO airstrikes,

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provided ample experienced manpower to solidify the “General Uprising,” and consummate the overthrow of the regime.

Observation 2: Libyan Former Foreign Fighters-By the Numbers

The Combating Terror Center at West Point’s publication, “Bombers, Bank Accounts and Bleedout,” gives unique estimates for foreign fighters who served in Iraq and Afghanistan during the Soviet and American wars. In November 2006, the CIA Director General Michael Hayden, estimated that there were (1,300) foreign fighters operating in Iraq at that time. The Sinjar Papers tended to corroborate this estimate with around (590) foreign fighters entering annually. Of these, around 19 per cent (111) tended to be of Libyan origin. In Iraq alone, as many as (582) Libyan foreign fighters may have fought there.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Additionally, a similar number may have either served in Afghanistan or been trained in Pakistan during the same time frame (2001-2010). These estimates give a top end of Libyan former foreign fighters who served against the US and its coalition partners of around (1, 164).⁽⁶⁹⁾

As previously noted, Vahid Brown estimated that anywhere from (25,000-40,000) Arab foreign fighters fought the USSR in Afghanistan in the 1980’s. Mr. Brown also noted that, according to Pakistani intelligence estimates, around (3,000-4,000) Arabs were on the ground in Afghanistan at any time from 1984-1989.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Gary C. Gambill, in an article on the LIFG in the Jamestown Foundation’s *Terrorism Monitor*, estimated that as many as (500) Libyans served in Afghanistan during the Soviet War.⁽⁷¹⁾ Between Iraq or Afghanistan, a conservative estimate of Libyan former foreign fighters to have served in both locations, against the US, its coalition partners and the former Soviet Union is approximately (1,664).⁽⁷²⁾

Of the (1,664) possible Libyan former foreign fighters, the exact number of former foreign fighters who survived and returned to Libya from Iraq or Afghanistan is difficult to

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estimate precisely. A portion of these Libyans would have been killed in combat during these wars. Moreover, in Iraq, a significant number of Libyan former foreign fighters had signed contracts with Al Qaeda in Iraq to conduct suicide operations. As 75% of all suicide attacks in Iraq were conducted by foreign fighters, this would significantly reduce the number of Libyans who could have survived to return to Libya by 2011.⁽⁷³⁾

As such, at least 1/3 to 1/2 of Libyan foreign fighters could have become casualties with (554-831) able to return to Libya or continue the fight elsewhere. The principal number of Libyan former foreign fighters that is easiest to confirm is the (400) former LIFG members who were released from prison at the beginning of the “General Uprising.”⁽⁷⁴⁾ While, (400-831) veterans is a relatively small number, they created an exponential effect by leavening the masses (as all the US SOF unconventional warfare model), by acting as experienced assault elements in the most difficult urban fighting and by applying the planning, command and control apparatus and lessons learned from decades of foreign and domestic warfare.

Observation 3: Libyan Former Foreign Fighters-the Backbone of the Revolution

The Libyan foreign fighters learned valuable lessons fighting the US and its allies in Iraq and Afghanistan that they were able to apply to the revolution against Muammar Qaddafi. According to Peter Bergen, a Schwartz senior fellow at the New America Foundation and adjunct lecturer at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, “Al-Qa’ida in Iraq is fighting the best army in history, acquiring skills that will be far more useful for future terrorist operations than those learned by their counterparts during the 1980’s, who fought a conventional guerilla war against the demoralized conscripts of the Soviet Army. These lessons were not limited to tactical operations. They learned the importance of propaganda, fund raising, recruitment, training, analyzing past operations, and how to conduct distributed but unified

operations. They also learned valuable lessons on how to keep a loosely knit confederation of groups unified until they had defeated their common enemy.”⁽⁷⁵⁾

According to an April 8, 2011 Jane’s Terrorism and Security Monitor article, entitled “Libya’s Jihadist Rebels,” journalists in Libya reportedly recognized that while former foreign fighter jihadists were few in number compared to overall numbers of those participating in the revolution, they had been at the fore front of the fighting. Moreover the article goes on to claim that, “The guys who obviously have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan do little to hide their past...They wore the same *shalwar khomeez* that usually signals time spent in Afghanistan or Pakistan, carry their weapons like professionals, and tend to bear the brunt of the fighting inside the towns...as the rest of the rebels lack any sort of real training for close quarter combat.”⁽⁷⁶⁾ The article goes on to note that, “it was obvious when the foreign commandos [NATO SOF] arrived because the rebels immediately halted unfettered access to the front lines that journalists and civilians had enjoyed until the end of March. ‘The obviously well trained jihadists disappeared at about the same time...It is clear that the rebels and [NATO] special forces know that it would be a major problem if American or British operators were suddenly seen on CNN helping call in airstrikes to assist guys that were most likely fighting America and the UK a few years ago.”⁽⁷⁷⁾

Libyan Former Foreign Fighters-Impact, Leadership and New Approaches

There were many factors that made the Libyan former foreign fighters critical to the success of the Libyan “General Uprising.” Although AQI created fewer fighters than the ‘Arab-Afghans’ who fought in Afghanistan in the 1980’s, these newer fighters saw more combat in Iraq than the ‘Arab-Afghans’ did in Afghanistan and were far more skilled in comparison. They also displayed greater ability to innovate critical tactical skills, such as IED development and

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suicide bombings.⁽⁷⁸⁾ According to Brian Glyn Williams, an Associate Professor of Islamic History at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, “...during this period of limited American activity in the country [Afghanistan], foreign fighters learned new techniques from other conflict zones and began applying them locally.”⁽⁷⁹⁾ These foreign fighters, brought with them incredibly dangerous capabilities such as training, planning command and control, knowledge of IEDs and explosives etc.⁽⁸⁰⁾

While the uprising that toppled Colonel Qaddafi was clearly a general, nationwide, non-ideological uprising, former foreign fighters provided critical, experienced leadership. Several of the most successful and influential rebel commanders are former LIFG members who fought in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Of these commanders, one of the most influential and notorious is Abdel Hakim Belhaj.⁽⁸¹⁾ When rebel forces defeated Qaddafi’s security forces and captured Tripoli on 23 August 2011, Abdel Hakim Belhaj led the rebel elements and has since become the de facto military leader in Tripoli.⁽⁸²⁾ Abdul Hakin Al Hasidi, also a key rebel leader, personally claimed to have recruited twenty five Libyans from Derna to fight in Iraq and claimed to be leading these same men in Libya during the “General Uprising.”⁽⁸²⁾

Other key former foreign fighter rebel leaders include Khalid al-Tagdi, who was killed on March 2 in Brega, Libya, and Abdelmonem Mukhtar. Mukhtar was killed by security forces and mercenaries in April 2011 in vicinity of Ajdabiya and Brega, Libya.⁽⁸⁴⁾ What has made these commanders uniquely capable are the lessons learned in decades of fighting. According to Dr. Parageter, “Given the dearth of well-trained personnel and the amateur nature of the rebel forces, individuals with combat experience are clearly a precious asset to the opposition.”⁽⁸⁵⁾

Rapprochement, Takfir and Tartarus

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The Libyan former foreign fighters have learned lessons from Iraq, Afghanistan and other insurgent movements that allowed them to maintain credibility among the Libyan population and prevent undesired concern from the western powers. First, these former jihadists have been practicing a policy of *rapprochement*, or foregoing ideology in order to first oust the occupier and then deal with ideological differences.⁽⁸⁶⁾ This was demonstrated during the fighting as Islamists willingly united their efforts with secularists, monarchists, democrats and most obviously with the western powers to achieve the near term goal of defeating Qaddafi while allowing the long term question of who will control the post-Qaddafi era to be settled later.

Next, the Libyan rebel leaders appear to be distancing themselves from policies of *takfir*, and *tartara*”us operations that fellow Libyan and Al Qaeda spokesman Atiyya Allah warned them against. Atiyya Allah recently rejected three forms of Islamic extremism that had negatively impacted Arab Muslim and Al Qaeda operations in Bosnia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Algeria and Iraq. These are the concepts of *takfir* and *khawarj* or the declaring of Muslims as hypocrites, the toleration of non-violent Muslims who refuse to participate in *faridhat al-jihad* and *tartara*”us operations that accept collateral damage among Muslim civilians during otherwise legitimate jihad operations.⁽⁸⁷⁾

Atiyya had warned Abu Musab al Zarqarwi about “scenes of slaughter” that would turn local and world opinion against AQI. These scenes and those Islamists who slaughtered scores of Iraqis under the auspices of *takfiri* doctrine (declaring and slaying apostates) were instrumental in fomenting the discord that eventually led to the “Anbar Awakening” movement in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq. *Tartara*”us operations, though they did not specifically target Muslim civilians, allowed them to be killed and counted as martyrs in order to facilitate attacks on occupiers or apostates.⁽⁸⁸⁾ These *tartara*”us operations in Iraq and Afghanistan added to the

“scenes of slaughter” that Atiyya warned against and they have not been widely reported on in Libya; this has greatly assisted the rebels in generating western and Arab support for their revolution.

Libyan Former Foreign Fighters Exploitation of the Revolution

On October 20, 2011, Libyan rebels captured and killed Colonel Muammar Qaddafi in his hometown of Sirte, Libya after a (42) years of autocratic leadership. Now, with Qaddafi’s death, the rebel forces have begun to create a government from scratch.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Libyan former foreign fighters opposed the regime for two decades before the revolt and were instrumental in the final execution of the revolution. These same foreign fighters will continue to play a pivotal role in the post-Qaddafi era with their political posturing, occupation of key governmental billets, access to substantial financing and their continued connection with Al Qaeda.

Political Positioning

Many experts have contended that Libyan Islamists are not likely to circumvent the democratic process unfolding in Libya unless either foreign soldiers occupy the country or the democratization process results in chaos. According to David Kilpatrick, a New York Times reporter and Middle East specialist, “if the transition process post-Qadhafi results in chaos, then it is possible that militant forces could try to organize and assert themselves in their own local areas. These forces would have a popular base of support given that they have some sympathy in the east.”⁽⁹⁰⁾ Most former foreign fighters in Libya are interested in taking part in the democratic process because they already hold a significant number of critical positions in the government and because they have demonstrated substantial political momentum. Still, there are other indications that Islamists and other groups may either generate or simply prepare to take

advantage of ensuing chaos as the death of Qaddafi brings to a close the policy of *rapprochement* and the need to work together to defeat the regime's security forces.

Libyan Former Foreign Fighters in Key Governmental Billets

In September 2011, Rod Nordland and David Kirkpatrick published an article for the New York Times and reflected that, "For an uprising that presented a liberal, Westernized face to the world, the growing sway of Islamists-activists with fundamentalist views, who want a society governed by Islamic principles-is being followed closely by the United States and its NATO allies."⁽⁹¹⁾ Libyan Islamists now hold critical positions in the government and military and as a recent report prepared for the US Congress titled, "A View to Extremist Currents in Libya," asserts, "Despite early indications that the Libyan revolution might be a largely secular undertaking ... the very extremist currents that shaped the philosophies of Libya Salafists and jihadis like (Abd al-Hakim) Belhaj appear to be coalescing to define the future of Libya."⁽⁹²⁾

Abdel Hakim Belhaj is the commander of the Tripoli Military Council, the military governor of Tripoli and the most powerful military leader in the country.⁽⁹³⁾ He has been involved in efforts to create security in Tripoli but has also been involved in gunfights with other militia commander and has recently been rumored to have had a hand in the assassination of a former Libyan special forces officer who defected to the rebel cause during the fighting. Belhaj is seeking to replace Mahmoud Jabil-the prime minister of the interim government. Mr. Belhaj is also supported by former LIFG member Abdel Hakim al-Hasidi who maintains a significant militia in Derna, and by Sheikh Ali al-Salabi, an influential Libyan cleric operating out of Benghazi.⁽⁹⁴⁾

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The key Islamist political figures are cleric Sheikh Ali al-Salabi and a Muslim Brotherhood figure, Abdel al-Rajazk Abu Hajar who leads the Tripoli Municipal Governing Council.⁽⁹⁵⁾ Sheikh al-Salabi was the most prominent cleric who represented the LIFG in its negotiations with the Qaddafi regime in concert with the “Corrective Studies.” With the commencement of the fighting, Mr. Salabi refused to negotiate a cease fire and is now part of an influential Islamist political group called Etilaf.⁽⁹⁶⁾ Moderate politicians believe that Etilaf has overwhelmed secular groups with Etilaf’s confederation of Islamic organizations. Specifically, they allege that Etilaf operates covertly, acts as a revolutionary guide, and issues decrees which may be enforced by former Libyan foreign fighters. Fathi Ben Issa, a former Etilaf member and representative on the NTC said he quit when Etilaf began issuing fatwas banning such things as women driving, theater or sculptures of the human body. According to Ben Issa, in reference to Sheikh Ali al-Salabi, “He is just hiding his intentions. He says one thing to the BBC and another to Al Jazeera. If you believe him, then you don’t know the Muslim Brothers.”⁽⁹⁷⁾

By all indications, the former foreign fighters in Libya and Islamists appear to be supportive of “democratic pluralism,” as they seem convinced that they can elect a majority of Islamists following the examples of Tunisia and Egypt. Still, they also seem to be covering their bets by holding onto their weapons until they have political control. Jihadist websites have admonished Islamists to refuse to relinquish their weapons and in fact, according to David Kirkpatrick, in an article in the New York Times, “local militia leaders who helped topple Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi are abandoning a pledge to give up their weapons and now say they intend to preserve their autonomy and influence political decisions as “guardians of the revolution.”⁽⁹⁸⁾ This desire to maintain their arms as “guardians of the revolution,” has created a situation with

rival commanders manning checkpoints throughout Tripoli and with gun battles between Libya's 'new military' and other rebels for control of the airport. It also opens the door for an Iranian style revolution described by Rod Nordland and David Kirkpatrick, "where after the fall of the Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini stomped out a short-lived liberal government by denouncing democracy as un-Islamic."⁽⁹⁹⁾

Al Qaeda's Opportunism

Joseph Felter, the Director of the Combating Terror Center (CTC) at West Point and Brian Fishman, a senior associate at the CTC assert that as of 2008, "the LIFG is an important partner in al-Qa`ida's global coalition of Jihadi groups. The late Abu Layth al-Libi, LIFG's Emir, reinforced Benghazi and Darnah's importance to Libyan Jihadis in his November 2007 announcement that LIFG had joined al-Qa`ida."⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ More recently, according to the aforementioned Kronos report, "Libyans have been featured prominently in the history of core al Qaeda," and "Libya was considered important to al Qaeda because of its geographic proximity to Egypt and its perceived ability to 'affect the jihadist political situation in Egypt.'"⁽¹⁰¹⁾ It is clear that events in Libya are of great importance to Al Qaeda and there is significant evidence that although Al Qaeda did not care for the secular nature of the general uprising, it has sought to exploit this revolution.

During the fighting, Chad's president, Idriss Deby Itno claimed that Al Qaeda had had access to and carried off a variety of munitions but especially man-portable surface to air missiles (SAMs).⁽¹⁰²⁾ This was corroborated by Human Rights Watch Washington Director, Tom Malinowski, "There are whole bunch of MANPADS, for example, the shoulder-fired missiles, that actually we discovered in this warehouse. Most of them are not there anymore. In

the back and forth of the fighting around Ajdabiyah, somebody took them.”⁽¹⁰³⁾ From a variety of sources, it seems that Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) or affiliates associated with AQIM were able to spirit away significant amount of ordnance including shoulder launched SAMs during the confusion caused by the fighting.

Since the original announcement of the LIFG becoming an Al Qaeda affiliate, Libyan Islamists have continuously tried to downplay the relationship or to deny it outright. Abdel Hakim al-Hasidi claims that his men and members of Al Qaeda are good people. On the contrary, Abdel Hakim Belhaj has tried to distance himself publicly from Al Qaeda, especially as he sought western air support during the rebellion. It is clear that Libyan Islamists have long had affiliations with AQI and with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and most likely still maintain some relationship. Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, the Director of the Center for the Study of Terrorist Radicalization at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, suggests that Al Qaeda and the Somali Islamist group al Shabab has have refrained from over publicizing their relationship because it, “doesn’t want to attract greater U.S. attention to that theater of war.”⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ This seems like a reasonable explanation for why the former foreign fighters associated with Al Qaeda since the 1980’s would now publicly distance themselves from Al Qaeda and possibly maintain a less public relationship.

Impact on the Region: Exporting the Revolution?

In addition to the impact Libyan former foreign fighters have had on their own revolution, there now appears to be some evidence that they are beginning to export their revolution. As of March 6, 2012, Russia’s ambassador to the UN claimed to have evidence that Libya was supporting the Syrian rebels in their battle against the Syrian regime of Bashar Al-Assad. Specifically, Ambassador Vitaly Churkin claimed, “that in Libya, with the support of the

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authorities, there is a special training center for the Syrian revolutionaries and people are sent to Syria to attack the legal government."⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ While Libyan Prime Minister Abdurrahim El-Keib did not respond to the accusation, the Libyan government was the first country to recognize the Syrian rebel government-the Syrian National Council. The Libyan government has also pledged \$100 million in humanitarian aid to the Syrian rebels.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

Conclusion

Hasidi, Belhaj and others claim that they accept western air support in Libya because there are no foreign boots on the ground, but they reject that same support and fight against these same forces in other Muslim countries for the same reason. So at the very same time, the same Libyan foreign fighters who have received direct NATO support in Libya are aligned with other Libyan foreign fighters fighting NATO and US forces in Afghanistan. The US now finds itself in the same position as the Soviet Union did in the 70s and 80s. At the same time the USSR was substantially supporting the Arab-Muslim states in the Middle East against Israel, it was also fighting a significant guerilla war in Afghanistan. During this same period, the Arab-Muslim states that were receiving significant military aid from the USSR, were also allowing (directly or indirectly) their citizens to deploy to Afghanistan and fight the USSR there. The US now finds itself in much the same position. While the US supports the Libyan rebels in Libya, a significant number of these rebels have recently returned from fighting US and NATO forces in Afghanistan. These same former foreign fighters willingly admit that they still have a continuing obligation to fight the US and NATO presence in any Muslim lands (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, etc).

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While Libyans have had dubious impacts on the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan, Libyan former foreign fighters have had a decisive effect on the Libyan revolt. In Phase I, “Covert Organization,” Libyan former foreign fighter combat experience gained against the former Soviet Union allowed them to clandestinely develop a resistance force and recruit from the local populace to begin overt guerilla warfare. In Phase II, “Overt Guerilla Warfare,” these former foreign fighters employed their international connections with the British and Al Qaeda to place pressure on the Qaddafi regime and support jihadist efforts against the US in Iraq and Afghanistan. Finally, in Phase III, “General Uprising,” Libyan former foreign fighters provided the tactical acumen, planning command and control that allowed the Libyan masses to defeat the Qaddafi regime.

Libyan former foreign fighters were instrumental in initiating and sustaining the Libyan revolution for over twenty years. The Libyan former foreign fighters now hold critical political and military positions in the Libyan government and the NTC. These former foreign fighters helped form the NTC, helped gain western air support during the fighting and now have access to the nation’s oil supply and finances that had been previously frozen by western powers. Lastly, these former foreign fighters also still have their weapons and refuse to give them up. Should they see a role for themselves in a pluralistic democracy, it may be that they will engage in the government and democratically advance their agenda. However, should their political view point be in the minority, it is likely that they will hold on to their weapons, exploit the chaotic situation, and attempt to advance their view point through force.

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Endnotes

¹ This also includes Libyan foreign trained fighters.

² Peter Bergen, Joseph Felter, Vahid Brown, Jacob Shapiro and Brian Fishman, *Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qaida's Road in and out of Iraq*, Harmony Project, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, July 22, 2008, pg 16.

³ Nasiri, Omar. *Inside the Jihad: My Life with Al Qaeda- A Spy's Story*. Basic Books. New York, N.Y. 2006, pg 179.

⁴ Mendelsohn, Barak. "Foreign Fighters-Recent Trends." *Orbis*. Foreign Policy Research Institute. Spring 2011. Pg 190. Vahid Brown captures these estimates from Milton Bearden's "Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires" pg24 and Anthony Hyman's "Arab Involvement in the Afghan War," pg. 79. Bergen, Felter, Brown, pg 25.

⁵ Peter Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I Knew*, Free Press, New York, N.Y., January 3, 2006, pg 58.

⁶ Micheal P. Noonan (edited by), "The Foreign Fighters Problem, Recent Trends and Case Studies: Selected Essays," Program on National Security at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, Philadelphia, Pa, April 2011, pg 2.

⁷ Noonan, pg. 3.

⁸ Noonan, pg. 2.

⁹ Noonan, pg. 2.

¹⁰ In fact, in many cases Arab fighters were used as cannon fodder or even attacked by their Afghan partners due to cultural sensibilities that the Arabs tended to offend. Bergen, Felter, Brown, pg 28. This same dynamic was also evident in Chechnya, Somalia, Bosnia and Iraq where Arab foreign fighters were actually turned on by the local resistance forces at times. In addition to inherent cultural challenges faced by Arab foreign fighters, local jihadi leaders may actually encourage fighters to return to their home countries where their knowledge of the population, language and networks may be exploited or may question the Arab foreign fighter as to "why he wants to fight in a jihad faraway when he could help topple the apostate or infidel regime in place in his own country." Barak Mendelsohn, "Foreign Fighters-Recent Trends," pg189.

¹¹ Nevertheless, the Afghan war's "bleed out" has had profound impact on regional conflicts in the Middle East and South Asia. Islamic veterans of the Afghan War returned home to take part in conflicts in their home countries such as the Algerian Civil War, the uprising of jihadist groups against Egypt's Hosni Mubarak before the Arab Spring, the Chechen rebellion, the Bosnian Civil War, and the conflict in Somalia. Barak Mendelsohn, "Combating Jihadism: American Hegemony and Interstate Cooperation in the War on Terrorism," Pg 37-62.

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¹² Lucas Winter, "A Nation at the Periphery: Libyan Regionalism Revisited," *Small Wars Journal.com*. Small Wars Foundation, 2011, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/a-nation-at-the-periphery-libyan-regionalism-revisited>. (accessed 4 Jan 2012), pg 2.

¹³ Noonan, (edited by) pg 3-4.

¹⁴ Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, *Counterstrike: The Untold Story of America's Secret Campaign Against Al Qaeda*. Time Books, Henry Holt and Company, New York, NY, 2011, pg 76.

¹⁵ Bergen, Felter, Brown, Shapiro and Fishman, pg 38.

¹⁶ Winter, pg 2.

¹⁷ Winter, pg 3.

¹⁸ Winter, pg 4.

¹⁹ Noonan, (edited by), pg 6.

²⁰ Noonan, (edited by), pg 6.

²¹ Though there is no indication that this was the LIFG's plan from the beginning, the revolution generally follows Mao Tse-tung's three phases of People's War as captured in *FMFMRP 12-18: Mao Tse-tung on Guerilla Warfare*. United States Marine Corps. Washington, D.C. April 5, 1989, 20.

²² Noonan, pg 6.

²³ None of the authors of *Bombers, Bank Accounts, & Bleedout: Al-Qaida's Road in and out of Iraq* specifically define "bleedout," but it is used in the context of foreign fighters participating in combat and then, after being forced out of a country or at the end of the fighting in a country, "bleeding out," and carrying their skills, experience and ideology to other nations. See Bergen, Felter, Brown, and Shapiro nor the editor Fishman pg 7, 10 and 24.

²⁴ "Libya's Jihadist Rebels." *Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor*. April 08, 2011.

²⁵ Bergen, Felter, Brown, Shapiro and Fishman, pg 28. The bulk of Arab participation in the Soviet-Afghan War did not substantially materialize until 1984.

²⁶ Gary Gambill, "The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group," *Terrorism Monitor Volume: 3 Issue: 6*, The Jamestown Foundation, March 23, 2005. http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=30147. (accessed 14 December 2011).

²⁷ Gambill.

²⁸ Term "Glocal" It refers to global organizations who tie local organizations and agendas into their global vision and operations and is described by Jean-Luc Marret, in his 2008 article, 'Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb: A "Glocal" Organization', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31:6, 541 — 552 Center For Transatlantic Relations, Johns Hopkins University of Advanced

International Studies. http://transatlantic.sais-jhu.edu/about/bios/jean_luc_marret.htm (accessed 18 January 2012).

²⁹ Perrin. Also Alison Pargeter, “Are Islamist Extremists Fighting Among Libya’s Rebels?” CTC Sentinel Volume 4, Issue 4, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, Apr 01, 2011, pg 12.

³⁰ The inability of Arabs to understand Balkan and Afghan culture made them liabilities in many cases. Even Arabs in an Arabic country such as Iraq soon wore out their welcome as they failed miserably to understand the cultural sensitivities of the country in which they were operating. By aligning with the LIFG, Al Qaeda may not have direct, day-to-day control of Libyan operations but through global organizations like Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) they maintain the power of the purse strings control as they influenced through money and were able to tap directly into experts in local culture-native insurgent groups. And while these local groups such as the LIFG pursue local jihadist agendas, global organizations such as AQIM tied their efforts into the larger global agenda. For “Glocal” organizations see Marret, Jean-Luc (2008) 'Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb: A “Glocal” Organization', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 31:6, 541 — 552 Center For Transatlantic Relations, Johns Hopkins University of Advanced International Studies. http://transatlantic.sais-jhu.edu/about/bios/jean_luc_marret.htm (accessed 18 January 2012).

³¹ Jean-Pierre Perrin, “Top Libyan Rebel Leader Has Deep Al Qaeda Ties,” *Les Temps, Worldcrunch*. August 29 2011, <http://www.worldcrunch.com/top-libyan-rebel-leader-has-deep-al-qaeda-ties/3661> (accessed 11 December 2011).

³² Bergen, Felter, Brown, Shapiro and Fishman, pg 24. Also Omar Nasiri, pgs 134 & 205.

³³ “Libya’s Jihadist Rebels.” *Jane’s Terrorism and Security Monitor*. April 08, 2011.

³⁴ “Libya’s Jihadist Rebels.”

³⁵ “Libya’s Jihadist Rebels.”

³⁶ “Al Qaeda’s ‘Gift from God.’” *Jane’s Terrorism and Security Monitor*. April 08, 2011.

³⁷ Perrin.

³⁸ Gambill.

³⁹ Gambill.

⁴⁰ Gambill.

⁴¹ “Libya’s Jihadist Rebels.”

⁴² “Perspectives on the Crisis in Libya.” One Hundred Twelfth Congress: Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate. First Session. April 6, 2011, pg 29.

⁴³ Winter, pg 4.

⁴⁴ Gambill.

⁴⁵ Winter, pg 5.

⁴⁶ Gambill.

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⁴⁷ Bergen, Felter, Brown, Shapiro and Fishman, pg 8.

⁴⁸ Gambill.

⁴⁹ The LIFG has never claimed to be an enemy of the US but was included on the US's list of terror groups due to its association with Al Qaeda. This is confirmed by Abdul Hakim Al Belhaj in Alison Pargeter's, "Are Islamist Extremists Fighting Among Libya's Rebels?" CTC Sentinel Volume 4, Issue 4, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, Apr 01, 2011, pg 10.

⁵⁰ Gambill.

⁵¹ Schmitt and Shanker, pg 93.

⁵² Schmitt and Shanker, pg 93.

⁵³ Schmitt and Shanker, pg 94.

⁵⁴ "Background Paper on the CIA's Combined Use of Interrogation Techniques" *NYTimes.com*. December 30, 2004.
<http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/politics/20090825-DETAIN/2004DOC71.pdf> (accessed 31 January 2012)

⁵⁵ Perrin.

⁵⁶ Pargeter, pg 11.

⁵⁷ Pargeter, pg 10.

⁵⁸ Pargeter, pg 11.

⁵⁹ Catherine Herridge, "The Islamist Winter: New Report Suggests Extremist Views Winning in Libya," *Foxnews.com*, January 4, 2012, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/01/04/islamist-winter-new-report-suggests-extremist-views-winning-in-libya/>, (accessed 21 January 2012).

⁶⁰ Pargeter, pg 10.

⁶¹ Mao's People's War describes this as the third type of guerilla force-permanent soliders or veterans intermixed with inexperienced civilians. *FMFMRP 12-18*: pg 71-75.

⁶² "Libya: Timeline of the Conflict." EURONEWS.NET. August 29, 2011.
<http://www.euronews.net/2011/08/29/libya-timeline-of-the-conflict/>. (accessed 14 December 2011).

⁶³ "Libya: Timeline of the Conflict."

⁶⁴ Perrin.

⁶⁵ "UNSCR 1973: The Situation in Libya," United Nations, March 17, 2011,
http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/unsc_resolutions11.htm (accessed 31 January 2012).

⁶⁶ Pargeter pg 10. See also "Libya's Jihadist Rebels."

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⁶⁷ “Libya’s Jihadist Rebels.”

⁶⁸ Bergen, Felter, Brown, Shapiro and Fishman pg’s 5, 6, 104. The number of (582) is my estimate based on the start of the significant foreign fighter participation circa 2004 and a significant reduction of foreign fighters by 2008 per the Bergen, Felter, Shapiro and Fishman publication.

⁶⁹ (1,164) assumes that (582) Libyan foreign fighters served in Iraq against the US and a similar estimate (582x2) for those to have served in Afghanistan against the US.

⁷⁰ Bergen, Felter, Brown, Shapiro and Fishman pg 25 and Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001).

⁷¹ Gambill.

⁷² (1,664)-1,164 to have served in Iraq or Afghanistan against the US plus 500 to have served against the former USSR in Afghanistan. These are my estimates using a rate similar to that which eastern Libya (Cyrenaica) supported the Iraq insurgency less than a decade later.

⁷³ Bergen, Felter, Brown, Shapiro and Fishman pg’s 5, 6, 104.

⁷⁴ Pargeter, pg 10.

⁷⁵ Bergen, Felter, Brown, Shapiro and Fishman, pg 110.

⁷⁶ “Libya’s Jihadist Rebels.”

⁷⁷ “Libya’s Jihadist Rebels.”

⁷⁸ Bergen, Felter, Brown, Shapiro and Fishman pg 9.

⁷⁹ Noonan (edited by), pg 8.

⁸⁰ Barak Mendelsohn, “Foreign Fighters-Recent Trends,” *Orbis*. Foreign Policy Research Institute, Spring 2011, Pg 198.

⁸¹ Perrin.

⁸² Perrin. Also, “Libya: Timeline of the Conflict.”

⁸³ Swami, Praveen, Nick Squires and Duncan Gardham. “Libyan Rebel Commander Admits His Fighters Have Al-Qaeda Links.” UK Telegraph. October 28, 2011. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8407047/Libyan-rebel-commander-admits-his-fighters-have-al-Qaeda-links.html>. (accessed 10 November 2011).

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⁸⁴ Pargeter, pg 10.

⁸⁵ Pargeter, pg 11.

⁸⁶ *FMFMRP 12-18: Mao Tse-tung on Guerilla Warfare.* pg 69.

⁸⁷ “Al Qaeda’s ‘gift from God.” *Jane’s Terrorism and Security Monitor.* April 08, 2011.

⁸⁸ “Al Qaeda’s ‘gift from God.”

⁸⁹ St. John, Ronald Bruce. *Libya Continuity and Change.* Routledge. New York, N.Y. 2011, pg 49.

⁹⁰ Kirkpatrick, David. “In Libya, Fighting May Outlast the Revolution.” NYT.COM. November 1, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/02/world/africa/in-libya-the-fighting-may-outlast-the-revolution.html?pagewanted=all>. (accessed 13 December 2011).

⁹¹ Rod Nordland, and David D. Kirkpatrick, “Islamists’ Growing Sway Raises Questions for Libya,” *Nytimes.com*, September 14, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/15/world/africa/in-libya-islamists-growing-sway-raises-questions.html?pagewanted=all>. (accessed 21 January 2012).

⁹² Herridge.

⁹³ Nordland, and Kirkpatrick.

⁹⁴ Nordland, and Kirkpatrick.

⁹⁵ Nordland, and Kirkpatrick.

⁹⁶ Herridge.

⁹⁷ Nordland, and Kirkpatrick.

⁹⁸ Nordland, and Kirkpatrick.

⁹⁹ Mahmoud Habboush, “Libya to include rebels in military from January,” Reuters.com, December 25, 2011, <http://news.yahoo.com/libya-rebels-military-january-210632529.html> (accessed 25 December 2011).

¹⁰⁰ Nordland, and Kirkpatrick.

¹⁰¹ Bergen, Felter, Brown, Shapiro and Fishman, pg 38

¹⁰² Herridge.

¹⁰³ PraveenSwami, Nick Squires and Duncan Gardham, “Libyan Rebel Commander Admits His Fighters Have Al-Qaeda Links,” UK Telegraph. October 28, 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8407047/Libyan-rebel-commander-admits-his-fighters-have-al-Qaeda-links.html>. (accessed 10 November 2011).

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¹⁰³ “Perspectives on the Crisis in Libya.” One Hundred Twelfth Congress: Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate. First Session. April 6, 2011.

¹⁰⁴ Noonan (edited by), pg 5.

¹⁰⁵ Michelle Nichols, “Russia Accuses Libya of Training Syrian Rebels,” *Reuters.com*, March 6, 2011.

¹⁰⁶ Nichols.

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