



# Terrorism Monitor

In-Depth Analysis of the War on Terror

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

BRIEFS.....	1
CLASHES ERUPT BETWEEN KHYBER TRIBESMEN AND LASHKAR-E-ISLAM MILITANTS By Zia Ur Rehman.....	3
THE JUBALAND INITIATIVE: IS KENYA CREATING A BUFFER STATE IN SOUTHERN SOMALIA? By Derek Henry Flood.....	5
MAPPING QADDAFI'S TRIBAL ALLEGIANCES IN LIBYA: AN OVERVIEW By Camille Tawil.....	7



Warfalla tribesman in Benghazi

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For comments or questions about our publications, please send an email to [pubs@jamestown.org](mailto:pubs@jamestown.org), or contact us at:

1111 16th St. NW, Suite #320

Washington, DC • 20036

Tel: (202) 483-8888

Fax: (202) 483-8337

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## GROWING DISSATISFACTION IN REBEL CAMP WITH NATO'S CAMPAIGN IN LIBYA

Since NATO air operations over Libya began on March 19, there have been increasing expectations on the part of rebel forces that NATO warplanes will act as a proxy air force for the rebel campaign to overthrow Libyan leader Mu'ammr Qaddafi. These expectations have been fuelled by rhetoric coming out of Western capitals calling for the destruction of the Libyan military and even the assassination of Qaddafi himself, though these activities would seem to exceed the aims and limitations of the UN Security Council's authorization of a no-fly zone.

The rebel viewpoint was expressed in a pan-Arab daily's recent interview with Mustafa Abd al-Jalil, the chairman of the rebel National Transitional Council (NTC) and the former justice minister in the Qaddafi government (al-Hayat, April 22).

Without reference to the terms of the no-fly zone, which authorizes air attacks for the purpose of defending civilians, Abd al-Jalil berates NATO for not striking targets identified by rebel observers, an action he claims "could have ended the war within a month." Al-Jalil says he does not understand the reasons for NATO's failure to strike these targets: "God knows the conditions under which the coalition operates. Perhaps there is competition among these countries, or perhaps there is inability. I do not understand military issues, and I do not know the reason." The rebel leader does describe "prevarication" in decision-making after NATO took command of air operations on March 25: "Perhaps the reason

is the difference in the attacking capabilities of the aircraft of the friends in France, Italy and Britain, and the extent of the advance of the U.S. aircraft used in the first strikes.”

Abd al-Jalil rejects suggestions that members of al-Qaeda are active in the armed opposition: “You know very well that the issue of al-Qaeda is a scarecrow used by the enemies and opponents who support Mu’ammara Qaddafi in dealing with the international community, especially with the Europeans and the United States.” Ignoring the March 12 message to Libyans from top al-Qaeda leader and Libyan native Abu Yahya al-Libi, al-Jalil claims: “Some Libyan individuals were members of al-Qaeda, but their number does not exceed ten, and they have abandoned their organization, and the organization abandoned them long ago.”

While insisting that “Libyans are capable of managing the battle by themselves,” al-Jalil admits that he is asking France, Italy and Qatar to urge NATO and its coalition partners to apply greater force against the Libyan regime. He alleges that Qaddafi is also receiving foreign support from Algeria, Niger, Chad and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) of Abd al-Wahid al-Nur. The latter is a Darfur rebel movement consisting mostly of Fur tribesmen, unlike the largely Zaghawa Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), which has more commonly been accused of supporting Qaddafi, though no evidence of this has been presented. [1] According to al-Jalil, the NTC has asked France to do something about the fuel, weapons and other supplies they claim are flowing to Qaddafi’s forces from the former French colonies and is now “waiting for the results.”

Al-Jalil also suggests that the Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC) of Ahmad Jibril has sent 1,000 Palestinians to Tripoli to defend the regime. The PFLP-GC was also recently blamed by Syrian authorities for the sniper killings of anti-Assad protestors in the Syrian port city of Latakia, though many observers believe the killings were the work of Syrian security forces (see *Terrorism Monitor* Brief, April 1).

There are reports of divisions within the NTC over the introduction of Western ground forces in Libya, though there is some consensus that NATO air operations are insufficient to guarantee a rebel victory. If the UN Security Council and the Arab League fail to authorize such an intervention, the rebels may seek out their own “military experts and advisers to boost the capabilities

of the Free Libya Army” (al-Sharq al-Awsat, April 21). The NTC chairman confirms that the rebel camp has been successful in obtaining new weapons, either through purchase or donation, and that some of these weapons have been shipped to the rebels in Misurata.

Note:

1. See Andrew McGregor, Jamestown Foundation Special Commentary, “Update on African Mercenaries: Have Darfur Rebels Joined Qaddafi’s Mercenary Defenders?” February 24, 2011. [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=37563](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37563)

#### AL-QAEDA IN THE ISLAMIC MAGHREB STRIKES ALGERIAN MILITARY IN KABYLIA

While the Saharan wing of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has dominated regional headlines in the last year, the larger core wing of AQIM operating in the northern forests and mountains of the Kabylia region has recently stepped up its activities, killing dozens of soldiers, gendarmes and civilians in a series of attacks this month.

A major AQIM raid targeted a guard post of the Armée Nationale Populaire (ANP) near the town of Azazga in Tizi Ouzou province on the evening of April 14/15. Local residents say the attack began at 8PM with a series of mortar explosions, followed by bursts of automatic rifle fire. Soon after the assault began, government helicopters arrived and delivered heavy fire against a nearby forest to which the assailants had fled. Other helicopters evacuated the dead and wounded to a military hospital in Algiers (Le Temps d’Algérie, April 17).

An AQIM communiqué released on April 20 claimed responsibility for the attack, saying that one mujahid was killed during the raid: “We will never forget the blood of our martyrs and we will reply to all those among us who have been killed by the evil apostates [i.e. the Algerian military]” (Ennahar [Algiers], April 20). Official sources said the militants had suffered heavy losses in the attack (Le Temps d’Algérie, April 27).

Militants have begun using roadside bombs along the RN 24 highway in Kabylia, recently re-opened after being closed for security reasons for 20 years (al-Watan [Algiers], April 13; La Tribune [Algiers], April 7). Two gendarmes were killed in Kabylia by a roadside bomb on April 27 (Reuters, April 27).

In the town of Lakhdaria, surrounded by the mountains of Kabylia, a remote-controlled bomb planted in a restaurant killed one gendarme and injured another. It was believed the bomb was meant to target Chinese nationals who frequented the restaurant, but the arrival of the gendarmes led the terrorists to detonate the device early (L'Expression [Algiers], April 18).

Algerian security forces are engaged in constant operations to eliminate the elusive cells of AQIM. Four AQIM fighters were killed on April 24 in a large military operation carried out in the Khenafou mountains of Tizi Ouzu province. Authorities said intensive intelligence work had led to the arrest of the guide of a column of roughly 20 AQIM militants. The guide was about a day and a half ahead of the rest of the group and his information allowed security forces to prepare and ambush for his comrades (Tour sur l'Algérie, April 26). Algerian authorities had earlier reported the death of eight AQIM militants in Tizi Ouzu and neighboring Boumerdès province on April 15 (L'Expression, April 18).

Algerian troops and fighter jets are also monitoring the southern Saharan region for AQIM militants crossing to and from Libya. Seven militants were reported to have been killed by border guards with shoot-to-kill orders on April 20, three of them while trying to enter Libya (al-Khabar [Algiers], April 20).

## Clashes Erupt Between Khyber Tribesmen and Lashkar-e-Islam Militants

*By Zia Ur Rehman*

**T**he Lashkar-e-Islam (LeI), a Mangal Bagh-led militant organization based in the Khyber Tribal Agency, is facing a serious threat to its existence after recent clashes with an LeI splinter group comprised of Zakakhel tribesmen. Efforts by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to forge a peace deal between the warring groups have failed. The Ansar-ul-Islam (AI), an arch-rival of the LeI, has now joined hands with the Zakakhel and the resulting clashes have forced hundreds of local families to flee the area.

The Khyber Agency is one of Pakistan's seven tribal agencies and borders Afghanistan to the east, Orakzai Agency to the south, Mohmand Agency to the north and the district of Peshawar in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province to the east. Sectarian violence, drug mafias and Sunni militant groups aiming to establish a Taliban-style government all fuel conflict in the region. Local militants belong to different extremist groups such as the LeI, the AI, the TTP and Amr Bil Maroof Wanahi Anil Munkar (Invitation to Virtue and Negation of Vice). These movements became active in the region after 2004 and have since wreaked havoc on the lives of Khyber's residents. Though the militant groups often compete with one another, the LeI, which is loosely allied with the TTP, has a strong base in the region and frequently attacks and loots trucks carrying fuel and other goods to NATO forces in Afghanistan, making passage through the valley unsafe.

The LeI is based in areas belonging to the majority Afridi tribe and are most prominent in the Bara sub-division of Khyber Agency. Recently, however, the strategically located Tirah valley has emerged as a flash point in Khyber Agency and is believed to have been used by al-Qaeda militants escaping into Pakistan in the wake of U.S and NATO attacks on Afghanistan in 2001. Many locals believe the troop surge in Afghanistan has increased pressure on the Khyber Agency to accommodate militants expelled from Afghanistan. [1] Ibn Amin, an important commander of al-Qaeda and the TTP Swat chapter, was killed with six other militants in one of four drone attacks carried out on December 17-18, 2010 in Khyber Agency. Ibn Amin was reported

to be engaged in mediating a reconciliation between the different factions of the LeI at the time (*The News* [Islamabad], December 20, 2010).

The recent clashes between the LeI and the Zakakhel tribesmen started after a religious scholar of the Zakakhel tribe, Maulana Muhammad Hashim, was kidnapped from the bazaar area of Landi Kotal subdivision on March 21 and beheaded a day later by a group of LeI militants led by Commander Khan, a close aide of Mangal Bagh (for Bagh, see *Terrorism Monitor*, May 29, 2008). Hashim, a respected and influential religious cleric living in a remote area of Tirah valley, was a severe critic of Bagh and the un-Islamic and criminal activities of militants under his command. [2] The abduction and subsequent murder of Hashim enraged militants from his tribe, who then formed a dissident group to rebel against Bagh, warning him to release Khan to the Zakakhel tribe (*The News*, April 2). Ghuncha Gul, a Zakakhel leader of an LeI breakaway faction, was also abducted by militants loyal to Bagh two months ago and is still in captivity. The Zakakhel demanded the LeI release their fellow tribesman from detention, hand over Commander Khan, who is blamed for the killing of Hashim, and guarantee that LeI militants will not operate in the Zakakhel area again. Their demands were turned down by Mangal Bagh (*Express Tribune* [Islamabad], April 4).

The armed lashkar (militia) of the Zakakhel is commanded by three senior LeI dissident commanders – Shireen, Tooti and Munshi. The AI, the arch-rival of LeI, joined hands with the Zakakhel fighters against the LeI. Hundreds of people have been killed in clashes between the LeI and AI during the last five years. By the latest account, at least 50 people have been killed and 100 others injured in the fighting that began on April 1. The clashes forced local people to move to safer places and hundreds of families arrived in Peshawar and other safer areas in Khyber Agency. Local media and tribal sources said that the Zakakhel tribesmen have pushed the LeI out of the area of Baazar Zakakhel and have weakened, though not completely evicted, the LeI's militia in other parts of the valley. [3]

The AI's leaders have claimed that Mangal Bagh and his associates recently fled to Afghanistan, taking shelter there with Amin Shinwari, a notorious drug baron in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province. Their flight came in the face of growing public opposition, which resulted from the constant vigilantism and repression imposed locally by the LeI (*Daily Mashriq* [Peshawar], April 18).

The recent alliance between the Zakakhel and AI has also worried the TTP militants of the Khyber and Orakzai tribal regions. Two important TTP commanders, Maulana Gul Zaman and Commander Saeed, were expelled in March by the AI from Zakakhel areas in Maidan (bordering Orakzai Agency), where they had opened training centers. Zaman has good relations with LeI chief Mangal Bagh and took refuge in the Tirah valley following a military operation against the TTP in his native tribal agency (*The News*, April 5). The TTP leaders, especially Zaman, held talks with the dissident Zakakhel to bring them back into the LeI fold but did not succeed. [4] It has also been learned that Bagh appealed to the TTP for help to fight his many enemies. Some Taliban militants have reached the area to fight alongside Bagh's loyalists. Local residents fear that if the TTP joins hands with the LeI, the fighting would increase in intensity as Hafiz Gul Bahadar-led militants from North Waziristan are likely to come to the aid of the AI, which is ideologically close in its beliefs (*Express Tribune*, April 6). Many observers suggest that Bagh had the blessing of the Pakistani military establishment because he rebuffed several offers from the TTP to cooperate and merge, but now his alliance with the TTP shows that the LeI has been weakened organizationally. The Zakakhel, once a powerful supporter in the region, has now become their enemy (*BBC Urdu*, April 18).

The Pakistani government has targeted the LeI in five operations over the past two years in order to relieve pressure on Peshawar and secure NATO supplies through the Khyber Pass, but has failed to dislodge the group. Despite occasional claims about government "successes," the Khyber Agency remains a serious problem. The LeI remains a serious threat in Khyber and beyond, having the capability to cause trouble in Peshawar and the adjoining Orakzai Agency. [5] Local elders and security analysts agree that the parting of ways of the Zakakhel fighters from the LeI was a great setback to the LeI as the Zakakhel provided great support to Bagh in the form of manpower and the use of their strategically important territory. If the government plays its cards right by supporting the Zakakhel and putting pressure on the LeI in other parts of Khyber Agency, there is a chance to eradicate a menace from the region. However, tribal dynamics are complicated and if not handled properly, Mangal Bagh and the LeI may yet survive in other parts of the tribal region.

*Zia Ur Rehman is a journalist and researcher and works on militancy, human rights and development in Pakistan's tribal areas. He is a Pakistan Pashtun*



*belonging to the Swat Valley and has written for Central Asia Online, The News, New York Times and Newslime.*

Notes:

1. Author's interview with Aqeel Yousafzai, a Peshawar-based journalist and author of two books on militancy, April 19, 2011.
2. Author's interviews with Zakakhel tribesmen, April 15, 2011.
3. Ibid.
4. Author's interview with a local journalist based in Khyber Agency, April 16, 2011.
5. Author's interview with Aqeel Yousafzai, April 19, 2011.

## The Jubaland Initiative: Is Kenya Creating a Buffer State in Southern Somalia?

*By Derek Henry Flood*

Several reports circulated through the international media in early April indicating that a new semi-autonomous state, tentatively named Jubaland (or alternately "Azaniya"), would be created in southwestern Somalia to contain the Somali militant outfit Harakat al-Shabaab. Jubaland is purportedly being created by Kenyan authorities to keep al-Shabaab fighters far away from the border of its North Eastern Province with Somalia where recent clashes and cross border incursions from both belligerents have occurred.

Jubaland would supposedly be composed of three Somali regions: Lower Juba, Middle Juba, and Gedo. The state would be headed by a professor named Muhammad Abdi Muhammad "Gandhi," who briefly served as defense minister in Mogadishu in February 2009 (Garowe Online, February 21, 2009). Jubaland would have as its capital the Indian Ocean port of Kismayo, which was for a period of time under the firm control of an alliance between al-Shabaab and the Mu'askar Ras Kamboni militia (al-Jazeera, December 21, 2008). Professor Gandhi, as the former defense minister is commonly known, has outlined his strong desire to create a new, stable sub-state entity, analogous to Somaliland and Puntland, in order to "liberate Jubaland from extremists" (*Daily Nation* [Nairobi], April 3).

Beyond the argument for defending Kenya's borders from foreign militants, Kenya's ethnic Somali majority in North Eastern Province has historically been threatened by the Greater Somalia movement and deeply rooted notions of pan-Somali irredentism. From November 1963 to April 1968, a pro-Somali movement fought government forces in what was then called the Northern Frontier District. Known as the "Shifita War," the conflict pitted Jomo Kenyatta's Kenya in alliance with Haile Sellasie's Ethiopia against ethnic Somali rebels and their backers in the Republic of Somalia. [1] Nairobi is not threatened solely by al-Shabaab forces crossing into Kenyan territory to stage attacks, but also fears a resurgence of ethnic Somali nationalism within its borders and the incitement of over 300,000 Somali refugees currently subsisting inside Kenya. Al-Shabaab

spokesman Shaykh Ali Mahmud Raage recently rattled his saber at the Kenyan state by claiming Nairobi was knowingly allowing Ethiopian regular troops to stage offensive operations against al-Shabaab from the border town of Mandera (Reuters, February 27). Al-Shabaab wasted little time in making good on its threats by launching a bomb and gun attack on Mandera just two weeks later (*The Standard* [Nairobi], March 15). Beatrice Karago, counselor at the Kenyan Embassy in Addis Ababa told Jamestown the embassy has no knowledge of the entrance of Ethiopian troops into sovereign Kenyan soil as asserted by al-Shabaab. When asked if the Jubaland initiative had been a possible thorn in the side of Kenyan-Ethiopian relations, Karago glossed over any possible policy rift, replying: “Kenya and Ethiopia have always had good relations.”

Differing from the official Kenyan account of Kenyan-Ethiopian relations, a U.S. Embassy cable released by the Wikileaks site states: “[Prime Minister] Meles [Zenawi] said the GoE [Government of Ethiopia] is not enthusiastic about Kenya’s Jubaland initiative, but is sharing intelligence with Kenya and hoping for success. In the event the initiative is not successful, the GoE has plans in place to limit the destabilizing impacts on Ethiopia.” [2] In describing the unilateralist nature of Ethiopia’s 2006 failed military intervention in Somalia, Prime Minister Zenawi was hesitant to predict a successful outcome for any political or military intervention in southern Somalia by the Kenyans, at least from a tactical standpoint. If Kenya’s Jubaland initiative was to ever get off the ground and have a modicum of success, it is likely that Addis Ababa would publicly lend the government of President Emilio Mwai Kibaki and a nascent Jubaland administration tentative support coupled with further repression of indigenous ethnic-Somali separatists such as the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in Ethiopia’s vast Ogaden Region.

Another significant factor that should not be overlooked is Kenya’s long-standing Somali refugee crisis. An additional reason for Nairobi to solidify a new semi-autonomous region inside Somalia is to stem the steady flow of displaced people fleeing the non-stop violence in that country. Kenya, as an impoverished host country, views the refugees as both a large financial burden and a security liability. Francis Kimemia, Kenya’s permanent secretary for internal security, believes that at some point the refugees must be repatriated to Somalia, where African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeeping troops or forces loyal to

the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) should be responsible for their well-being. Jamestown was unable to reach AMISOM for comments at its Addis Ababa headquarters. However, an official working in an adjacent Sudanese security affairs office stated that he believed the implementation of a purely Kenya-driven reorganization of the Somali state lacked solid prospects. Despite the difficulties ahead, Kenya is being forced to act pragmatically. According to Kimenia: “The long-term option is to urgently stabilize Somalia since Kenya may not host the refugees forever” (*Daily Nation* [Nairobi], April 20). Kenya would prefer the Somalis be internally displaced inside Somalia rather than remain in fetid conditions in its northeast, where they pose what it believes is a possible security risk in regard to radicalization and cross border arms smuggling, among other issues.

A critical factor for Kenya’s wider security structure, particularly in the wake of the July 11, 2010 Kampala bombings attributed to al-Shabaab, is the very real threat posed by the now transnational Somali Islamists against Kenya. Al-Shabaab has become hostile to Kenya for what it believes to be Nairobi’s direct support for the TFG. [3] Simultaneously, the Mogadishu-based TFG is wary of the Jubaland initiative because it views any further devolution of power in Somalia as an existential threat to its authority, undermining its ability to bring any kind of future peace to Somalia proper. TFG Prime Minister Muhammad Abdullahi Muhammad further views the Jubaland initiative as a blow to Somali-Kenyan bilateral relations and opposes its formation (Raxanreeb, April 7).

Though the TFG views, perhaps correctly, that the further dissection of an already truncated Somali state greatly erodes any chance of reconciliation amongst constantly feuding parties, Nairobi believes it is acting to contain a very real threat along and inside its borders. In the eyes of the Kibaki government, the creation of Jubaland may isolate the seemingly pointless machinations of the TFG in its AMISOM-protected Villa Somalia compound, but it will greatly assist in buffering Kenya from al-Shabaab attacks. Kenyan patience with Somalia’s unending internecine strife and the relative impotence of the TFG is running out.

Although the African Union supposedly backed the Jubaland initiative, Jamestown met with Shewit Hailu, an AU official in Addis Ababa, who stated that the AU had taken no official position, nor made any

official statements regarding the political reordering of southwestern Somalia's perennially troubled geography (see also *The Standard* [Nairobi], April 3).

While al-Shabaab militants increase tension in the border region with attacks inside Kenya and reported engagements with Ethiopian troops, the TFG's governor in the southern Gedo region, Muhammad Abdi Kalil, said his men under arms are at war with al-Shabaab (Shabelle Media Network, April 24). Kalil claims his forces are preparing to mount a counteroffensive against al-Shabaab, though it is unclear just what such an offensive would look like considering the TFG's inherent military weaknesses in the region. Adam Diriye, an MP in the beleaguered TFG administration, called on the people of Middle and Lower Juba to revolt against al-Shabaab, describing the TFG forces in Gedo as "heroes" (Shabelle Media Network, March 15). From a security standpoint, the three regions would, at the very least, have to largely evict al-Shabaab fighters from their respective administrative centers in order to consolidate a future Jubaland - no easy task at present. According to David Shinn, former U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia: "Until the supporters of the Jubaland State can take control of the area from al-Shabaab, it is nothing more than a creation on a map with elected representatives sitting in Nairobi." [4]

*Derek Henry Flood is the editor of Jamestown's Militant Leadership Monitor publication. Mr. Flood is also an independent author and journalist who blogs at the-war-diaries.com.*

Notes:

1. Nene Mburu, *Bandits on the Border: The Last Frontier in the Search for Somali Unity*, (Trenton, New Jersey: Red Sea Press, 2005), p. 153.
2. To view the original document, see: "Under Secretary Otero's Meeting with Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi - January 31, 2010," <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2010/02/10ADDISABABA163.html#par4>.
3. Barako Elema, "Insurgency in Somalia and Kenya's Security Dilemma", Institute for Security Studies [Pretoria], March 31, 2011.
4. Author's email exchange with Ambassador David Shinn, March 19, 2011.

## Mapping Qaddafi's Tribal Allegiances in Libya: An Overview

By Camille Tawil

After announcing that Libyan troops had suspended operations in Misurata, an official of the Libyan government suggested that armed tribesmen loyal to the regime would soon take their place. It would then be up to the tribesmen to negotiate with the besieged rebels or to carry on the fight: "If [the army] cannot solve the problem in Misurata, then the people from Zleitan, Tarhouna, Ben Walid, Tawargha and other villages will move in and talk to the rebels. If they don't surrender, then they will engage them in fighting" (Tripoli Post, April 23; al-Jazeera, April 24). Khalid Kaim, Libya's deputy foreign minister, said the loyalist tribes had several points of contention with the rebels, including the disruption of roads and trade and control of the Misurata seaport. On an ominous note, Kaim claimed that the army had tried to keep civilian casualties to a minimum, but the government could provide no guarantees that tribesmen would show the same restraint (BBC, April 23).

### A One Man Regime

Colonel Mu'ammarr Qaddafi's regime looks weak from the outside. It is a one-man show. Qaddafi is the man who makes the important decisions in Libya. Not a single significant order can be issued without his approval. Qaddafi claims that he is neither a president nor a prime minister; he is only the leader of the revolution, in addition to being Africa's self-appointed "King of Kings." In theory, toppling a one-man regime with many enemies inside and outside the country should not be a difficult thing to do. In practice, however, it is a different matter, as Qaddafi has proved during his long rule of Libya.

The 1969 military coup that ultimately led to Qaddafi taking power was certainly not a one-man show. The officers behind the coup that toppled the regime of King Idriss al-Sanusi came from all over the country and were mainly influenced by the Nasserite pan-Arab popular movement at that time. Gradually, Colonel Qaddafi started to change and wanted to concentrate power onto himself, something which must have upset many of the people who were part of the coup or supported the new military regime. These people then started to defect, with some even plotting to remove Qaddafi from power.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Qaddafi's regime defeated three major plots carried out by the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL). In 1984, NFSL members attacked the Colonel's residence in Tripoli's Bab al-Aziziya military compound. In the late 1980s, the National Front moved its camps and fighters to Algeria, where it hoped to launch a coup against Qaddafi. The third and final plot by the NFSL was carried out in 1993 by officers who came mainly from a powerful tribe that has otherwise been loyal to Qaddafi's regime, the Warfalla. In the mid-1990s, Qaddafi also defeated an armed insurgency by the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), a jihadist movement made up mainly of veterans of Afghanistan's anti-Soviet jihad (see *Terrorism Monitor*, May 5, 2005; November 3, 2005).

These coup attempts and insurgencies led Qaddafi to change the way he organized his armed forces. He started to see the army as a threat; the army could one day produce an officer who may try his own luck at a coup attempt as did the young colonel himself in 1969. To prevent such a scenario, Qaddafi created what can be described as a parallel army that was better equipped than the regular army. This parallel army is known in Libya today as the "Qaddafi Brigades," the most famous of which is led by Khamis, a son of Colonel Qaddafi (for Khamis, see *Militant Leadership Monitor*, February 28). The parallel army's main mission is to protect the regime from any revolt or coup attempt. It is not designed for fighting another army, and its members, who are known to be loyal to Qaddafi, are equipped with the best arms available to the Libyan armed forces.

### Qaddafi's Tribal Support

In addition to these loyal brigades, the survival of Qaddafi's regime is dependent on a complex map of tribal allegiances and pacts with tribes, especially those in the western Libya. Some people say that the tribal influence in Libya is not that important today, pointing to the fact that the current uprising seem to be a popular movement that has support from different regions and tribes all over the country. They also believe that the tribes which are still supporting Qaddafi in the west of Libya are doing so out of fear of his regime. Both may be true, but the tribes in western Libya still hold the key to Qaddafi's fate:

- The first tribe on which Qaddafi depends is his own, the Qadadfa. This tribe's main base is in Sirte, in central Libya, on the Mediterranean coast. It is not a big tribe, but it is very powerful.

Its members hold sensitive positions within the state and the armed units which are currently leading the fight. There are reports that each fighting unit includes a Qadadfa tribesman or two to insure its loyalty.

- The second important tribe on which the regime depends is the Megharha. Its base is in the south of Libya, around the city of Sabha, and a great number of the fighters in Qaddafi's units come from this area. Their loyalty to the regime should not be questioned. Their position is very strong in the Libyan state, and their alliance to Qaddafi is cemented by family ties - Abdullah al-Sanus, the head of military intelligence and the brother-in-law of Colonel Qaddafi, is a Meghrahi. Abd al-Basit al-Meghrahi, the Lockerbie bomber, is also a Meghrahi, as is obvious from his name. About two years ago, Colonel Qaddafi put great pressure on the British government to secure the release of Abd al-Basit from a Scottish prison. He wanted to please the Megharha tribe which was very angry at the prospect that Meghrahi, who was reported to be terminally ill, might die in jail in a foreign country. Some would also argue that Qaddafi wanted Meghrahi back home to ensure that he did not reveal any secrets about the Lockerbie bombing before dying.

- The third important tribe for the regime is the Warfalla. It is considered the largest tribe in Libya (more than one million strong, out of more than 6 million Libyans) and its members live all over the country, including Benghazi. Its main base is just to the south of Tripoli in an area called Bani Walid. The tribe's members hold very important positions within the government and security agencies. The Warfalla's relationship with Qaddafi suffered a setback after the 1993 failed coup, in which some Warfalla officers were implicated. Qaddafi saw the officers' attempt against him as a betrayal, not only to him, but also to their own tribe, which Qaddafi had trusted and allowed to control a large part of the military and security institutions. In 1997, members of the Warfalla tribe executed the implicated officers. Some would argue that they were forced to do so by Qaddafi. Whether or not this is true, the fact is that Qaddafi managed to keep the blood of these dead officers on the hands of their tribe. In some Arab cultures, there is still an ancient tradition of tribal revenge - if



a member of one tribe is killed by another tribe, then the victim's tribe has the right to take revenge by killing a member of the other tribe. Sometimes these tit-for-tat killings can go on for decades. By making the Warfalla tribe kill its own officers, Qaddafi was able to make it an internal tribal issue. The matter was resolved when the leaders of the tribe renewed their pact with Qaddafi and his tribe. To this day, the Warfalla still compose an important part of the units that defend the regime (Reuters, March 8, 2011).

- The fourth tribe is the Tarhouna. They are also seen as loyal to Qaddafi and his tribe, and they occupy important positions within the security agencies. Their role became more important after the 1993 coup by the Warfalla officers, which led Qaddafi to give more prominent roles to other tribes. The Tarhouna's importance also stems from the fact that they control vast areas south of Tripoli housing many army barracks and military compounds. In addition, much of Tripoli's population is derived from the Tarhouna. This factor will become very important if the opposition tries to mount any kind of operation against the regime inside the Libyan capital.

*of militant Islamic groups. He is the author of Brothers in Arms: the Story of Al-Qaida and the Arab Jihadists.*

## Conclusion

These are only the most prominent of the tribes still seen as loyal to the Libyan regime, or at least not siding with the rebels against it. The reason these tribes stay loyal to the regime may be related to their desire to honor their historic pacts with the Qadadfa, the Colonel's tribe. They could also be fearful of losing the power they hold if Qaddafi falls. Under his regime, members of these tribes have occupied important positions in the government. Now a new regime is emerging, based in the east of the country, where the majority of the rebels are from. It seems normal, therefore, that some tribes in the west of Libya would feel threatened by the emergence of a new rival power in the east that might try to separate them from the power they have enjoyed for so long. It will now be seen in the coming days whether these tribes are willing to enter the conflict as a third armed force.

*Camille Tawil is an investigative journalist and Jamestown analyst who specializes in Islamist groups and movements. Mr. Tawil writes for al-Hayat newspaper in London where he has worked since 1991, covering the Middle East and writing about the activities*