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A man sits under electoral posters for Salafi political party Al-Nour and the Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party

EGYPT’S MUSLIM BROTHERS WATCH AS DIVISIONS REND THEIR SALAFIST CHALLENGERS

Andrew McGregor

As the February 25 parliamentary elections grow near, the political wings of Egypt’s Salafist movement continue to fragment, raising questions about the movement’s ability to replicate its relative success in last year’s elections, in which the movement took nearly a quarter of the available seats despite being political neophytes.

Egypt’s Salafist movement was shaken on December 26, 2012, when Nur Party leader Abd al-Ghafour and two former Nur Party spokesmen, Yousri Hammad and Muhammad Nur, joined roughly 150 other party members in a mass resignation followed by the creation of the new Watan (Homeland) Party (Daily News Egypt, December 29, 2012). The Nur Party was the lead element in a largely Salafist coalition that placed second in parliamentary elections last year before that parliament was dissolved as unconstitutional by a June decision of the Supreme Constitutional Court of Egypt.

Abd al-Ghafour became engaged in a power struggle with Nur Party vice-chairman Shaykh Nasser al-Borhami, a founder of al-Da’wa al-Salafiya (the Salafist Calling), an Islamist group formed in 1970s Alexandria as a rival to the Muslim Brotherhood, which later created the Nur Party as its political expression. Al-Ghafour led a wing of the party that called for internal reform of the powerful role played in political decisions by the clerics of al-Da’wa al-Salafiya. Not surprisingly, al-Ghafour and al-Watan have lost the support of the Salafist Calling, which will inevitably hurt their appeal to the party’s core constituency. Referring to the dispute, Ahmad Badie, a prominent Nur Party defector and new Watan Party spokesman, said: “The role of clerics should be restricted to handing down edicts and opinions on matters that pertain to the Shari’a...

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but they should not be involved in elections or day-to-day politics” (*al-Masry al-Youm* [Cairo], January 21).

Watan Party vice-president Dr. Yusri Hamad explained in an interview with a pan-Arab daily that the new party’s ultimate reference is Islamic Shari’a, “the general model for all Salafist parties.” Al-Watan, however, will not be “exclusionist,” but will welcome the participation of Copts and women in its ranks: “We have spoken about women’s rights and dignity and the importance of women playing a role. At the same time, we are also extending our hand in national partnership to the Copts because Egypt was not built by any one faction or entity; therefore everybody is invited to participate in the country’s construction and development.” This openness will not, however, extend to guaranteeing women roles as candidates for the party. In the Egyptian context, Hamad says Salafism “means that we believe that state-building and reform must be based on two things; modernity, in addition to the traditions and values that are present and which distinguish Egypt from other countries” (*al-Sharq al-Awsat*, January 7).

Borhami and the Nur Party are adamant that mandatory representation for women and Christians in the new Egyptian parliament is a violation of Shari’a and the constitution; “Allocating quotas for women and Copts simply because of their gender or religion is blatant discrimination” (*al-Masry al-Youm* [Cairo], January 21). The Nur Party was forced to include female candidates in the previous parliamentary election to avoid being banned from participation.

Given the measured words of the Watan leaders and their temperate demeanor, it is somewhat surprising that they have aligned themselves closely with Shaykh Hazem Salah Abu Ismail, an outspoken and unpredictable preacher who spoke at the Watan founding despite planning to announce his own Salafist party days later.

Abu Ismail keeps his place in Egyptian headlines through an apparently endless series of provocative statements. Most recently he blamed Egypt’s post-revolution economic collapse on “rumors about the economy” spread by the political opposition (*al-Shorouk* [Cairo], January 4). He has also condemned the national protests scheduled for January 25, describing their advocates as “criminals” who want “to burn the country” (*Daily News Egypt*, January 4).

Abu Ismail has repeatedly called for the dismissal of Interior Minister Major General Ahmad Gamal al-Din after police tried to enter his political headquarters following an outbreak of political violence. A series of violent attacks on the offices of the Wafd Party and its newspaper as well as the offices of the Popular Current, a political coalition led by Neo-

Nasserist Hamdeen Sabahi (Karama Party), were blamed by police on members of Abu Ismail’s party. Abu Ismail denied any knowledge of the attacks but was undone by his own followers, who celebrated their role in the attacks on their Facebook accounts (*Daily News Egypt*, December 16, 2012).

Abu Ismail has said he will not run for president or for the House of Representatives (the new name for Egypt’s parliament), adding that he had only run for president in the last election out of fear that the regime would mount a counter-revolution (*al-Masry al-Youm* [Cairo], January 22). Before his disqualification from the contest on the grounds his mother had dual U.S.-Egyptian citizenship (a violation of electoral rules), Abu Ismail shocked many Salafists with his advocacy of rebellion against “unjust” rulers. Despite the suspicions raised by his support for this very un-Salafist belief, Abu Ismail seems to have appealed to many young Islamists who subsequently entered his camp (*al-Masry al-Youm* [Cairo], January 21).

Besides their alliance with Abu Ismail’s Umma al-Misriya Party, al-Watan is seeking to build a coalition named Watan al-Hor (Free Homeland) with other Salafist parties, including the Asala (Fundamentals) Party of Shaykh Muhammad Abd al-Maqsud, Hizb al-Fadila (Virtue Party), Hizb al-Islah (Reform Party) and the Islamist New Labor Party. Negotiations continue regarding the participation of two other parties, Hizb al-Wasat (Center Party), a moderate breakaway faction of the Muslim Brotherhood, and Hizb al-Bena’a wa’l-Tanmia (Building and Development Party), the political wing of al-Gama’a al-Islamiya.

Though an accelerating process of political divisions is usually regarded as a troubling sign for most political movements or ideologies, the deputy chief of the Nur Party, Mustafa Khalifa, has put a more attractive spin on the political fragmentation, suggesting it will provide voters with “more alternatives from across the political spectrum” (*al-Ahram Weekly*, January 23). In a less rosy light, it appears that, unlike the more powerful and enduring Muslim Brotherhood, the Salafist movement in Egypt has fallen victim to the growth of personality-driven politics. There is little to differentiate between the aims and ideology of the growing number of Salafist political parties; in most cases these differences could probably be accommodated within a single party. As the new Salafist formations draw their strength from existing parties, a space has opened for the emergence of confrontational leaders such as Abu Ismail who have the potential of polarizing the nascent electorate. The Muslim Brotherhood can also be expected to exploit the Salafist divisions in February’s parliamentary election by presenting themselves

as a movement where the promotion of Islam in daily life is more important than the success or failure of individuals.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENSE FORCE – A MILITARY IN FREEFALL

Andrew McGregor

Despite an eagerness to use the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) as a means of projecting the nation's influence abroad, there is evidence that South Africa's government has so neglected or mismanaged its military assets that it may soon be unable to defend itself, much less engage in international adventures.

Last year, Roelf Meyer, the chairman of South Africa's defense review committee, identified a number of strategic goals for the SANDF, including:

- Maintaining the security of South Africa's borders;
- Promoting peace and security in Africa;
- Assisting civil authorities in policing or anti-poaching efforts;
- Establishing South Africa as a responsible leading member of the African Union;
- Responding to new regional threats such as piracy (*Business Day* [Johannesburg], April 13, 2012).

However, with a reduced force size and inadequate resources, the SANDF will soon have difficulty meeting most of these goals. The SANDF is already estimated to be three battalions short of what it requires to meet current commitments (*Johannesburg Star*, January 9). Defense spending is now 1.2 percent of GDP, shy of the IMF's recommended 2 percent, and there are no plans to increase it.

Considering the current restraints on the SANDF, the president's decision to deploy a reinforced paratroop company of some 400 men to the Central African Republic (CAR) earlier this month took many by surprise, not least because of the president's failure to inform parliament of the deployment and the costs involved as he is required to do by the South African constitution (*Johannesburg Star*, January 8; for the intervention in the CAR, see Terrorism Monitor Brief, January 10). The South African force was chartered into the CAR due to a lack of operable transport aircraft.

Prior to the CAR deployment, SANDF already had nearly 2,000 personnel active on peacekeeping and training

missions in Darfur, the CAR and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Some 1,200 South African troops were amongst the 1,500 man UN peacekeeping force (the Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo - MONUSCO) that was heavily criticized in November for allowing a few hundred rebels to take the Congolese city of Goma with little fighting (See Terrorism Monitor, November 30, 2012). With a total strength of over 19,000 and a budget of over \$1.4 billion annually, MONUSCO is the largest and most expensive peacekeeping force in the world (*Daily Monitor* [Kampala], December 29, 2012).

Life in the South African military is not seen as desirable by many potential recruits. Pay can be erratic, HIV rates are as high as 25% (making these troops unavailable for external deployment) and an estimated 35% of South Africa's military barracks have been classed as unfit for human occupation since 2007 (*Mail & Guardian* [Johannesburg], April 21, 2012). Without money to operate sophisticated equipment, skilled staff continue to flee at the end of their enlistment and there is little opportunity for new recruits to train in skills useful in the civilian world. Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Defense has described abuse of women in the SANDF as "common," adding that many female recruits have been impregnated by their instructors (BUAnews, November 26, 2011). Racial abuse of black subordinates by white senior officers also remains a problem 19 years into the integration process (*Mail & Guardian* [Johannesburg], August 21, 2011). South African troops are unionized and have at times clashed with police during pay disputes.

With the 2012 defense budget of \$3.8 billion still far below the 2 percent of GDP required to maintain the armed forces, the South African defense department began looking at other ways of generating income, including contracting out soldiers to municipalities to do various labor and infrastructure repair projects. The department also created the Defense Estate Management agency to lease or sell-off defense department lands. Much of the land owned by the SANDF came by way of British government endowments of military facilities made on the condition that they could only be used for defense purposes (*Mail & Guardian* [Johannesburg], April 21, 2012).

There has also been a temptation to use the military as a well-armed police force to suppress labor unrest and gang activity. Considerable controversy was generated last year when President Jacob Zuma deployed 1,000 SANDF troops to aid police in disarming striking Lonmin miners following a massacre by police (*Johannesburg Times*, September 21, 2012; SAPA, September 16). Western Cape premier Helen

Zille issued a request for troops to fight “emergency levels” of gang violence in Cape Town in July (AFP, July 10, 2012). By late November, there were calls for the army to be sent to rural areas of the Western Cape to prevent violence by striking farm workers (SAPA, November 28, 2012).

Sending the SANDF into the streets of South Africa damaged President Zuma’s credibility as the South African Development Community (SADC) facilitator in neighboring Zimbabwe, where he has urged that Zimbabwean troops be confined to barracks. According to the state-run *Daily Mail*, if South African presidential spokesman Mac Maharaj “thinks he will be able to still come here and continue mindlessly preaching about keeping the army in the barracks as part of President Zuma’s mediation, then he does not take himself seriously” (*New Zimbabwe*, September 24, 2012).

Politicization of the military is still a problem in South Africa. There has been speculation that the current chief of the SANDF, Angolan-trained Lieutenant General Solly Zacharia Shoke, received his appointment as a result of his history as a commander in Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC’s military wing (SAPA, May 11, 2011). Umkhonto we Sizwe forces were integrated into the newly formed SANDF between 1994 and 2004. An investigative commission recently declared that the SANDF was too politicized, a situation typified by former Defense Minister Lindiwe Sisulu’s preference for wearing SANDF uniforms at public occasions (SAPA, April 28, 2011). A sometimes unaccountable procurement process remains a problem for the South African military; last year the political opposition revealed over \$7.75 billion had passed through a defense department slush fund that had failed to reveal to parliament how the money had been spent (*Johannesburg Times*, April 18, 2012). The army has been overlooked in recent acquisition programs and is close to finding itself equipped with obsolete equipment in terms of armored personnel carriers, logistics vehicles and main battle tanks (*Financial Mail* [Johannesburg], October 21, 2012).

During the years of sanctions, South Africa developed a competitive and innovative defense industry. Since then a somewhat diminished defense industry has survived domestic cutbacks by turning to the export trade. Now, however, once innovative designs are becoming dated while research and development funding is drying up, threatening a once profitable industry that was a reliable employer of skilled labor (*Financial Mail* [Johannesburg], October 21, 2012).

South Africa’s once-effective air force has new aircraft but cannot afford the fuel and maintenance needed to keep them in the air. Despite this, one element of the air force that

did see extensive time in the air was Squadron 21, charged with flying South African VIPs and government ministers. Former defense minister Lindiwe Sisulu booked 203 flights over three years in chartered luxury Gulfstream jets at an estimated cost of \$4.5 million. Some 63 of the flights were empty, as they were intended solely to pick the minister up somewhere and take her to another destination in what one opposition critic described as “a staggering waste of money” (*Mail & Guardian* [Johannesburg], November 9, 2012).

In 2012, President Zuma decided the Boeing Business Jet purchased by his predecessor, Thabo Mbeki, for \$66 million in 2001, was no longer good enough for presidential travel. Controversy erupted when it was learned that the defense department had been instructed to purchase two Boeing 767s for Zuma’s exclusive use, two Boeing 737s for the exclusive use of his deputy, Kgalema Motlanthe and two smaller business jets for former presidents and government ministers. Following the predictable uproar, the SANDF leased two executive jets from a Nigerian charter company at a cost of \$88 million over five years (*Mail & Guardian* [Johannesburg], April 8, 2012; *Johannesburg Star*, October 19, 2012).

While government ministers travel in luxury, the South African Air Force (SAAF) still transports troops in 70-year-old Dakota aircraft. One of these, a Dakota C47TP (an upgraded DC-3 with turbine engines) crashed last December, claiming 11 lives when it was unable to fly above inclement weather. The crash came shortly after the military decided it could no longer afford a maintenance contract for its military aircraft (SAPA, December 6, 2012; *Sunday Times* [Johannesburg], December 10, 2012). World War II-era Dakotas also continue to be used for surveillance of South Africa’s 3,900 kilometer coastline in the absence of modern surveillance aircraft (*Sunday Times* [Johannesburg], April 18, 2012). Meanwhile, 26 new Swedish-built Gripen fighter-jets, purchased at a cost of R10 billion (approximately \$1 billion), average only two hours in the air each week; not enough to keep the machines in operable condition and far from the 10 hours of flight-time each week considered necessary to keep pilots well-trained (*Sunday Times* [Johannesburg], December 10, 2012).

Former SAAF chief Lieutenant General Carlo Gagiano retired in 2012 after trying to resign in late 2011 during his hospitalization for stress as he continued to try unsuccessfully to find enough money for the fuel and maintenance to keep the SAAF in the air. His successor, Lieutenant General Fabian Zimpande Msimang (the first black chief of the SAAF) will have trouble keeping all but executive travel jets in the air if current funding problems continue.

The once formidable South African navy now spends little time at sea. Replacement parts and maintenance budgets barely exist, leaving only one of the navy's four new frigates operational and only one its four new submarines able to put out to sea (*Sunday Times* [Johannesburg], December 10, 2012). South African Navy ships and SAAF aircraft carry out anti-piracy operations in the Mozambique Channel, though this mission is also threatened by underfunding.

Despite economic troubles and a collapsing military, South Africa still desires to be a major player in Africa, which encourages it to commit to missions that stretch the military's capacity to its breaking point. Unless current trends are reversed, the steady transformation of the SANDF into an assembly of riot police and border guards will be completed in just a few years. Geography and reputation have left South Africa with few external enemies, but it is also extremely wealthy in various resources. South Africa was only cobbled together from various constituent parts a little more than a century ago, and it would not be surprising if a general collapse of South Africa's security infrastructure invited the emergence of secessionist movements drawing on both domestic and external inspiration. South Africa's eventual inability to project force beyond its borders will also have important implications for regional security in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Death of Waziristan's Mullah Nazir: An American Victory or a Pakistani Loss?

Tayyab Ali Shah

News of the death of prominent Taliban leader Mullah Nazir in a drone strike hit the headlines in Pakistan earlier this month just as the national focus was on a new military doctrine that defines "home-grown militancy" as the "biggest threat to the country" (*Express Tribune* [Karachi], January 3; January 4; *The News* [Islamabad], January 4).

Mullah Nazir was a strategic asset and close ally of the Pakistani security establishment and was considered by them to be one of the "good Taliban," fighters who focused their jihad against U.S. and NATO forces across the border rather than on Pakistani forces. The Pakistan army signed a peace deal with Mullah Nazir in 2009 in which the latter agreed

that he would not attack Pakistani security forces. In return, the Pakistani military left Mullah Nazir's area of control totally untouched during operations against the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in South Waziristan in October 2009. The Obama administration, however, regarded Mullah Nazir as one of the "bad Taliban," a dangerous al-Qaeda collaborator who had openly supported Osama bin Laden and Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar. Mullah Nazir was further accused of aiding cross-border attacks on U.S. forces in the Paktika, Zabul and Helmand provinces of Afghanistan and was once described as "the most influential anti-U.S. commander" (*The News* [Islamabad], January 4; January 10). In the aftermath of the drone strike the mutilated body of a purported Afghan spy was dumped by the road in Wana with a note accusing him of responsibility for the death of Mullah Nazir through collaboration with U.S. forces. According to the note, the deceased confessed to giving a digital Quran to Mullah Nazir just before the strike which contained tracking chips used by the drone to acquire its target (AFP, January 22).

The 38-year-old Mullah Nazir was a dual citizen of Pakistan and Afghanistan and had property and family in both the countries, as is common in the tribal area of Pakistan. Mullah Nazir belonged to the Kaka Khel clan of the Ahmadzai Wazir sub-tribe. The Mullah had already been targeted on multiple occasions by both drone attacks and suicide bombings, but had escaped with his life each time. The first drone attack on Mullah Nazir was in February 2008, while another near-miss came in June 2012. The Mullah narrowly escaped a suicide attack last November when a bomber blew himself up near his vehicle as it was passing through a Wana market. Rival Taliban commanders affiliated with Hakimullah Mahsud's TTP were widely believed to be behind the attack. Shortly after the bombing, Mullah Nazir's Wazir tribe ordered all Mahsud tribesmen to leave the area.

Mullah Nazir was first associated as a militant with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami, an Afghan rebel movement and favorite of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) during the days of the anti-Soviet jihad. Nazir later joined the Taliban movement in Afghanistan, but within Pakistan he was aligned with Maulana Fazlur Rahman's JUI Party (*Daily Times* [Lahore], January 9, 2007).

Mullah Nazir moved back to South Waziristan when the Taliban government fell to U.S.-led coalition forces in November, 2001 and tried to reorganize former jihadis and Taliban sympathizers using funds from al-Qaeda (*Friday Times* [Lahore], January 17). When the Pakistani army started military operations against Waziristan-based Taliban and al-Qaeda elements in 2003, Nazir was already on the most-wanted list. Nevertheless, Mullah Nazir was quickly

released after his surrender and detention as part of a deal made with tribal militants in 2004.

Mullah Nazir founded his own Taliban outfit in 2006 and within a year he was counted among the most powerful Taliban commanders in Wana. In March 2007, Nazir started a battle with the Uzbek and Tajik militants who had been active in northwest Pakistan since the 1990s, most notably the powerful Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan under the leadership of the late Tahir Yuldashev (*Express Tribune* [Karachi], November 30, 2012; *The News* [Islamabad], January 18). The battle that ensued in March, 2007 lasted for roughly 17 days, during which time the Uzbeks lost around 200 people – about a fifth of their total strength – forcing them to vacate the area (*The News* [Islamabad], January 4; see *Terrorism Monitor*, January 13, 2008).

As the Uzbeks and their local supporters left the local capital of Wana and the surrounding areas, Mullah Nazir emerged as the sole Taliban leader in the area. The Pakistani army provided cover to Nazir's forces and also helped him secure the bases vacated by the Uzbeks before signing a truce with the Pakistani authorities in 2007 (*Daily Mashriq* [Peshawar], January 4). A cozy relationship developed with the Pakistani Army, which viewed his methods as a model for the rest of the tribal agencies.

Nazir has now been replaced with Bahwal Khan, who is better known as Salahuddin Ayubi and is a former confidante of Mullah Nazir. Ayubi belongs to the Zalee Khel, a sub-tribe of the Ahmadzai Wazir, and participated in the Afghan Taliban's war against the U.S.-led NATO coalition. He is known to be hot-tempered compared to his predecessor and may therefore have difficulty keeping his people loyal to himself (*Friday Times* [Lahore], January 17).

According to analyst and former Pakistani official Rustam Shah Mohmand, Mullah Nazir's death may not have any impact on the insurgency in Afghanistan, but may change the local power balance and military landscape in the tribal areas (*The News* [Islamabad], January 10). Any attempt by the expelled Uzbeks and their supporters to return to Waziristan would complicate matters for the Pakistani military. According to Mohmand, Mullah Nazir was relatively effective in ensuring that Pakistani troops and their installations were not attacked.

After Mullah Nazir's death, members of his group declared that no one would be allowed to disturb peace in the area. However, it remains unclear how effective his successors will be in maintaining this state of affairs. Analyst Saifullah Khan Mahsud of the FATA Research Center said his death

could result in chaos, as Mullah Nazir tried to contain the Pakistani Taliban while keeping Waziri tribes and militant groups united (*The Nation* [Lahore] January 3). According to veteran journalist Saleem Safi, Mullah Nazir's death is a major impediment to Islamabad's policy-makers and may have repercussions for Pakistan's latest Afghan policy of facilitating peace talks with the Afghan Taliban (*Friday Times* [Lahore], January 17).

Some analysts believe that Nazir's death may be a serious setback to the Afghan Taliban. A Kabul based security analyst, Ashraf Khpalwak, said that Mullah Nazir's death would harm the insurgency in Afghanistan, especially in those provinces that share a border with Pakistan (*Friday Times* [Lahore], January 17). Others believe that it would become more difficult for Pakistani security forces to combat and control the TTP as they have lost a close ally in this effort. Though Mullah Nazir's group has declared that they would honor all existing peace agreements with the Pakistani government, some analysts feel that keeping Mullah Nazir's successor Bahawal Khan from joining the TTP will be a major challenge for the Pakistani military (Khybernews [Peshawar], January 19; *Friday Times* [Lahore], January 17).

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Algiers Reshapes Its Foreign Policy Following the In Amenas Attack

Dario Cristiani

In a rather surprising shift from its historical position of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries and its earlier statement that it would not support any external military intervention in Mali, Algeria is backing the French intervention in Mali by allowing overflights of French military aircraft between Mali and France (Seneweb.com [Dakar], September 24, 2012; *El Watan* [Algiers], January 13; *Tout Sur l'Algérie*, January 14; January 16).

The shift is even more notable if viewed in the context of the psycho-political impact of having French troops in

a country bordering Algeria, a nation formed during a long and bitter campaign against French colonial forces. However, the change is associated with a series of specific geopolitical circumstances and is not a structural departure from the Algerian principle of non-interference. Moreover, as the domestic security situation continues to be affected negatively by wider regional developments, Algeria is likely to intensify its focus on strengthening domestic security and border controls. In these circumstances, a direct military engagement of Algiers in the Malian conflict, although still possible, remains unlikely.

The guiding principles of Algerian foreign policy are well known: Algiers sticks strictly to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, a choice closely associated with the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial stance that has characterized Algeria since its establishment as an independent state. Algeria has a rather paranoid approach to its national sovereignty; domestic security is not negotiable and Algerians do not accept any external interference in domestic issues. These patterns of political behavior have remained substantially unchanged over the past fifty years and were the result of the bloody anti-colonial war that is at the very root of independent Algeria and provides a formidable psychological and narrative burden that still defines the national elites' choices and perceptions in almost all policy fields.

However, the developments of the past twelve months in Mali represent a challenge for Algeria and its historical approach of non-interference. In regard to Mali, this historical principle was strengthened by specific geo-political circumstances: i.e. the southward shift of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and much of its establishment to northern Mali represented a victory for the Algerian policy aimed at eradicating this threat from its territory. Although AQIM was still able to carry out operations in Algeria, the group no longer presented the existential challenge to the state once posed by AQIM and its predecessors, the Groupe Islamique Armée (GIA) and the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC). As those elements of AQIM still based in northern Algeria (specifically in the Kabylia Mountains) saw their power and influence within the organization fade and their operative capacities significantly reduced, the Sahara/Sahel wing of AQIM came to be viewed in Algiers as a residual security concern.

The dramatic (if temporary) change in Algeria's foreign policy highlights the pragmatism of the Algerian elites that remain committed to specific principles in their foreign policy but are nevertheless keen to modify their positions when dealing with specific developments occurring in the region.

Specifically, the Islamist takeover of the Malian town of Konna was about to change the overall strategic direction of the conflict in Mali. Having AQIM and its alleged splinter groups (more likely sub-groups of the movement operating

under different labels) in the north of a dysfunctional but still unified and "formally sovereign" state like Mali was still acceptable. Algeria believed it had the means and the capacity to contain the threat of AQIM within its borders. Since 2008, AQIM has moved more "horizontally" in the wider Sahelian strip, focusing mainly on illegal businesses, than "vertically," i.e. by trying to increase their operative profile in Algeria.

Now, however, the secession of Azawad (northern Mali) or the takeover of all Mali by Islamists are both considered red lines that cannot be passed as either result would be perceived in Algiers as representing a considerable threat to Algerian interests.

Secession could reignite aspirations for independence in some areas of Algeria, especially in the largely Berber Kabylia region. Despite being a rather strong – above all if compared to regional standards – and centralized state, there are still significant parts of Algeria in which local ethnic autonomy movements could explode suddenly, as occurred in the early 2000s. Moreover, an eventual Islamist-led state in either northern Mali or throughout the country is considered a major threat, as it could provide a territorial platform, psychological boost and ideological magnet for Algerian jihadists and regional volunteers to fight the elites of Algiers. It is these specific geopolitical circumstances that have led to the change in Algiers' stance towards an external intervention in Mali.

Given its counter-terrorist and intelligence capacities, knowledge of the area, resources and geographical position, Algeria could represent a key component in conducting a successful military campaign in northern Mali. However, rising domestic threats within Algeria, the need to upgrade border security and the general reluctance of the Algerian military to enter an extraterritorial campaign will likely prevent Algiers from seeking a direct military engagement in Mali.

Specifically, one of the founding principles of the Algerian Armée nationale populaire (ANP) is to avoid foreign interventions even when such interventions are authorized by the UN or the African Union (*Jeune Afrique*, October 30, 2012). Since independence, the Algerian army has engaged in more domestic conflicts than external wars, with the last "official" engagement beyond its borders directed against Morocco in 1963, though it also backed Sahrawi guerrillas against Morocco in the 1970s and has officially been in a state of war with Israel since 1948. As shown by the temporary acceptance of the French intervention in Mali, Algeria may change its stance in certain specific circumstances and decide to intervene in Mali. According to Algerian communications minister Muhammad Said, Algeria's role in the Malian conflict following the terrorist strike at In Amenas will be determined "in accordance with the supreme interests of Algeria... In this kind of situation, national interest takes precedence and it is the country's supreme authorities who

will judge whether to authorize or not authorize such action” (AFP, January 20).

The attack on the gas facility at In Amenas highlighted two major problems that will rise to the top of the Algerian government’s policy agenda over the next few weeks:

- Although Algeria is the strongest of the states of the Maghreb/Sahel region, the length of its borders and the turbulence of its neighbors (Libya and Tunisia in the east, Mali to the south) make it difficult to fully control all of its frontiers.
- The attack at In Aménas will represent a psychological deterrent to some foreign oil companies to upgrade facilities or invest in Algeria for some time. Therefore, the need to strengthen domestic security and border controls will become a security priority, making a direct military engagement in Mali more difficult and problematic.

As long as AQIM and its affiliates were operating “horizontally” in the Sahelian strip, with their bases in northern Mali, that situation remained acceptable to Algiers because it was not perceived as a structural threat to the state. However, the In Aménas attack will likely push Algeria to focus even more on the security of its borders and its domestic environment. Although the military involvement of Algeria in the Malian conflict cannot be completely ruled out, above all if the French intervention should prove to be less effective than thought, direct engagement still remains extremely improbable.

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Tribes and Terrorists: The Emerging Security Threat from Libya’s Lawless South

Andrew McGregor

One of the reported demands of the terrorist group that seized the In Aménas gas field last week was safe passage to the Libyan border, some 30 miles away and the likely launching point for their attack on Algeria. This should not be surprising, despite a stream of statements from Benghazi regarding increased security in southern Libya, an oil-rich region that has also become a home for criminal gangs, arms traders, smugglers, militias, armed tribal groups and foreign gunmen since the fall of the Qaddafi regime.

The alleged planner of the In Aménas attack, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, is believed to have travelled to southwestern Libya in the fall of 2011, possibly returning there in the spring of 2012. In November 2011, Belmokhtar told a Mauritanian news agency that he had purchased Libyan weapons to arm his group (Nouakchott Info, November 11, 2011; CNN, January 21, 2012). He was again reported to be in southwestern Libya by Malian security sources in March 2012 (AFP, March 12, 2012). Both occasions would have allowed Belmokhtar to establish important connections with local Islamists or others willing to work for him. Belmokhtar could also have used these trips to reconnoiter routes from northern Mali through Niger into southwestern Libya, possibly by crossing the lifeless Tafassâsset desert.

At least two of the terrorists involved in the attack on Algeria’s In Amenas natural gas facility have been identified as Libyan by the Algiers government (Libya Herald, January 17). Amidst fears that Libya might have provided the staging ground for the terrorist raid on In Aménas, Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zidan promised that “Libya will not allow anyone to threaten the safety and security of its neighbors” (Reuters, January 19). Zidan’s government has rejected the “attacks on Mali,” urging a return to dialogue to resolve the situation there (Tripoli Post, January 21). Prime Minister Zidan has been reluctant to acknowledge terrorist activity within southern Libya, but claims that “There are powers that don’t want stability involved in white slavery, drugs smuggling, arms smuggling, money laundering and others who want North Africa to be a theatre of instability” (Libya Herald, January 19).

Protecting Libya’s Oil Infrastructure

Libya has recently created the Petroleum Faculty Guard

(PFG), a force dedicated to protecting energy operations in the vast Libyan interior. In the aftermath of the In Aménas attack, the PFG announced it was taking steps to secure Libyan energy facilities, including “the formation of a special operations room, adding military air support and increasing guards and military personnel, and intensifying security patrols inside and outside the sites around the clock to block any attempt from anyone who wishes to compromise public property” (Libya Herald, January 18). As seen in Algeria, however, deploying troops as guards is not enough; they must be well-commanded, maintain an appropriate system of patrols and level of vigilance and be supplied with the necessary intelligence to do their job.

Efforts are under way to try and integrate many of the militias active in southern and western Libya into the newly-formed National Guard, which operates directly under the Libyan head-of-state but may soon be transferred to the control of the Interior Ministry. For the moment, many members of the 10,000 man force are working in support of the Libyan Border Guards (Libya Herald, January 8).

Last December, EU foreign ministers met to consider the problems created by the trafficking through Libya of arms and illegal migrants (many of them bound for Europe). Italy emphasized the need for stronger border controls and urged its counterparts to initiate a border guard training mission by January, a proposal considered “unrealistic” by other EU diplomats, who suggested training could wait to begin in mid-2013 (Reuters, December 10, 2012).

Prime Minister Ali Zidan rejected rumors that the southern al-Wigh airbase was being used as a base for French operations in Mali or as a base for terrorist operations in Algeria (Reuters, January 19; al-Wataniyah TV, January 19; Tripoli Post, January 21). Al-Wigh was an important strategic base for the Qaddafi regime, being located close to the borders with Niger, Chad and Algeria. Since the rebellion, the base has come under the control of Tubu tribal fighters under the nominal command of the Libyan Army and the direct command of Tubu commander Sharafeddine Barka Azaiy, who complains: “During the revolution, controlling this base was of key strategic importance. We liberated it. Now we feel neglected. We do not have sufficient equipment, cars and weapons to protect the border. Even though we are part of national army, we receive no salary” (Libya Herald, December 23, 2012). Since the hostage-taking in neighboring Algeria, Prime Minister Zidan has ordered surveillance operations and patrols to be stepped-up in the region of al-Wigh (al-Wataniyah TV, January 19).

Only days before the raid on In Aménas, the premiers of

Libya, Algeria and Tunisia met on January 12 at the Libyan oasis border town of Ghadames to discuss border security, with an eye to securing their borders “by fighting against the flow of arms and ammunition and other trafficking” (AFP, January 10). There are continuing tensions in the region around Ghadames near Libya’s border with Tunisia and Algeria, where Arab-Berber tribes have sought revenge on the local Tuareg community, parts of which provided security support to the Qaddafi regime during the battle for Libya.

On December 15, Libya’s ruling General National Congress (GNC) declared that Libya’s borders with Algeria, Chad, Niger and Sudan would be temporarily closed and designated the regions of Ghadames, Awbari, Sabha, al-Shati, Murzuq and Kufra as military zones to be ruled by a military governor. Only certain roads in the south would remain open, with Prime Minister Zidan warning that caravans, convoys or other groups using anything other than official frontier posts would face action by land forces or military aircraft (Libyan News Agency, December 16, 2012; Libya Herald, December 18, 2012). Two days later, Libyan fighter-jets struck a suspected smugglers’ camp in the Kufra region near the borders with Chad and Sudan. During the anti-Qaddafi rebellion, Sudanese troops coordinating with Qatari forces moved into the strategically important Kufra region and helped rebel forces seize the oasis (Sudan Tribune, August 28, 2011; Telegraph, July 1, 2011). According to air force spokesman Colonel Miftah al-Abdali, Libyan warplanes would monitor the Kufra region from the border with Chad to Jabal al-Uwaynat and Jabal al-Malik near the border with Egypt (Libyan News Agency, December 19). Eventually Libya plans to establish only one authorized border crossing with each of its four southern neighbors, Chad, Niger, Sudan and Algeria (AFP, December 19).

The new military governor for the south has the authority to detain and deport illegal immigrants, initiating a round-up of refugees and migrants in parts of southern Libya. These powers were seen as necessary in expectation of a greater flow of “illegal immigrants” from an expected war in northern Mali. Libya is concerned that if things go poorly for the Islamists in Mali, there will be a reverse flow of fighters and weapons back into southern Libya in the hands of armed groups.

Tunisia – A Conduit for Libyan Weapons?

On January 12, Tunisian President Moncef Marzouki suggested that local jihadists had ties with terrorist forces in northern Mali and that Tunisia was “becoming a corridor

for Libyan weapons to these regions” (AFP, January 12). The Tunisian border with Libya is rife with the smuggling of everything from milk to explosives since the collapse of the Qaddafi regime. Violent incidents have become common – two uniformed Libyans were arrested on the night of January 17 after using a 4X4 vehicle to attack the Tunisian security post at Jedelouine (Libya Herald, January 18; For the smuggling routes across the Tunisian-Libyan border, see Terrorism Monitor Brief, May 20, 2011).

While the hostage crisis was still ongoing in Algeria, Tunisian security forces announced the discovery of two large arms depots in the southeastern town of Medenine on the main route to Libya. The materiel seized at the depots included bombs, missiles, grenades, rocket launchers, ammunition, bullet-proof vests, uniforms and communications equipment (Tunis Afrique Press, January 18).

The Egyptian Border and the Route to Gaza

A minor crisis in Libyan-Egyptian relations occurred on January 18 when a Lebanese newspaper, *al-Diyar*, reported that Egyptian Prime Minister Hisham Qandil had rights over parts of eastern Libya. Though historical claims to parts of the Libyan Desert once existed, they were renounced by Egypt in a 1925 agreement with Italy, the occupying power of the time. After Libyan premier Ali Zidan appealed for clarification, the Egyptian government issued a firm denial: “These alleged statements were not made by Qandil or any Egyptian official” (Egypt State Information Service, January 21).

Libya and Egypt fought a three-day border war in July, 1977 after Qaddafi sent thousands of protesters on a “March to Cairo” to protest Egypt’s progress towards a peace treaty with Israel. When the demonstrators were turned back at the border, Libyan forces raided the coastal town of Sollum, the site of fighting between Sanusi militants and the British-controlled Egyptian Army during the First World War. Retaliation came swiftly in the form of three Egyptian divisions supported by fighter-jets destroying Libyan opposition as they crossed the border into Libya. A complete invasion was averted only by the mediation of Algerian president Houari Boumediène.

More recently, it appears that a shipment route for Libyan arms on their way to Sinai and Gaza has been opened along the northern coast of Egypt, encouraging greater activity by militants in the area. There are fears in Cairo that these militants could eventually turn the Libyan weapons against the Egyptian government (see Terrorism Monitor, May 18, 2012). [1]

Sabha Oasis – A Strategic Base under Threat

GNC President Muhammad Magarief toured southern Libya earlier this month, meeting with Major General Omran Abd al-Rahman al-Tawil and other military officials in the strategic southern oasis of Sabha. While in Sabha, Magarief’s hotel was attacked by gunmen who wounded three of his guards (Libya Herald, January 6; al-Jazeera, January 13).

Six days of clashes between the Qadhadhfa (the Arab-Berber tribe of Mu’ammarr Qaddafi) and the Awlad Sulayman tribe left four dead and several others wounded in Sabha on January 2 (AFP, January 2). An attempt by Libyan Special Forces units to enter the town on December 31 and impose a truce ultimately failed when fighting resumed (Libya Herald, January 4). The oasis town, 500 miles south of Tripoli, was the site of an important airbase during the Qaddafi regime and many of the current tribal clashes are rooted in differences between the Qadhadhfa, regarded as Qaddafi supporters, and the Awlad Sulayman, who opposed Qaddafi in the rebellion (see Terrorism Monitor, April 5, 2012).

The inability of security forces in Sabha to keep detainees under lock and key has contributed to the insecurity in the region. On December 4 there was a mass breakout of 197 inmates from the Sabha jail with the apparent assistance of the Judiciary Police responsible for guarding them (Libya Herald, December 6, 2012). Local authorities claimed most of the prisoners were common criminals, while others were alleged to be Qaddafi loyalists (Reuters, December 5). In July 2012, 34 prisoners escaped another detention facility in Sabha by crawling through ventilation shafts. The most recent breakout was followed by 20 southern GNC representatives walk out of the Libyan Congress to protest the “deteriorating security situation in their region,” saying the government’s inability or unwillingness to address these problems was “the last straw” (AFP, December 16, 2012; Libya Herald, December 6, 2012; December 18, 2012).

There are plans to spur development in Sabha by turning its military airport into a regional air cargo hub, but this is unlikely to happen so long as the region remains plagued by violence and instability.

Kufra Oasis – Where Race Politics Meets Border Security

Clashes between the Black African Tubu and the Arab Zawiya tribe continue in the southeastern Kufra Oasis, where inter-tribal fighting earlier this month developed into wildfires between the Tubu and members of the Libyan Desert Shield, a pro-government militia that was flown into Kufra last year

to bring the region under control. Desert Shield has failed to win the trust of the Tubu, who accuse the militia's northern Arabs of siding with the Zawiya. According to a Tubu tribal chief in Kufra: "We want the army to secure Kufra, and not a group of civilian revolutionaries who have no military principles" (AFP, January 9; For the struggle over Kufra, see Terrorism Monitor Brief, May 5, 2011, Terrorism Monitor, February 23, 2012).

Tubu fighters in the Kufra region are led by Isa Abd al-Majid Mansur, head of the Tubu Front for the Salvation of Libya (TFSL), founded in 2007 to combat the Qaddafi regime on behalf of the disenfranchised Tubu community. Following a failed revolt against Qaddafi and his "Arabization" program, the Tubu had their citizenship stripped, access to services cancelled and their homes bulldozed. Prior to the declaration of a military zone in the south, Mansur maintained that Libya's southern borders from Sabha to Kufra were controlled and guarded by desert-savvy Tubu tribesmen after the fall of Qaddafi (Libyan Herald, December 23, 2012; January 13, 2013). Local Arab tribes accuse the Tubu of actually seizing control of the region's smuggling routes for their own profit.

Government authorities maintain there are only some 15,000 Tubu tribesmen in Libya, while Tubu activists claim the real number is closer to 200,000. According to Tubu activist Ahamat Molikini, the Tubu are confronting an Arab desire to create a new demographic reality in the south: "Many from the [Arab] Zuwaya and Awlad Sulayman tribes want the Tubu people out before they create a new Libya, before it becomes a democracy. They provoke the Tubu with these new attacks and killings; they create conflict to evict them." These tribes have succeeded in convincing the northern Arab tribes that the native Tubu who predate the Arab presence in southern Libya are actually foreigners (a popular Qaddafi canard) "with an agenda to make southern Libya an independent country" (Minority Voices Newsroom, January 8).

No Better in Benghazi

In the *de facto* Libyan capital of Benghazi, meanwhile, a campaign of attacks on members of the police and military continues as Western nations begin to pull out their nationals amidst rumors of an impending terrorist attack. Many of the victims of assassination were formerly employed by the Qaddafi regime (Xinhua, January 14; January 16; see Terrorism Monitor Brief, August 10, 2012). The government is considering what it described as a "partial curfew" to help deal with the deterioration of security in Benghazi (Middle East Online, January 17).

Western diplomats also continue to be targeted; on January 12, unidentified gunmen fired on the Italian consul's bullet-proof car, damaging the vehicle but causing no casualties in a strike that Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi described as "a vile act of terrorism" (AFP, January 13; Xinhua, January 12). On January 16, Italy agreed to provide logistical support to air operations targeting terrorists in northern Mali after shutting down its Benghazi consulate and withdrawing all diplomatic personnel (*Telegraph*, January 16; UPI, January 16; Reuters, January 16).

On January 19, a car carrying Libya's defense minister, Muhammad al-Barghati, came under attack at the Tobruk airport, east of Benghazi. Al-Barghati claimed the attack was the work of followers of al-Sadiq al-Ghaithi al-Obeidi, a reputed jihadist who had just been sacked as deputy defense minister after refusing to bring his fighters under the command of the army's chief-of-staff. Al-Obeidi was formerly responsible for border security and the security of foreign oil installations (AFP, January 19; Reuters, January 21).

Conclusion

The "closed military zones" of the south are little more than a fiction without the resources, personnel and organization necessary to implement strict controls over a vast and largely uninhabited wilderness that is nonetheless the heart of the modern Libyan state due to its vast reserves of oil and gas that provide the bulk of national revenues and its aquifers of groundwater that permit intensive agriculture and supply drinking water for Libya's cities.

The Libyan GNC and its predecessor, the Transitional National Council (TNC), have failed to secure important military facilities in the south and have allowed border security in large parts of the south to effectively become "privatized" in the hands of tribal groups who are also well-known for their traditional smuggling pursuits. In turn, this has jeopardized the security of Libya's oil infrastructure and the security of its neighbors. As the sale and transport of Libyan arms becomes a mini-industry in the post-Qaddafi era, Libya's neighbors will eventually impose their own controls over their borders with Libya so far as their resources allow. Unfortunately, the vast amounts of cash available to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb are capable of opening many doors in an impoverished and underdeveloped region. If the French-led offensive in northern Mali succeeds in displacing the Islamist militants, there seems to be little at the moment to prevent such groups from establishing new bases in the poorly-controlled desert wilderness of southern Libya. So long as there is an absence of central control of security

structures in Libya, that nation's interior will continue to present a security threat to the rest of the nations in the region, most of which face their own daunting challenges in terms of securing long and poorly defined borders created in European boardrooms with little notice of geographical realities.

Note

1. See Andrew McGregor, "The Face of Egypt's Next Revolution: The Madinat Nasr Cell," Jamestown Foundation "Hot Issue," November 20, 2012, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=40137&cHash=b3b95312dc7c4911c1727f4b929e2fd](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=40137&cHash=b3b95312dc7c4911c1727f4b929e2fd).

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