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A parade of ISIS members in Hawija, Iraq, which is near Kirkuk
Source: Islamic State Media

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WILL ISIS SPUR NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR SAUDI ARABIA?

Andrew McGregor

In some ways, the recent triumphs of the radical Sunni Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) inside Iraq have alarmed Riyadh as much as Tehran. While the Saudis are still willing to support less radical Islamist movements in Syria and Iraq as part of a proxy war against Shiite Iran, there are fears in Riyadh that ISIS extremists, many of whom were recruited in Saudi Arabia, may eventually turn their attention to the Kingdom itself, threatening its hereditary rulers and the stability of the Gulf region. Iraq and Iran, meanwhile, accuse the Saudis of sponsoring terrorism and religious extremism throughout the Middle East.

Iraqi president Nuri al-Maliki first accused Saudi Arabia of financing Iraqi terrorists in March. Echoing al-Maliki, the Shiite-dominated Iraqi cabinet issued a statement on June 17 in which they held the Saudis “responsible for supporting these [militant] groups financially and morally... [and for] crimes that may qualify as genocide: the spilling of Iraqi blood and the destruction of Iraqi state institutions and religious sites” (Arabianbusiness.com, June 17). Saudi Arabia reacted to the allegations by releasing a statement condemning ISIS as well as the Iraqi government:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wishes to see the defeat and destruction of all al-Qaeda networks and the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) operating in Iraq. Saudi Arabia does not provide either moral or financial support to ISIS or any terrorist networks. Any suggestion to the contrary, is a malicious falsehood. Despite the false allegations of the Iraqi Ministerial Cabinet, whose exclusionary policies have fomented this current crisis, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports the preservation of Iraq’s sovereignty, its unity and territorial integrity (Arab News [Jeddah], June 19).

The Iranian press has clearly stated the Kingdom is the largest sponsor of terrorism in the region (*Javan* [Tehran], June 14). Tehran considers Riyadh to be in complete support of efforts to drive Iraq's Shi'a majority from the central government in Baghdad. After Iran's President Hassan Rouhani announced Iran's readiness to defend Shi'a holy sites in Iraq, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, Prince Sa'ud al-Faisal, warned against foreign interference in Iraq. While also pledging fighters to defend the Shi'a shrines of Iraq, Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah was less eager to accuse the Saudis of directly sponsoring the radical Salafist ISIS movement, saying only: "It is uncertain that Saudi Arabia had a role" (*Ra'y al-Yawm*, June 17).

Syria has also pointed to Saudi Arabian responsibility for arming and funding ISIS operations in that country at the behest of Israel and the United States and in cooperation with Qatar and Turkey. According to Syrian state media: "No Western country is unaware of the role Saudi Arabia is playing in supporting terrorism and funding and arming different fronts and battles, both inside and outside Iraq and Syria" (*al-Thawra* [Damascus], June 12).

Saudi Grand Mufti Shaykh Abd al-Aziz Al al-Shaykh denounced ISIS on May 27, condemning their recruitment of Saudi youth for the war in Syria (*al-Riyadh*, May 27). The Kingdom has also stepped up its terrorist prosecutions, diving into a backlog of hundreds of cases mainly related to the 2003-2006 Islamist insurgency. Sentences of up to 30 years in prison are being issued in cases where there once seemed little inclination to prosecute (Saudi Press Agency, June 10). Earlier this year, King Abdullah issued decrees prohibiting Saudi citizens from joining the jihad in Syria or providing financial support to extremists.

Saudi foreign minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faisal recently told an Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) gathering in Jeddah that Iraqi claims of Saudi support for terrorism were "baseless," but warned there were signs of an impending civil war in Iraq, a war whose implications for the region "cannot be fathomed" (*Arabianbusiness.com*, June 18; *al-Arabiya*, June 19). The Saudi government has blamed "the sectarian and exclusionary policies implemented in Iraq over the past years that threatened its stability and sovereignty" (*al-Akhbar* [Beirut], June 10). Officially, Saudi Arabia disavows sectarianism in Iraq and calls for a unified Iraqi nation with all citizens on an equal basis without distinction or discrimination (*al-Riyadh*, June 18).

Saudi authorities hold the Maliki government responsible for the present crisis and its sometimes bewildering implications, a stance summed up by former Saudi intelligence chief Prince

Turki al-Faisal:

Baghdad has failed to stop the closing of ranks of extremists and Ba'thists from the era of Saddam Hussein... The situation in al-Anbar in Iraq has been boiling for some time. It seemed that the Iraqi government not only failed to do enough to calm this situation, but that it pushed things towards an explosion in some cases... One of the possible ironies is to see the Iranian Revolutionary Guard fighting alongside U.S. drones to kill Iraqis. This is something that makes a person lose his mind and makes one wonder: Where are we headed? (*al-Quds al-Arabi*, June 15; *Arab News*, June 14).

When Prince Bandar bin Sultan was removed from his post in April and replaced by Prince Muhammad bin Nayef it was interpreted as a sign Riyadh was prepared to vary from the hardline approach to Iran taken by the ex-intelligence chief (Gulf News [Dubai], May 21). The change reflects the Saudi government's appreciation of the strategic situation it finds itself in as Washington shows greater reluctance to intervene directly in the affairs of the region. The lack of American consultation with the Kingdom during initial U.S.-Iranian discussions has convinced many in Riyadh that their nation must forge its own relationship with Iran to avoid a wave of conflict that could threaten the traditional Arab kingdoms of the Gulf region. The election of new Iranian president Hassan Rouhani has presented new possibilities in the Saudi-Iranian relationship, including a common approach to Turkey, whose Islamist government has supported the Muslim Brotherhood, now defined as a destabilizing threat in both Iran and Saudi Arabia. However, this remains conjecture at this point, as Riyadh follows a cautious approach to an Iranian rapprochement. While improved relations might prove beneficial, the Kingdom cannot afford to risk its self-adopted role as the guardian of Sunni Islam.

The rapprochement with Iran began tentatively earlier this year, with a series of secret meetings in Muscat and Kuwait followed by more official encounters between the Saudi and Iranian foreign ministers (*National* [Abu Dhabi], May 19). Diplomacy between the two nations appears to have been spurred by American urgings and the Kingdom's realization that a reactive rather than pro-active foreign policy could leave the Saudis outside of a recalibrated power structure in the Middle East. There are fears in Riyadh that an ISIS offensive may result in Iranian troops joining the fight against Sunni extremists in Iraq, followed by the breakup of the country (*al-Quds al-Arabi*, June 15).

While Saudi Arabia appears to have backed off from its covert financial support of ISIS, private donations likely continue

to flow from donors in the Kingdom and other Gulf states, though the recent looting of bank vaults and consolidation of oil-producing regions in Syria and Iraq mean that ISIS will be largely self-supporting from this point. Saudi anxieties over political change in the Middle East are reflected in the Kingdom's growing defense budget, which now makes the nation of under 30 million people one of the world's top six military spenders (Arabianbusiness.com, June 14).

THE CUTTING STRIKE: OPERATION ZARB-E-AZB IN NORTH WAZIRISTAN

Andrew McGregor

Pakistan's military has spent months trying to convince their civilian masters of the necessity of mounting a large military offensive in the lightly-ruled North Waziristan tribal agency, currently a hotbed for Islamist extremists and foreign fighters. The objections of the political class were finally overcome following the June 8 terrorist attack on Karachi's Jinnah International Airport, a devastating demonstration of strength by the militants and a further display of the inability of local security forces to contain extremist groups and the futility of continuing peace talks with the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP). On June 15, Pakistan's military launched Operation Zarb-e Azb ("the cutting strike"), a massive offensive designed to clear North Waziristan of militants and extremists. The name of the operation appears to be part of an effort to lend a sense of Islamic legitimacy to the offensive – Azb was the name of the sword carried in battle by the Prophet Muhammad. Pakistani forces were also armed with a religious decision signed by over 100 clerics from various Islamic trends that declared their operations a jihad with the right to use an iron fist on extremists guilty of hundreds of murders (*Hindustan Times*, June 24).

The operation began with F-16 airstrikes that killed a claimed 105 militants, including the alleged planner of the Jinnah Airport attack, Uzbek commander Abu Abdur Rahman Almani (*Dawn* [Karachi], June 15). American CIA drone strikes have also targeted militants in the region, though these are not officially part of the government's offensive. Despite the apparent tacit approval of Islamabad and the unlikelihood that American drone operations inside North Waziristan would be mounted independent of Pakistani authorities during a military operation in the region, Pakistan has still condemned recent drone strikes in

North Waziristan as a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity (*The Nation* [Islamabad], June 14; June 19).

According to the top U.S. military commander in Afghanistan, Marine General Joseph Dunford, U.S. forces inside Afghanistan were not coordinating with the Pakistani offensive but were ready to intercept militants looking to wait out the operation inside Afghan territory (AP, June 17). The U.S. drawdown in Afghanistan is seen as a major factor in motivating Pakistani authorities to take the offensive in North Waziristan before the Afghan Taliban are able to consolidate their control of the border region in cooperation with local militants. Some 450,000 residents of North Waziristan have fled the offensive so far, taking advantage of a break in the campaign to allow their evacuation to Bannu, Peshawar, Kohat and, ironically, across the border in Afghanistan (*Dawn* [Karachi], June 22).

The success of Pakistani military operations in North Waziristan depends to a great extent on the willingness of Afghan president Hamid Karzai to seal the border, though appeals from Islamabad have yet to receive a positive response from Kabul. Karzai, who alleges the terrorist problem in his country has a Pakistani origin, is apparently seeking a commitment from Islamabad that the offensive will be part of a major operation to shut down cross-border militant groups such as the Haqqani Network that have operated with the connivance of Pakistan's military intelligence service (*News on Sunday* [Islamabad], June 22). Targeting the Haqqani Network is also a condition of further U.S. military assistance (*The News* [Islamabad], June 13). Whether Afghan security forces actually have the ability to effectively seal the border remains an open question. Without the full cooperation of Afghan forces, some militants are believed to have already slipped across the border into Paktika and Khost provinces, while others may have scattered into the remote wilderness of North Waziristan's Shawal Valley (*News on Sunday* [Islamabad], June 22). Afghanistan's ambassador to India, Shaيدا Muhammad Abdali, recently observed that Pakistani authorities had not succeeded in their battle against extremism "because they are fighting those they don't like, but not those whom they like" (*The Hindu*, June 24).

The offensive has encountered a generally favorable popular attitude from a populace grown tired of terrorist strikes, particularly after the Karachi Airport attack. Opposition criticism has been muted since the operation began. First-hand accounts of the fighting are hard to find, however, as the campaign is being tightly managed by the public relations arm of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) unit. All journalists were ordered to leave North Waziristan on

the first day of the offensive and nearly all accounts of the fighting since have originated with the military. Cell phone service has been cut off in the agency and internet service is practically non-existent (*News on Sunday* [Islamabad], June 22).

Pakistani tactics have included integrated operations involving Cobra helicopter gunships, snipers and artillery, deployments along the Afghan border to prevent militants from escaping, securing the boundaries of urban centers like Miranshah and Mirali, processing refugees through filtration points to weed out fugitive militants and the establishment of “surrender points” to encourage militants to lay down their arms without fear of immediate retribution.

The Army’s offensive reflects a shift in strategic thinking in the Pakistani military under the new leadership of Chief-of-Staff General Raheel Sharif, who has emphasized the danger of Islamist militancy in the tribal agencies over the traditional attempts by the Pakistani military to co-opt such groups in the interest of maintaining “strategic depth” in the event of a major conflict with India (*Express Tribune* [Karachi], June 24). While the political leadership in Islamabad has reluctantly agreed to the necessity of a major military operation in the tribal region, it continues to fear a major backlash from terrorist cells based in Pakistan’s poorly secured urban centers. Creating a local administration capable of maintaining order and security in North Waziristan after the conclusion of active operations will also pose a major challenge to Islamabad.

The Tribal Component of Iraq’s Sunni Rebellion: The General Military Council for Iraqi Revolutionaries

Nicholas A. Heras

Following the Iraqi armed opposition’s seizure of Mosul on June 10 and the subsequent capture of large areas of Ninewah, Salah al-Din and Ta’imim governorates from the Nuri al-Maliki government, several Iraqi organizations have proclaimed their role in the fighting. Emerging as one of the most powerful Iraqi armed opposition organizations in this rebel offensive is al-Majlis al-Askari al-Amm li-Thuwar al-Iraq (GMCIR – General Military Council for Iraqi Revolutionaries) and its affiliated tribal militias, organized as al-Majlis al-Askari li-Thuwar al-Asha’ir al-Iraq (Military Council of Iraqi Tribal Revolutionaries). GMCIR members state that the organization has existed since the summer of 2013 and announced its existence in January 2014 in order to respond militarily against Iraqi security forces for firing on Sunni demonstrators in Anbar governorate. [1]

GMCIR members assert that their leadership is composed predominately of a network of Sunni former Iraq Army officers of tribal Arab origin that maintain a hierarchical chain-of-command inside Iraq in order to oversee the day-to-day operations of the organization. They estimate that there are 75,000 fighters affiliated with the GMCIR, mostly concentrated in Anbar, Salah al-Din and Ninewah governorates, with GMCIR-affiliated armed groups also located in Ta’imim, Baghdad, Diyala, Karbala, Dhi Qar and Maysan governorates. [2] GMCIR officers, including Iraqis exiled by sectarian conflict in their country, are also reported to be located throughout the Middle East region, including in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (*al-Mustaqbal* [Beirut], January 17; *al-Jazeera* [Doha], January 16). [3]

Ideologically, the GMCIR is staunchly anti-Maliki and anti-Iranian. It opposes the significant role played by Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)-organized militias such as Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq and Kata’ib Hezbollah in the Iraqi security forces. [4] The GMCIR’s first public declaration on January 15 outlined its political program. This declaration emphasized that the GMCIR is an Iraqi nationalist, non-sectarian movement that is drawn from Iraq’s tribes and that it seeks the removal of Nuri al-Maliki as prime minister of Iraq. The GMCIR also seeks support from the people of southern Iraq (i.e. Shi’a Arab tribesmen) to help remove

al-Maliki from power. [5] GMCIR members assert that the second-in-command of the organization is a Shi'a from southern Iraq and that the GMCIR is actively seeking the assistance of southern Iraqi Shi'a tribes in Basra, Dhi Qar and Maysan, which they claim are as disenfranchised by al-Maliki's government as they are. [6]

According to GMCIR members and media produced by the organization, the rank-and-file of the GMCIR consists of predominately Arab and Sunni tribal fighters, including a significant number of Sahwa (Awakening) council veterans mobilized as part of the "Sons of Iraq" and Iraqi military officers that served in the Iraqi Army prior to its May 2003 disbandment by Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 2. [7] GMCIR members state that the majority of its first cohort of fighters were local protestors, mainly from Anbar governorate, that actively demonstrated against the al-Maliki government and decided to join an armed uprising against the Iraqi government following the December 2013 arrest of popular Anbari MP and member of the Iraqiya bloc, Ahmad al-Awlani, and the ongoing Iraqi security force operations that resulted in Anbari protestors being fired on (Reuters, December 28, 2013). [8]

In keeping with the GMCIR's official declarations, representatives of the organization state that its participation in the current conflict is intended to seize Baghdad in order to remove "Tehran's spoiled boy," Nuri al-Maliki (Nashwan News [Baghdad], June 14). The GMCIR's opponents claim that the group is strongly influenced by former Ba'athist officers affiliated with groups such as the Jaysh Rajaal al-Tariqa al-Naqshabandia (JRTN – Army of the Men of the Naqshabandi Path), which is particularly powerful in Ninewah governorate and the city of Mosul (*al-Safir* [Beirut], June 15; Iraq al-Qanoon [Baghdad], February 1). GMCIR members state that JTRN members and former Ba'athist officers are represented in their organization, including in its Political Council; however, they assert that these officers are not the most important figures within it. [9] Arabic media report that social media sites affiliated with JRTN claim it is operating in Ninewah and Salah al-Din governorates in close cooperation with the GMCIR and its affiliate, the Military Council of Iraqi Tribal Revolutionaries (Dunya al-Watan [Ramallah], June 12). In addition to JRTN and tribal militias, it is reported that the GMCIR maintains close contact with the Iraqi Sunni socio-political movement Hay'at al-Ulama al-Muslimeen (Association of Muslim Scholars), which serves as a political ally of the organization (Dunya al-Watan [Ramallah], June 12).

The GMCIR's relationship with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is also a controversial subject. GMCIR members

admit to an operational relationship with ISIS, particularly in Anbar, Ninewah and Salah al-Din governorates. [10] It is reported that two former Iraqi generals associated with the GMCIR were appointed to serve as governing administrators of territory seized by the Iraqi armed opposition in Anbar and Salah al-Din governorates, with approval for their appointments given by ISIS in consultation with local Sunni Arab tribes (*Elaph* [London], June 18). A GMCIR spokesman stated that ISIS in Iraq was a small organization and could not have seized Mosul without the support of the Iraqi armed opposition. The spokesman further claimed that the GMCIR was stronger than ISIS, better organized than ISIS, and fought under the laws of war established by the Geneva Convention (BBC News, June 14).

At its core a political movement that seeks substantial changes in Iraq's current socio-political system, the GMCIR's strongly anti-Maliki and anti-Iranian political platform, which it has emphasized in a succession of declarations that its leadership has issued since January 2014, makes the organization an unlikely participant in any peace negotiations that do not promise to conclude with the removal of al-Maliki from the post of prime minister. In order to accomplish these political objectives, the GMCIR will need to be able to network effectively with other anti-Maliki factions inside Iraq, including Iyad Allawi's al-Iraqiya bloc, the Kurds and Shi'a political figures and groups such as Ahmad Chalabi and his allies in al-Majlis al-A'ala al-Islami al-Iraqi (ISCI – Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq) and Muqtada al-Sadr and his allied al-Ahrar bloc.

One likely future difficulty that the GMCIR will need to address is how to appeal to Iraqi Shi'a socio-political actors when there is a popular perception that the organization is allied with ISIS and must be fought against in the context of the mobilization of predominately Shi'a volunteers for militias intended to serve as auxiliaries to the Iraqi military. The GMCIR's potential partners in forming a post-Maliki Iraqi government will likely need to give the organization guarantees they will work to reduce the influence of the powerful IRGC-backed militias within the Iraqi Army and Special Forces (see *Terrorism Monitor*, May 15).

The GMCIR will also need to resolve potential political and military conflicts that could arise and divide its own predominately Sunni constituency. In the face of potential challenges to its influence over the Iraqi Sunni community and its role in post-conflict negotiations over the future direction of Iraq, it is highly likely that GMCIR leaders will seek to maintain the allegiance of associated tribal militias organized under the Higher Military Council of Iraqi Tribal Revolutionaries. It will also need to demonstrate to Iraqis in

general that it can be a partner for a negotiated and peaceful settlement to the current conflict and that, if called upon, it can effectively confront ISIS forces in Iraq.

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Notes

1. Interviews conducted with GMCIR members in Amman, Jordan in January 2014 and April 2014. Interviews conducted by the author and Carole A. O'Leary.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. "First Declaration of the General Military Council of Iraqi Revolutionaries," Al-Rafidain TV YouTube page, January 15, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bV-y5B_Vbl0.
6. Interviews conducted with GMCIR members, *op cit*.
7. Interviews conducted with GMCIR members, *op cit*. For the GMCIR's Twitter account see: <https://twitter.com/militarycouncil> and for the GMCIR'S YouTube page see: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJmoeAnehTlrmulRFu4ZhHQ>.
8. Interviews conducted with GMCIR members, *op cit*.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.

Mozambique's RENAMO Conducts Low-Level Insurgency While Running for Election

John C.K. Daly

Mozambique has been slowly descending into a political-military crisis since April 2013, as the ruling Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO – Mozambique Liberation Front) party has unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO – Mozambican National Resistance) to end its low-level insurgency in the countryside. Dozens have been killed in attacks largely centered on Mozambique's highway network.

In the two decades since Mozambique's civil war ended, the economy has slowly blossomed, even though the country remains dependent upon foreign assistance for much of its annual budget and a large majority of the population remains below the poverty line. In 2013, Mozambique's economy remained one of the most dynamic on the continent, with a 7 percent gross domestic product rate increase, despite the politico-military, low-intensity confrontations between government and the opposition movement. Foreign direct investment has focused mostly on country's extractive sector, with constantly rising oil, coal and aluminum exports.

Mozambique's general elections, scheduled for October 15, have become a three-way contest between FRELIMO candidate Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, RENAMO's Afonso Marceta Macacho Dhlakama and Daviz Mbepo Simango, who established the Movimento Democrático de Moçambique (MDM – Mozambique Democratic Movement) in March 2009. FRELIMO's Nyusi, who is heavily favored to win, has served as Mozambique's minister of defense since 2008.

Two RENAMO actions complicate the electoral procedure – the first is its demand that its armed units have parity in the Forças armadas de Moçambique (FADM – Mozambique Armed Forces) as a precondition for laying down its arms. The second problem is that Dhlakama is running for the presidency for the fifth time in two decades.

Despite standing for the country's highest elective office, Dhlakama, an unsuccessful candidate in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009, has not yet reined in RENAMO attacks, which consist largely of ambushes along one of the country's main highways, the Estrada Nacional (EN1), which runs the length of the country, linking Mozambique's capital Maputo in the south with the northern reaches of the nation.

After achieving independence from Portugal in 1975, roughly one million people died in the subsequent civil war between FRELIMO and the newly-formed, anti-Marxist RENAMO movement. The bitter conflict lasted until October 4, 1992, when the two parties signed the General Peace Accord (GPA) in Rome with current President Armando Emilio Guebuza as one of the negotiators. Protocol IV of the GPA stated that the Mozambique military “shall be non-partisan, career [-oriented], professionally trained and competent; it shall be made up exclusively of Mozambican citizens who are volunteers and drawn from the forces of both Parties.” [1]

In every presidential election since a multi-party system was introduced in 1994, voters have returned FRELIMO to power. Negotiations between the parties are now deadlocked, since the Mozambican government does not accept RENAMO’s demand to introduce a system of parity in both FADM and the Forças de Defesa e Segurança (FDS – Defense and Security Forces). Speaking from the bush on May 23, Dhlakama said:

It is written [in the GPA] that RENAMO and FRELIMO are each entitled to [contribute] 50 percent of the men in the Armed Forces. Today they no longer want to discuss the accord but they want RENAMO to surrender its arms. How is Dhlakama to support surrendering to another party the weapons of the security guard that protect him and RENAMO? We have to create a technical and professional army. We do not want each party with its own armed forces (*Verdade jornal* [Maputo], May 29).

On June 2, RENAMO began five days of ambushes along the EN1, with ten people dying in the assaults according to a military source speaking on condition of anonymity (AllAfrica.com, June 9). On June 6, Dhlakama spoke by mobile phone from Gorongosa district to a Maputo meeting of religious leaders attempting to persuade him to halt RENAMO military operations (*Diário de Notícias Globo* [Lisbon], June 10). Dhlakama rebuffed them and instead threatened that, unless the government acceded to RENAMO’s demand for “parity” in the armed forces, RENAMO would divide the country (AllAfrica.com, June 7).

Despite Dhlakama’s candidacy, RENAMO guerrillas continue to battle government troops, most recently engaging in a skirmish with a FDS garrison in Muxungué in Chibabava district in Sofala province on June 17, which the militants claimed was in retaliation for an earlier FDS attack on their base in Mangomonhe (*Verdade jornal* [Maputo], June 19).

The previous day RENAMO guerrillas mounted two separate assaults on vehicles traversing the EN1. The first attack occurred on June 16, when a bus with 20 passengers traveling the EN1 section between the Save River and Muxungué in Chibabava district was raked by small arms fire, injuring five people. The second assault with on a convoy of more than 300 vehicles with a military escort bound southward to Muxungué. There were no casualties during the five-minute attack (AllAfrica.com, June 18).

The renewed RENAMO violence is a direct result of the presidential campaign; on May 2, a Dhlakama spokesman, Antonio Muchanga, claimed that the government was concentrating FADM forces in Gorongosa district in central Sofala province in order to “physically liquidate” Dhlakama, who is hiding there (*The Zimbabwean*, May 4). At the time Muchanga spoke, Dhlakama had not been seen in public since FADM forces overran and occupied the main RENAMO military base in Gorongosa on October 21, 2013. Following Muchanga’s press presentation, RENAMO abrogated their four-month unilateral ceasefire and resumed ambushing convoys, concentrating on the EN1 between the Save river and Muxungué.

FRELIMO presidential candidate Felipe Nyusi obliquely addressed the issue of ongoing violence on June 18 during a political rally in Nhacolo in Manica province, remarking: “A nation must be united if it is to be able to beat the challenges on the path to development,” adding that peace was where the seeds of patriotism germinate, and while there were “people who did not respect this point of view” (a clear reference to RENAMO), government efforts to end RENAMO’s armed resistance would continue (AllAfrica.com, June 18).

In the meantime, the attacks continue. In the most recent serious incident, RENAMO guerrillas again attacked vehicles travelling along EN1 on June 4 between the Save River and Muxungué, killing 15 soldiers and wounding 26 others. After the incident, the head of the government negotiating delegation, Jose Pacheco, admitted that, “in reality, there is no longer a ceasefire” (Agencia EFE [Madrid], June 4).

In the interim, positions are hardening on both sides. On June 9, the deputy head of the government’s delegation to the 61st round of talks between RENAMO and the government, Transport Minister Gabriel Muthisse, said in reference to RENAMO demands for parity in FADM and the FDS: “Imagine the government of Nigeria handing over the army to Boko Haram, and the Afghan government handing over the army to the Taliban. It is not possible” (Xinhua, June 9).

While Dhlakama is at best a long shot to win the October

15 election, RENAMO hopes to increase its visibility in Parliament, where it now has 51 of 250 seats. Discussions between RENAMO and the government have been deadlocked for more than a year. The major unresolved sticking point is the integration of RENAMO armed militants into the FADM and the FDS. Guebuza's administration has been steadfast in rejecting RENAMO's demand for parity in the FADM and the FDS. Nyusi, FRELIMO's presidential candidate, has directed FADM operations for six years as minister of defense. If he intends to modify Guebuza's policies towards integrating RENAMO into Mozambique's armed forces, he has given no indication of it in his speeches around the country. Accordingly, the turmoil in Mozambique seems likely to continue.

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Note

1. United Nations Security Council S/23645, "General Peace Agreement for Mozambique, Rome, 4 October 1992," http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/MZ_921004_MozambiqueGeneralPeaceAgreement.pdf.

Algeria and Egypt Struggle with the Implications of Libya's Political Chaos

Dario Cristiani and Kaçper Rekawek

The progressive deterioration of security within Libya represents a major concern for a number of regional actors, most notably Libya's two powerful neighbors, Egypt and Algeria. Algeria has already directly experienced some of the destabilizing effects of the Libyan upheaval, with the terrorist attack on In Aménas and the war in neighboring northern Mali. The war in Libya and its outcome had a number of effects on Egypt also: with the situation along the border remaining unstable, it is widely believed that weapons from Qaddafi's arsenals have inundated the Sinai Peninsula. This has contributed to the deterioration of security there, making that part of Egypt one of the most difficult regions to control for the post-revolutionary authorities. While both Egypt and Algeria both have an interest in a stable Libya, this does not imply automatically that the two countries will deepen their relations. While there may be some tactical convergences and a substantial agreement on a "Libyan solution to Libyan problems," the prospect for a deeper and more strategic cooperation on Libya and other regional issues remains grim.

The Algerian Response – Testing Foreign Policy Principles

During the Arab Spring, Algeria adopted a rather conservative stance, both internally and externally. Internally, the regime worked to guarantee its survival using a number of instruments such as raising public expenditures and tightening security to cool down the potential threat emanating from the revolutionary wave that engulfed its three eastern neighbors, Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.

Externally, Algeria adopted its traditional principle of non-interference, an approach very much in line with the nation's historical foreign policy attitude and strategic culture. With non-interference remaining a major pillar of post-colonial Algeria, authorities maintained a rather cold stance toward the efforts of external powers to support the rebellion mounting in Libya in 2011 despite a history of troubled relations between Algiers and the Qaddafi regime.

Nevertheless, Algeria perceived the destabilization of Libya as a major threat and its intelligence services likely had a much more accurate picture of what constituted the Libyan rebel front than the NATO nations that supported the revolt. However, in line with the pragmatism often showed in its

foreign policy, Algeria coped with the new reality on the ground by collaborating with the new post-revolutionary government, developing relations that were described as “solid” by both sides despite some initial tension associated with the presence of members of Qaddafi’s family in Algeria (Algeria.dz, March 12, 2012).

The rising instability in northern Mali as a result of inflows of militants and weapons from Libya, and above all the attack on Algeria’s In Aménas gas plant by terrorists operating from across the Libyan border, significantly changed the way Algeria looked at what was going on in Libya. A prolonged period of instability in Libya will significantly stress Algerian security resources. An arc of diplomatic tension and instability at its borders surrounds Algeria, including its western borders, where tensions remain high with neighboring Morocco over the status of the Western Sahara and a number of other issues.

The rivalry with Rabat remains the defining and central regional issue for Algeria. As such, the need to devote security resources to face the wave of instability coming from the east is perceived as an element that may weaken Algeria *vis-a-vis* Morocco. The Algerian army is already mounting a great effort to manage the instability coming from Mali and the opening of a new front on its eastern border with Libya is considered a major burden that should be reduced as soon as possible. Reports of an unlikely joint Algerian, American and French military operation in eastern Libya emerged in early June, but the existence of the operation has been denied between all the parties alleged to be involved and no further confirmation has been available (*El Watan* [Algiers], June 6; *al-Arabiya*, June 6).

In a meeting with American secretary-of-state John Kerry, Algerian president Abd al-Aziz Bouteflika stressed the need to eradicate the terrorist threat along the Libyan border. Moreover, it is not by chance that two major heavyweights of the French government, Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian and Minister of Foreign Affairs Laurent Fabius, visited Algeria in May and June 2014 respectively (*Tout sur l’Algérie*, May 20; *El Watan* [Algiers], June 7; *Le JDD* [Algiers], May 21).

For Algeria, the eventual support of General Khalifa Haftar and his effort to take over the Libyan government may be simply a pragmatic move to reduce Algeria’s degree of involvement in Libyan affairs, though this would not necessarily imply a wholesale change in Algeria’s historical policy of non-interference. Signs of cooperation with the United States and France, two of the main actors in the deposal of Mu’ammarr Qaddafi, and Algeria’s growing

pro-active attitude in the region are dictated by tactical circumstances and are required to avoid more problematic strategic consequences. The extent to which Algeria supports Haftar will depend on his capacity to represent an element of stability, rather than a further element of destabilization in Libya’s already complex strategic equation.

The Egyptian Response – Containing Islamist Militancy

The other regional power particularly interested in developments within Libya is Egypt. Haftar seems intent on copying the Egyptian military’s methodology in his quest for power in Libya. [1] Not only does he phrase his actions in terms which should theoretically please Egyptians (his intervention is a “fight against terrorism” represented by the Muslim Brotherhood and allied Libyan-based jihadist groups), he also, like General Abd al-Fatah al-Sisi in July 2013, asked for popular support to justify his crackdown on the Islamists and even borrows the name of the his political wing – the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCARF) – from the military entity that governed Egypt between 2011 and 2012. All of this, however, does not automatically endear Haftar to Egyptians who are wary of the rogue general of a barely existing army, operating in a dysfunctional state on Egypt’s border while trying to imitate the success of Egypt’s June 30, 2013 revolution. [2]

In Cairo’s view, Haftar’s intervention, which was preceded by his alleged “television coup” in February 2014, complicates the internal situation in Libya and could further destabilize Egypt’s western neighbor. Consequently, this would endanger the safety of the ever-shrinking Egyptian workers’ community in Libya, whose members have endured killings, kidnappings and illegal detentions at the hands of local Islamist groups (Mada Masr [Cairo], March 25). Furthermore, a destabilized Libya, with unprotected borders, remains the main source of weaponry for Egyptian criminal or terrorist networks, with an estimated one million weapons smuggled into Egypt after Qaddafi’s downfall. [4]

Most importantly, Egypt views Libya as a sanctuary for terrorist groups operating in northern and Sahelian Africa, including al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Mokhtar Belmokhtar’s al-Murabitun movement and various Egyptian-based terrorist networks. According to some estimates, up to 12 “Afghan-style” camps for would-be Egyptian jihadists exist in eastern Libya. [5] These camps offer Egyptian jihadists from Sinai and other parts of the country (like the much-touted Nasr City Cell dismantled in 2012) access to the community of global jihadists, support from the likes of AQIM and strategic depth if they find themselves under too much pressure in Egypt. [6] The alleged trainees found in

these camps, whose numbers are disputed, do not however constitute a “Free Egyptian Army,” an alleged Muslim Brotherhood military organization in exile which is said to be waiting for a chance to “return” to Egypt. This entity is a bogeyman of some of the pro-Sisi Egyptian press but pro-government analysts dismiss it as a creation of supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ahram Weekly*, April 24). [7]

Both Haftar and Egypt deny cooperating in Haftar’s Operation Dignity. Egypt cautiously stresses the importance of international assistance to Libya that would enable the country’s authorities to re-impose control over their territory. [8] That does not include, despite President Sisi’s pre-election statements on the Egyptian Army as a guarantor of security to Egypt’s “Arab brothers,” direct Egyptian military intervention or unilateral cross-border attacks on jihadist strongholds in Libya (*Cairo Post*, May 15). What can be expected, however, is intensification of counter-terrorism efforts within Egypt to combat local networks stretching into eastern Libya and on into northern and Sahelian Africa, followed by intense public exposure to garner international support for Egyptian actions.

Conclusion

Theoretically, Algeria, which has been combating its own Islamist extremists for more than two decades, should be an ideal partner in Egypt’s quest to eradicate terrorism emanating from Libya. Some in Algeria have suggested Egypt could follow the pattern of political development that Algeria undertook over the past 20 years (*La Nouvelle République* [Algiers], July 3, 2013). However, the extent to which the two countries and their security sectors would be ready and willing to co-operate on the Libyan file is debatable. Egypt may not view Algeria as the best counter-terrorism partner in relation to the threat emanating from Libya in view of Algeria’s prolonged and unsuccessful effort to combat its own domestic terrorist threat.

In short, despite the fact that seemingly similar eradicationist political and security mindsets prevail in Algeria – and from 2013 – in Egypt, does not automatically mean that the two independent minded countries, with a history of troubled relations, are bound to implement mutual co-operation in the field of counter-terrorism. Both nations have an interest in reducing volatility and insecurity in Libya, but for different reasons.

Egypt needs to reduce the security threat at its border and work towards internal consolidation after the troubled post-Arab spring period while devoting resources and

soldiers to boost government control of the unstable Sinai Peninsula. Algeria’s concern is that a destabilized Libya will drain economic, political and military resources needed to confront more urgent issues such as northern Mali and historically more important issues such as its ongoing rivalry with Morocco. While some degree of tactical convergence remains possible between North Africa’s largest militaries, a deeper and more strategic cooperation on Libya at a political level remains improbable.

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Notes

1. See: Haftar’s profile by Camille Tawil, “Operation Dignity: General Haftar’s Latest Battle May Decide Libya’s Future,” *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume XII, Issue 11, May 31, 2014.
2. The sense of Libya’s “otherness” security wise was conveyed to the authors by all of their anonymous interviewees from the ranks of Egyptian journalists and think tankers.
3. Tawil. *op. cit.*
4. Authors’ interviews with experts, including former government and security officials, of the Regional Center for Strategic Studies (RCSS), Cairo.
5. *Ibid.*
6. For the Nasr City cell, see Andrew McGregor, “The Face of Egypt’s Next Revolution: The Madinat Nasr Cell,” Jamestown Foundation “Hot Issue,” November 20, 2012, and “Egypt’s Internal Islamist Threat: Who Are the Suspects in the Madinat Nasr Cell?” *Militant Leadership Monitor*, November 30, 2012.
7. Authors’ interviews with experts, including former government and security officials, of the Regional Center for Strategic Studies (RCSS), Cairo.
8. Arab Republic of Egypt Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Fahmy receives the US envoy to Libya,” June 10, 2014, <http://www.mfa.gov.eg/English/Ministry/News/Pages/NewsDetails.aspx?Source=6781921f-3993-444a-859e-ee26ce851de8&newsID=3ccf2776-3b70-4294-94ed-979cbbcc25cc>.