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LIBYAN ISLAMISTS UNPACKED:

RISE, TRANSFORMATION, AND FUTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Islamists played a decisive role in the Libyan revolution against Colonel Muammar al-Qadhafi. The extent of their influence in the new Libya, however, has sparked concerns in the international community. Two days after the storming of Qadhafi's Bab al-Aziziyya compound in Tripoli, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called on the National Transitional Council (NTC) to take "a firm stand against violent extremism" – an apparent reference to Islamist fighters.

The project of state-building and democratization in Libya is beset by a range of factors, including lack of pre-existing institutions, weak security arrangements, and the political inexperience and ideological rigidity of many of the actors concerned. The spread of arms, decentralization of Islamist militias, and proximity to the theater of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) are all further destabilizing elements. Libya's Islamists find themselves at the nexus of these challenges. Their role needs to be unpacked and better understood.

This policy briefing is divided into three parts. The first section identifies the main Islamist forces in Libya and briefly overviews their backgrounds. The second part attempts to understand the salient issues facing Libyan Islamists and the effect they have on Islamist political behavior. The final section concludes with policy implications for the international community.

ISLAMISTS IN LIBYA UNDER QADHAFI: AN OVERVIEW

This policy briefing focuses on the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) – now called the Libyan Islamic Movement for Change (LIMC) – and affiliates, as well as the decentralized, organizationally amorphous Salafi movement. Each of these groups, as well as their associated militias and parties, will be critical actors in shaping the identity and nature of the future Libyan state and its post-revolutionary transition. Other Islamist organizations and ideologies exist in Libya, including groups such as Hizb al-Tahrir and al-Tabligh wa al-Da'wa. Given the limited influence of these other groups, I will focus on the background of the Brotherhood, the LIFG, and the Salafis.

The Muslim Brotherhood and its Offshoots

The history of the Muslim Brotherhood in Libya dates back to 1949, when a number of Egyptian Brotherhood members fled a crackdown in Cairo and took refuge in Benghazi, where they were hosted by Prince Idris al-Senussi.[2] Meanwhile, some of the Libyans who had participated in the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948 returned home to spread Brotherhood teachings in the country.[3] The first clear organizational structure was established in 1968 when the Brotherhood of Tripoli and Benghazi developed a hierarchy based around "leadership committees."[4] In reaction to the 1969 coup of Colonel Muammar al-Qadhafi, the group froze most of its activities to avoid repression. In 1974, Qadhafi warned that if the Brotherhood wanted to initiate *da'wa* (or "call for Islam"), they should do so outside of Libya.[5] Several Brotherhood figures were asked to leave the country, and many emigrated to Europe and the United States.

In the United States, the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood was reborn.[6] Members established the "Islamic Group – Libya" in 1980 and published a magazine entitled *The Muslim*. In 1982, many of the Brotherhood figures studying in the United States returned to Libya to re-establish the organization.[7] Some leading figures, however, co-founded and

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joined the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL), an ideologically diverse nationalist front seeking regime change. This move caused a split within the Brotherhood's ranks between those who believed the group should maintain its ideological peculiarities and organizational independence and others who wanted to work under a broad-based political umbrella. Regardless, the NFSL's attempts to overthrow the regime by force ended in failure, beginning with the "Bab al-Aziziya Battle" in 1984, and followed by the U.S.-backed "Project Algeria" in 1985 and "Project Chad" between 1986 and 1990.

The Islamic Rally Movement (IRM) is another group with historic links to the Libyan Brotherhood. Many of its senior members left the Brotherhood to establish the IRM in 1992.[8] As with the NFSL, the IRM sought direct regime change via Islamist political and armed activism. The movement suffered a blow, however, when it lost many of its leading figures in the Abu Selim Prison massacre of 1996.[9]

The Brotherhood and its affiliates continued to suffer a brutal and sustained campaign of repression throughout the 1980s and 1990s, especially during the armed insurgency of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (1995-1998).[10] In the two years after the insurgency, more than 150 Brotherhood members were arrested, including the head of the organization and his deputy. In 1999, dialogue with the regime began.[11] It was bolstered in 2005 and 2006 by Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi's initiatives, which aimed to co-opt and neutralize opposition groups, with a particular focus on the Islamists. In 2009, Soliman Abd al-Qadir, the former General Observer of the Libyan Brotherhood, estimated the group had a few thousand members in Libya, mainly concentrated in the professional and student sectors, with a further 200 figures in exile.[12] These cadres have been critical for the movement, both during the Libyan revolution of February 2011 and in its aftermath.

The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and the Jihadi Movement

Established in 1990, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) was modeled along the lines of the Egyptian organization, al-Jihad: secretive, elitist, exclusively paramilitary, and aiming to topple the regime.[13] After being uncovered by the Libyan authorities, the movement was forced to publically declare its existence for the first time on October 18, 1995. A brutal crackdown followed, and the LIFG led a three-year low-level insurgency based mainly in eastern Libya. The group attempted to assassinate Qadhafi on three occasions. According to regime estimates, 165 Libyan officials, officers, and soldiers – mainly from the intelligence and security apparatuses – were killed during the confrontations.[14] The LIFG lost 177 members, including its top commander in Libya and four Consultative Council members.[15] By 1998, the Consultative Council decided to impose a three-year ceasefire, to be reviewed in 2001. The events of September 11, however, altered these calculations.

According to the LIFG leaders and members interviewed in Tripoli, a dialogue with the Libyan regime began in 2005. By 2006, six members of the Consultative Council were involved in these talks. At the end of 2010, the group published a book, titled *Corrective Studies in Understandings of Jihad, Enforcement of Morality, and Judgment of People*, forbidding armed insurgency and advocating tolerance of other ideologies and religions. In March 2010, Saif al-Islam announced the release of the LIFG commanders and praised their book in a public conference attended by Western diplomats, academics, and journalists.

Like the Brotherhood and its offshoots, the LIFG and the Jihadi trend supported the February 2011 revolution and played a significant role in the removal of the Qadhafi regime. The movement brought a wealth of paramilitary know-how to the relatively inexperienced Libyan revolutionaries. Members of the movement had been heavily involved in multiple armed conflicts, including in Afghanistan, Algeria, and Chechnya. The group later changed its name, becoming the Libyan Islamic Movement for Change (LIMC). Many of its members now form part of the Tripoli Military Council (TMC).

Another smaller Jihadi group that operated during the Qadhafi era was the Martyrs Movement. Based primarily in Benghazi and its suburbs, it too was composed of Libyan veterans of the Afghan conflict.[16] Again, some of its members played an active role in the revolution. In addition to the LIFG and the Martyrs, various small decentralized cells had operated in eastern Libya under Qadhafi, sending freelance Jihadis to fight in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Algeria.[17] Overall, most of the Libyan volunteers who fought abroad came from the Jihadi trend (including the LIFG, the Martyrs, and other cells). As many as 2,000 such fighters are estimated to have taken part in armed conflicts abroad between the mid-1980s and 2011.[18]

The Salafi Movement

The origins of the Salafi trend in Libya go back to the 1960s.[19] As in other countries, non-Jihadi Salafism in Libya is divided into two sub-trends: status-quo/apolitical/scholarly Salafism and political/reformist Salafism. Despite being associated with Saudi theologians, status-quo Salafism was able to survive in public under the Qadhafi regime, mainly due to its relatively apolitical nature and rhetorical support for current rulers. As was the case with some Egyptian Salafis, the sheikhs belonging to this sub-trend were initially against the Libyan revolution.[20] Between February and August 2011, some were used for pro-Qadhafi propaganda, issuing statements on television and radio that sought to grant the regime religious legitimacy, while delegitimating the revolutionaries.[21]

The Salafi trend in Libya, despite being larger in size than the Muslim Brotherhood and the LIFG, suffers from a lack of leadership and organizational structure. As in post-revolutionary Egypt – where Salafi groups formed political parties and now occupy 24 percent of parliament – this will likely change. Many Libyan Salafis are now set to participate in the political process by establishing political parties.[22]

To summarize, the aforementioned Islamist organizations and their main characteristics are listed in the Appendix, Figure 1.

ISLAMISTS AND THE LIBYAN REVOLUTION: MILITIA AND PARTY POLITICS

On the eve of the revolution, most of the aforementioned Islamist groups and trends faced a credibility crisis, in many ways similar to that experienced by Egyptian Islamists. The Muslim Brotherhood, Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, some figures from the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, and others had all held talks with elements from the regime, most notably Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi and Abdullah al-Senussi. As recently as March 2010 – at a conference attended by the author – Saif al-Islam was referring to senior members of the LIFG as "brothers," and to Muslim Brotherhood figures as "dear friend[s]." Shocked by the brutality of the regime's response to the Benghazi protests that sparked the revolution and by Saif al-Islam's support for these policies, Islamists sided with the uprising. As mentioned, there were a few exceptions among the status-quo Salafis.

Libya's Islamists do not appear to have been directly involved in instigating the revolution. Fawzi Bukatief, the head of the Revolutionary Brigades Coalition (RBC) in Eastern Libya and a former deputy defense minister under the NTC, has denied that the Brotherhood played any role in planning the uprising.[23] Bukatief was a leading figure in the organization and spent more than 18 years in Qadhafi's jails.[24] Meanwhile, Noman Benotman, a former senior member of the LIFG who worked with Saif al-Islam on his reform project, *Tomorrow's Libya*, was consulted by the regime on how to handle the uprising in Benghazi.[25] He did so, recommending dialogue rather than a violent response.

Despite this occasional proximity to the regime, Islamists played a critical role in the revolution. Most of the brigades that fought against Qadhafi had an Islamist, and sometimes a Jihadi, background. In the East, Ismail al-Sallabi, an Islamist commander close to the Muslim Brotherhood, headed the February 17th Brigade based in Benghazi. In the West, Abd al-Hakim Belhaj – currently the commander of the Tripoli Military Council (TMC) – spearheaded the attack on Qadhafi's Bab al-Aziziya compound. Belhaj, known in the Jihadi world as Abu

Abdullah al-Sadiq, is a former commander of the LIFG. Following the capture of Sirte last October, Islamists attempted to enhance their political fortunes by organizing themselves either as political parties, armed groups, or both.

The Muslim Brotherhood and the Justice and Construction Party

From the outset, the Brotherhood was supportive of the NTC, and some of its main figures became members of the body.[26] Mindful of the experience of the Egyptian Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the Libyan Brotherhood is attempting to a follow a similar model. After its ninth conference held in Benghazi in November 2011, the organization restructured itself, elected a new leader, increased its consultative council membership from 11 to 30, and decided to form a political party.[27] "Participation in the party will be based on an individual, not group basis," said Bashir al-Kubty, the group's newly elected General Observer,[28] whose statement implies that the party will not be a political front, and in particular, not an Islamist front (like the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front). "They want it to be like the FJP in Egypt, 80 percent Muslim Brotherhood and 20 percent others, to be able to say that they are inclusive," said Jum'a al-Gumati, a former representative of the NTC in London.[29]

The party, officially established on March 3, 2011, is a "a national civil party with an Islamic reference…[having both] Islamists and nationalists," according to Al-Amin Belhaj, the head of the party's founding committee. It was a considerable victory for the Brotherhood, which had existed in Libya for 63 years but was never able to operate publicly. Indeed, when State TV did finally mention the group in its public broadcasts, it was to show the bodies of its leaders hung from street lamp-posts in the 1980s. At the time, Qadhafi's media referred to them as "deviant heretics." Now, they go by the "Justice and Construction Party" (JCP).

When Ali al-Sallabi, a leading Islamist activist formerly affiliated with the Brotherhood, proposed a National Rally Coalition to include the Brotherhood and other Islamist factions, the group rejected his proposal.[30] It is currently seeking to assert control over its own political arm, shunning alliances with ex-Jihadis (such as LIFG members) that might trigger international criticism. It is also likely to reject initiatives proposed by ex-affiliates like al-Sallabi to send a message to the grassroots and mid-ranks of the organization that defections will not be condoned. The major determinants of the Libyan Brotherhood's behavior in the transitional period, therefore, are securing domestic and international legitimacy, extending its presence throughout the country, and maintaining centralized control of its members.

In addition to the JCP, the Brotherhood is also closely associated with a coalition of revolutionary brigades that are mainly represented by the Revolutionary Brigades Coalition (RBC), an alliance of more than twenty Eastern brigades. However, the Brotherhood-affiliated brigades are not limited to the RBC. "We are about to announce a national union of revolutionary brigades," Bukatief said in early April.[31] The union will be independent of the defense and the interior ministries and could use its firepower to crack down on other armed groups still operating in Tripoli.[32] "We will stop them, or imprison them.... We know the fighters. We will decide who is a revolutionary and who is not…. The militias are the problem, but also the solution," Bukatief added.[33] At the time of writing, talks were still ongoing to include the Tripoli Military Council in the union.

The Libyan Islamic Movement for Change and the Tripoli Military Council

The Libyan Islamic Movement for Change (LIMC) is the successor of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group. Its establishment was announced on February 15, 2011 by its spokesperson in London, Anis al-Sharif, who later became a spokesperson of the Tripoli Military Council. Both the LIMC and the Council are mainly composed of former LIFG figures and affiliates. Together they have between 5,000 and 7,000 members. Militarily, the Tripoli Military Council controls various parts of Tripoli, though not all critical areas. Belhaj himself was de-

tained for a few hours in Tripoli airport on his way to Turkey by a rival militia, the Zintan Brigade. This group belongs to the Zintan Military Council (ZMC), which was headed by the current Defense Minister Osama al-Juwaili. Following threats of a coup by the Tripoli Revolutionaries Council (TRC), another Zintanian-dominated militia, al-Juwaili was appointed as defense minister, in an apparent effort to placate both groups. These two militias form part of the larger Western Libya Military Council (WLMC), an important faction that is perceived as a counterweight to Islamist groups, most notably the LIMC and TMC.

The appointment of al-Juwaili as Minister of Defense is indicative of a number of critical issues. It reveals the political clout of the WLMC/ZMC/TRC compared to that of the LIMC/TMC. It also shows that the latter is unwilling to challenge the current status-quo through armed action. Additionally, it points to the NTC's desire to avoid international criticism in choosing not to appoint an ex-Jihadi such as Belhaj as defense or interior minister. Politically, the LIMC was part of the effort to form a coalition front with the Brotherhood and other Islamist figures such as Ali al-Sallabi. But the proposed National Rally Council was stillborn, mainly due to the Brotherhood's refusal to join. At the time of writing, the LIMC was involved in various negotiations with both Islamist and non-Islamist political groups to form a political party. For clarification, Figure 2 in the Appendix shows the relationship between the various political groups and militias currently active in Libya.

CHALLENGES FOR ISLAMISTS IN LIBYA

Organizational Structures and Mass Support

A striking difference between the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and al-Nahda in Tunisia on the one hand, and the Islamists of Libya on the other, relates to their varying degrees of institutionalism and the nature of their interaction with the population. The Egyptian Brotherhood underwent a renewal from the early 1970s,[34] and since then has worked under hazardous conditions to build mass support in universities, professional syndicates, unions, and neighborhoods. The same applies to *al-Da'wa al-Salafiyya* (the Salafi Call) of Alexandria, the mother-organization of the Egyptian Salafi Nour Party.[35] Al-Nahda in Tunisia followed a similar path, though efforts to build mass support were frozen between 1990 and 2011 due to Ben Ali's repressive policies. The Libyan Brotherhood, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, and others have never had the opportunity to connect with the masses in the same way, nor have they managed to build effective organizational structures or institutions within Libya. Despite that, these groups are poised to prosper in Libya's nascent political scene. Their relative political experience, coupled with an ability to deploy religious symbolism and rhetoric in a conservative society and strong revolutionary credentials, provide them with an edge over other political forces.

Behavioral and Ideological Transitions

In addition to their institutional immaturity, Libya's Islamists will have to deal with potentially problematic ideological and rhetorical legacies. In the transition period, questions are emerging over their commitment to democratic values and women's rights, and more generally, their perceptions of the political, ideological, and religious "other." An attempt to be inclusive was clear during the Justice and Construction Party's conference in early March. Walid al-Sakran, a non-Brotherhood member, was a candidate for the party's leadership, and five women ran to join the 45-member Consultative Council. Three of them were successful.

While their leaders have shown their commitment to a pragmatic politics, grassroots supporters will likely expect ideology to maintain a strong influence on behavior. The challenge for the leadership, then, is how to legitimate and garner support for potentially controversial policies, including building coalitions with non-Islamists. The tension between political pragmatism and ideological commitments may be eased, however, by the experience of exile in the West, which often involved a degree of ideological transformation. This applies in particular to the Brotherhood and the LIMC, though not to the more sizeable local Salafi contingent.

Such transformations are reflected in the statements of some ex-Jihadis. "Our view is starting to change of the West. If we hated the Americans 100 percent, today it is less than 50 percent," says Abd al-Hakim al-Hasadi, a former mid-ranking member of the LIFG, who previously represented the city of Derna in the NTC. "[The Americans] have started to redeem themselves for their past mistakes by helping us to preserve the blood of our children," he explained. The tone is generally consistent with what most of LIMC leaders have been saying since February 2011.

In many cases, LIMC leaders' experiences of armed conflict in Afghanistan, Algeria, and Libya have forced them to re-calculate their strategies and moderate their behavior and ideology. One reason for this is counter-intuitive: many of the fighters have had unfavorable firsthand experiences with warlordism in Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, and elsewhere. "We saw Muslims fight before.... Neither was Afghanistan liberated, nor was the Islamic state established.... [We] had enough. We want to raise our kids in a safe society," said a fighter from Derna who volunteered to fight in Afghanistan multiple times.[36]

Regional influences play a role as well. The transformations of the Brotherhood, the Salafi movement in Egypt, and al-Nahda in Tunisia set important examples for Libya's Islamists to follow. Last March, a Libyan Salafi delegation met with the leaders of the Egyptian *al-Da'wa al-Salafiyya* (Salafi Call), the mother organization of the Salafi Nour Party, the second largest bloc in the Egyptian parliament. The purpose of the meeting was to request legal and religious advice on forming a political party. "They look to the Egyptian Salafi sheikhs as their *ulamaa'* [scholars] and sources of inspiration. They are fascinated by their experience,"[37] Noman Benotman said. The meeting was not the first of its kind, and shows that mainstream Libyan Salafism is likely to follow the organized and politicized Egyptian model, as opposed to the status-quo, cult-like *madkhali* Salafism[38] sponsored by Saudi Arabia.

Crafting a Constitution

One thorny issue that Islamists will face in the coming months is the crafting of a new constitution. The reference to *sharia* as the principle source of legislation in article one of the constitutional declaration of August 2011 has raised eyebrows in the West, as well as among Libya's liberals. There was a similar reaction when Mustafa Abdel Jalil, chairman of the National Transitional Council, talked about the superiority of sharia and the legitimacy of polygamy in his liberation speech. Many Brotherhood, LIMC, and Salafi figures perceived Abdel Jalil's comments as a victory. Bashir al-Kubty, the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, asserted that all new legislation must have an Islamic reference and that this should be enshrined in the constitution.

According to Abdel Nasser Shamata, head of the Crisis Management Unit in the NTC, "the issue of the sharia is settled. It will be the supreme source of legislation… there is no point in making this debatable or raising the Qur'an in Benghazi and Sabha."[39] His statement came in response to demonstrations in Benghazi and Sabha in which hundreds demanded the implementation of sharia law. If Islamists gain a majority in the parliamentary elections scheduled for July, article one is almost certain to be upheld, with further provisions asserting the Islamic identity of the state.[40]

Armed Islamism, Al Qaeda, and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

The relationship between Algerian and Libyan Jihadis began in the 1970s. It was the Algerian and the Afghan conflicts, however, that drew them close together and fostered organizational links. In Afghanistan, many LIFG members fought side by side with Algerian Jihadis, some of whom would later play key roles in helping to establish the Algeria's Armed Islamic Group (GIA).[41] AQIM represents an offshoot of the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat – itself a splinter group within GIA.[42] In the 1990s, the LIFG believed that allying with Algerian Jihadis could offer strategic advantages. The rationale was that if the Algerian regime was toppled, or if parts of western Algeria were controlled by the GIA, the LIFG would have a continuous border across which it could launch attacks into Libya. The "leap" (*al-wathba*) was a term used by LIFG members to describe the move of trained fighters from

Afghanistan to Algeria. But although the "leap" seemed strategically sound on paper, it ultimately proved to be a disaster for the LIFG. Several elite group commanders were executed by the Algerian GIA, allegedly after refusing to give the *bay'a* (oath of loyalty) to Djmel Zitouni, the Emir of the GIA between 1995 and 1996. As a result of this bitter experience in Algeria, and given their ideological evolution and improved relations with the West, many of the Libyan Islamists are now bent on countering the influence of Al Qaeda in the country.[43]

This doesn't necessarily deter Al Qaeda and AQIM from trying to build networks in Libya. "You can see their flags here and there. You know they are not far," Muhammad Abdullah, a veteran of the Afghan conflicts from Benghazi explained.[44] A recent UN Security Council report showed that a convoy intercepted in Niger had large quantities of Semtex explosives and 445 detonators. Authorities say they were meant for AQIM camps in northern Mali. The report claims the explosives came from Libyan military stockpiles.[45] Another report claimed a leading Jihadi close to Al Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri arrived in the Libyan territories, forming a militia of some 200 men.[46]

Furthermore, Mukhtar Bilmukhtar, the senior commander in AQIM, has recently visited southwestern Libya, aiming to bring arms into Mali.[47] Rather than attempting to establish a presence as Al Qaeda has done, AQIM seems to be more interested in using Libya as a logistical support base. While the capacity of such groups is still limited, local Islamists entering the political game will consider them a direct challenge. This applies in particular to groups that have always been hostile to Al Qaeda, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, or that have more recently broken ties with it, as in the case of the LIMC.

ISLAMISTS AND THE FUTURE OF LIBYA'S TRANSITION

Islamists are likely to remain critical players in Libya's politics for the foreseeable future. That said, they are now presented with a number of challenges. These include building and sustaining mass support, transforming their ideology and behavior to encourage greater pragmatism and tolerance, and neutralizing the influence of Al Qaeda. A range of other factors and processes will also alter and shape their behavior. Chief among these are: the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process; conflict prevention and resolution capacities; the political learning curve; and external interactions with non-like-minded actors, including Western officials. Some important policy implications follow from the aforementioned factors.

The DDR process is key to the success of Libya's democratization. If it fails, or succeeds only partially, armed Islamist organizations are likely to emerge as a challenge to the state. Some progress has been made already. The ministry of interior recently announced the inclusion of 70,000 revolutionaries in its ranks,[48] while the head of the armed forces General Youssef al-Manqoush has announced the reintegration of 5,000 others into army units.[49] But the numbers remain small compared to the 125,000 or more Libyans who are still said to be armed.[50] Legitimacy too remains a problem. Without a popular mandate provided by an elected government, many of the armed groups will continue to challenge the reintegration process and the legitimacy of its administrators.

Establishing a sustainable DDR process is a considerable challenge. It involves dealing with more than 150 armed groups, each with different leadership structures, ideological leanings, regional identities, and political ambitions. Thus far, the NTC has responded by drawing on the influence of tribal leaders and deploying a mix of religious symbolism and rhetoric, and promises for a better future, often playing on the rifts between different militias. All this has not, however, been enough to guarantee success.

It is now critical that Libyan politicians, including Islamists, civil society organizations, and state institutions, receive further assistance in augmenting conflict prevention and resolution capacities. Such assistance is being provided by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Turkey, and

the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), as well as by various NGOs. The Kufra events, in which two tribes clashed in the remote southeast of the country leaving more than 100 people dead, exposed the limited capacity of the army and security forces to contain inter-tribal violence. The failure of the army has led some militias to declare that they will keep their weapons to protect themselves from Qadhafi loyalists. Indeed, attempts to disarm actors before safety has been assured and a legitimate, elected government has been established will inevitably lead to further security dilemmas. These could ultimately undermine the DDR process altogether, and further complicate processes of state-building and democratization.

Another consideration has to do with official and unofficial Western interactions with Islamists during the transitional period. Research has shown that interactions via conferences and workshops with non-like-minded organizations and entities will encourage modifications in their worldview and behavior, potentially leading to new strategic thinking.[51] This applies to Libyan Islamists who are willing to engage in the political process, as much as it does to like-minded Islamists in Egypt, Tunisia, and Syria. A third consideration relates to technical training and political education for Islamists and other parties. Training gaps need to be filled in particular areas such human rights, civil-military relations, legislative-executive relations, political party development, and constitutional law. This assistance is necessary to help prepare those parties which are most likely to gain a majority in the elections scheduled for late July 2012.

A final consideration is more strategic. In the long term, Islamism will transform its ideological agendas, behavioral patterns, and organizational manifestations. Its history is one of mutation and change, rather than stagnation or continuity. But it is in the region to stay. In Libya's near future, Islamists will be the primary political actors. Establishing ties and coordinating with them will be essential for any efforts to support democratization, state-building, regional stability, and counterterrorism.

NOTES

1. The author is grateful to Mohammed Ali Abdullah, Noman Benotman, Ali al-Sallabi, Abd al-Hakim Belhaj, Sami al-Sa'idi, Ashur al-Shamis, Ali A. Zakouk, and others who wish to remain anonymous for sharing their rich experiences and candid reflections. The author would also like to thank Tamara Wittes and Shadi Hamid for their insightful comments and Samuel Plumbly for his editorial help.
2. Soliman Abd al-Qadir,"*'Ilaqat al-Ikhwan ma' al-Nizam al-Libi* (The relationship between the Brotherhood and the Libyan Regime)," interview by Ahmad Mansour. *Bila Hudud,* Al-Jazeera Arabic, August 7, 2005; Mahmoud al-Naku' *,Al-Harakat al-Islamiyya al-Haditha fi Libya (Modern Islamist Movements in Libya)*. Libya Forum for Human Development, 2010, 23.
3. Al-Naku', *Al-Harakat,* 2010, 24.
4. Abd al-Qadir,"Ilaqat al-Ikhwan."
5. Al-Sadiq al-Ruqay'i,"*Al-Islamiyun fi Libya: Tarikh wa Jihad – Juz' 1* (The Islamists in Libya: History and Jihad - Part 1)," *Al-Manara*, December 22, 2011.
6. Author's interview with Bashir al-Kubty, June 14, 2011; Al-Ruqay'i, "*Al-Islamiyun fi Libya.*"
7. Fawzi Abu Kitef, Muslim Brotherhood leader and head of the Revolutionary Brigades Coalition, interview by Ahmad Mansour, *Shahid 'Ala al-Asr,* Al-Jazeera Arabic, February 8, 2012.
8. Author's interview with Mamdouh al-Abidy, former IRM member, June 18, 2011.
9. Al-Ruqay'i, "*Al-Islamiyun fi Libya*."
10. Other opposition groups were subjected to similar levels of repression during that period, including leftists, nationalists, liberals, independent figures, and even former members of the regime.
11. Soliman Abd al-Qadir, interviewed by Sami Kleib. *Liqa' Khas,* Al-Jazeera Arabic, May 30, 2009.
12. Ibid.
13. Author's interview with Noman Benotman, former LIFG Shura Council member, April 27, 2010.
14. Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi, Speech at the Press Conference entitled "National Reconciliation in Libya," Tripoli, Libya, March 23, 2010.
15. These were Saad al-Firjani (Wahid), Salih Abd al-Sayyid (Abu Yahya), Abd al-Hakim al-'Ammari (Abu Muslim), and A. S. Zakaria (killed in the Abu Selim Prison massacre).
16. Omar Ashour, "Post-Jihadism: Libya and the Global Transformation of Armed Islamist Movement," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23, no. 3 (2011): 394, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09546553.2011.560218#preview>.
17. Chris Steven, "Die Hard in Derna: Report ID no. 08TRIPOLI430," Libya Wikileaks Cables, February 6, 2008. Published in *The Daily Telegraph*, January 31, 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/wikileaks-files/libya-wikileaks/8294818/DIE-HARD-IN-DERNA.html>.
18. Author's interview with Noman Benotman, April 8, 2012.
19. Author's interview with Salem Mohamed, head of Salafi Forum in Libya, June 17, 2011.
20. Ibid.
21. Al-Sadiq al-Ruqay'i, "*Al-Islamiyun fi Libya: Tarikh wa Jihad – Juz' 3* (The Islamists in Libya: History and Jihad - Part 3)," *Al-Manara*, January 12, 2012.
22. Author's interview with Salem Mohamed, June 17, 2011.
23. Author's interview with Fawzi Abu Kitef, February 8, 2012.
24. Ibid.
25. Noman Benotman,"Interview by Camille al-Tawil," *Al-Hayat*, November 20, 2011, 6.
26. One example is Dr. Abdullah Shamia, who was in charge of the economy file in the NTC.
27. Bashir al-Kubty, interviewed by Khaled al-Mahreer, Al-Jazeera, November 21, 2011.
28. Ibid.
29. Jum'a al-Gumati, former NTC representative in London, interview by Ali al-Zafiri, *Fi al-'Umq*, Al-Jazeera Arabic, February 16, 2011.
30. Author's interview with Ali al-Sallabi, February 1, 2012.
31. Fawzi Bukatief, "Libyan Militias Trun to Politics," interview by David Kirkpatrick, *The New York Times,* April 2, 2012.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. If we consider the organization to have died twice in Egypt due to state crackdowns: between 1949 and 1950 and again between 1954 and 1970. Its third life began in the early 1970s.
35. Omar Ashour, "Egypt's Salafi Challenge," *Project Syndicate,* January 3, 2012, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/ashour8/English>.
36. Author's interview, June 17, 2011.

NOTES

37. Author's interview with Noman Benotman, April 8, 2012.
38. Madkhali Salafism refers to a strand of Salafism promoted by Saudi scholar Rabi' al-Madkhali (b.1931). It is well known for encouraging support for the political status-quo – regardless of its character – and discouraging political dissent. Madkhali Salafism is also known for its intolerance toward other Islamic schools of thought, including different Salafi trends, Islamic sects, or rival Islamist ideologies.
39. Author's interview with Abd al-Nasser Shamata, June 15, 2011.
40. Author's interview with Salem Mohamed.
41. The most notable of those figures is al-Qary Said (Nasr al-Din Wahabi), who played the major role in establishing the ties between Algerian-Afghans and the GIA. He can be considered as the founder of the "Afghan" faction in the GIA.
42. The splinter would be the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC).
43. Osama al-Juwaili, interview by Jamal Rayyan, *Liqa' al-Youm*, January 7, 2012.
44. Author's interview with Abdullah Mohamed, June 14, 2011.
45. United Nations Security Council Assessment Mission, "Report of the Assessment Mission on the Impact of the Libyan Crisis on the Sahel Region," December 7-23, 2011, 10.
46. Nic Robertson and Paul Cruickshank, "Al-Qaeda Send Veteran Jihadist to Establish Presence in Libya," CNN, December 29, 2011, <http://articles.cnn.com/2011-12-29/middleeast/world_meast_libya-jihadists_1_al-qaeda-leader-ayman-al-zawahiri-gadhafi-regime?_s=PM:MIDDLEEAST>.
47. Author's interview with Noman Benotman, April 8, 2012.
48. "*Mas'ul Libi: Indimam 70 alf min al-thuwar al-sabiqin ila al-wizarah al-dakhiliyyah* (Libyan official: 70,000 former revolutionaries join the Interior Ministry)," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat,* April 25, 2012.
49. "*Idmaj 10,000 min al-Thuwar fi al-Amn bi Tarblus: Taqrir Khas* (10,000 Revolutionaries are Integrated in the Security Forces: A Special Report)," Libya 24, February 16, 2012.
50. Chris Blanchard, "Libya: Transition and U.S. policy," *Congressional Research Services,* December 8, 2011, 19.
51. For more on the processes of "external interaction" and their impacts on decisions to moderate or abandon armed tactics, see Omar Ashour, *The Deradicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamist Movements* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009); Chris Boucek, "Extremist Re-education and Rehabilitation in Saudi Arabia," in T. Bjørgo & J. Horgan (eds.), *Leaving Terrorism Behind: Disengagement from Political Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Janine Clark, "The Conditions of Islamist Moderation: Unpacking Cross-Ideological Cooperation in Jordan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38, 4 (November 2006), 539-560; Mohamed bin Mohamed, "The Roles of the Religious Rehabilitation Group in Singapore," in A. H. Kader, *Fighting Terrorism: The Singapore Perspective* (Singapore: Taman Bacaan, 2009); Jillian Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Appendix

FIGURE 1: MAJOR LIBYAN ISLAMIST ORGANIZATIONS BEFORE THE LIBYAN REVOLUTION OF FEBRUARY 2011

Group	Offshoot from/ Ties to	Ideological Trend(s)	Location and Date of Establishment	Leader (As of January 2011)	Stance on Electoral Democracy	Stance on Armed Tactics
Libyan Muslim Brotherhood (LMB)	Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood	Ikhwanism	Libya, 1968	Soliman Abd al-Qadr	Accepted	Rejected
National Front for Salvation of Libya (NFSL)	Libyan Muslim Brotherhood	Multiple	Sudan, 1981	Ibrahim Abdulaziz Sahad	Accepted	Accepted
Islamic Rally Movement (IRM)	Libyan Muslim Brotherhood	Ikhwanism	Switzerland, 1992	Abd al-Wahab al-Hilali	Accepted	Accepted
Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)	Ties to al-Jihad of Egypt; Afghan Groups	Jihadism	Pakistan, 1990	Abd al-Hakim Belhaj	Rejected until 2011	Rejected*
Al-Shuhada' (The Martyrs)	Ties to al-Jihad of Egypt; LIFG; Afghan Groups	Jihadism	Libya, 1989	Muhammad al-Hami (killed in 1996)	Rejected	Accepted and Promoted

*Accepted and Promoted until 2005; Rejected since 2009.

FIGURE 2: MAJOR LIBYAN GROUPS, PARTIES, AND MILITIAS AFTER THE REVOLUTION

Organization	Affiliated Party/ Leader(s)	Affiliated/ Allied Militia(s)/ Commander(s)	Leader(s) Of Organization	Regional Stronghold(s) of Organization and Affiliates
Libyan Muslim Brotherhood (LMB)	Justice and Construction Party (JCP)/ Muhammad Sawan	Revolutionary Brigades Coalition (Fawzi Bukatief)	Bashir al-Kubty	Benghazi, Eastern towns, Tripoli
National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL)	National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL)	N/A	Ibrahim Abdulaziz Sahad	Misrata, Tripoli
Libyan Islamic Movement for Change (LIMC); Formerly (LIFG)	Vanguard Party (Hizb al-Tali'a)*	Tripoli Military Council (TMC)	Abd al-Hakim Belhaj	Tripoli, Tripoli suburbs
Tripoli Revolutionaries Council (TRC)	Summit Party	Zintan Military Council (ZMC) (Mukhtar Fernana)	Abdullah Naker	Tripoli, Al-Zintan
Libyan National Democratic Party (LNDP)	Libyan National Democratic Party (LNDP)	ZMC/Revolutionary Rally of Western Libya (RRWL) (Mukhtar Fernana)	Mahmoud Jibril	Tripoli, alZintan, other Western towns
National Rally	National Rally	February 17th Brigade (Ismail al-Sallabi)	Ali al-Sallabi	Benghazi

*At the date of publication, the party was still under construction and not officially declared.

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