

## From Qaddafi to al-Qaeda: What Obama Wrought in Libya

by Marcia Merry Baker and Nancy Spannaus

*Oct. 22—Oct. 20 marked the anniversary of the brutal murder of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, in a regime-change operation organized by the British, French, and Obama governments. As Lyndon LaRouche stated at the time, this barbarism marked a crucial point, reflecting a decision by the British-American elites to go for a global war, a war that would almost certainly become World War III. One of the elements that would lead to such a war would be the terrorist, jihadi forces controlled by the British and Saudi monarchies, and now embraced by the Obama Administration, in a globally extended replay of 9/11.*

Those terrorist forces come in shifting groups, and often change their names, but the baseline for their existence and funding, and their safe haven, lies in London, often called Londonistan, and Saudi Arabia. For simplicity's sake, we will call them "al-Qaeda," a group which, although originally associated with Osama bin Laden, is actually made up of elements of a data base of numerous international terrorist groups, using Islam as a cover for their attack on the nation-state, and civilization as a whole.

The presence of al-Qaeda in Libya, as de facto allies of the Obama Administration, was well known during the process leading up to the 2011 ouster and murder of Qaddafi; and in the 2012 vulnerability of the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, where four Americans, including the U.S. Ambassador, Christopher Stevens, were killed in a terrorist attack. Here is a timeline of some of the

undeniable key markers and pawprints of the British-Saudi-backed al-Qaeda role in the process which brought al-Qaeda to the fore in Libya, and resulted in the assassinations in Benghazi.

### **MI6, al-Qaeda, and LIFG**

**1995:** This was the year that Britain, with the tacit approval of the U.S., and funding from Saudi Arabia, made contact with Osama bin Laden, and proposed, among other things, the elimination of Muammar Qaddafi. The group the British contacted was the **Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)**, which had been formed in Afghanistan, where bin Laden was one of the major participants in the Mujahideen war against the Soviet occupation.

According to British intelligence sources, MI6 supplied the LIFG with money to buy weapons to carry out a coup against Qaddafi in February 1996. The plot went ahead, but failed. Later documents made public after the British ambassador's residence was abandoned during the 2011 uprising, reported that the LIFG members took refuge in London, after the failed assassination threat. The LIFG is centered in Benghazi.

The LIFG is an open partner of the U.S. in post-Qaddafi Libya today.

**2007:** According to a report by the West Point Combatting Terrorism Center, the LIFG officially merged with al-Qaeda. The report goes on to elaborately depict



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*It is well established that al-Qaeda and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) have infiltrated the Syrian “rebels,” such as those shown here.*

just how close together LIFG has been working with al-Qaeda, including the mention of LIFG member Abu Yahya, who is noted as second only to Ayman al-Zawahiri within al-Qaeda. Al-Zawahiri at the time was al-Qaeda’s #2 under Osama bin Laden.

Sufyan bin Qumu, head of the Ansar al-Sharia group, an off-shoot of al-Qaeda, is released after five years at Guantanamo, to a prison in Libya, where he is eventually released. Ansar al-Sharia has been officially blamed by the United States for involvement in the attack which killed Ambassador Stevens.

**2008:** The U.S. Embassy in Tripoli sends a secret cable to Washington, entitled, “Extremism in Eastern Libya,” reporting on the hotbed of anti-American, pro-jihadi sentiment there. This evaluation is confirmed by earlier al-Qaeda personnel documents that came into American hands in 2007, and analyzed by the Combating Terrorism Center, at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

**2011: February:** Qaddafi accuses al-Qaeda of being behind the growing unrest against him spreading among young people in the country.

**Feb. 15:** Benghazi becomes the launch point for the

movement to overthrow Qaddafi, with activities featuring violent demonstrations, attacks on the home of pro-Qaddafi sympathizers, and the like.

**Feb. 17:** Jihadists declare this a “Day of Rage” against Qaddafi. The name is chosen in commemoration of Feb. 17, 2006, when Islamic militants attacked the Italian consulate in Benghazi, burning it to the ground, allegedly because of anti-Muslim statements of the ambassador.

**Spring:** Abu Yahya al-Libi, a Libyan al-Qaeda militant, urges al-Qaeda in North Africa to do everything possible in the rebellion against Qaddafi.

**March:** The presence of al-Qaeda in Libya is mooted by top NATO Commander,

U.S. Adm. James Stavridis. He raises the question of who and what forces were among the rebels, being aided by the Western-coalition air strikes. “We have seen flickers in the intelligence of potential al-Qaeda, Hezbollah,” he says.

**April:** Training for some 200 jihadi fighters is taking place in the “April 7” military camp in Benghazi, led by Ismail Sallabi, a member of the Fighting Islamic Group in Libya (GICL) and al-Qaeda, with the support of about 20 experts sent in from Qatar, as reported by government spokesman Musa Ibrahim at an April 18 press conference.

A self-described al-Qaeda member since the 1980s, Abdelmonem Al-Madhuni, is killed west of Benghazi, near the Bregaoil terminal.

**April 18:** Abdelhakim al-Hasadi (also known as Belhadj), the al-Qaeda leader and former member of LIFG, is active in Libya. Musa Ibrahim said at a press conference, “The famous Abdelhakim al-Hasadi, the very famous al-Qaeda leader, who has a jihadist history and fought in many countries including Iraq and Afghanistan,” had, at the time, left Benghazi to go to the besieged Misrata. Hasadi, said Ibrahim, is “very well known to intelligence services around the world.” He has been operating from an old Egyptian ship, the Al-



YouTube

Abdelhakim al-Hasadi (also known as Belhadj), the al-Qaeda leader and former member of LIFG, is active in Libya. These are the logos of al-Qaeda (below) and Ansar al-Sharia of Libya.



Shahid Abdelwahab, equipped with weapons and advanced communications, and accompanied by 25 “highly trained fighters.”

Ibrahim added, “And unfortunately, the [Western] coalition knows about this, as they are observing our waters, and unfortunately, they are prepared to allow known al-Qaeda members to pass from Benghazi to Misrata...”

**July 16:** The day after the Obama Administration joined the U.K., France, and other NATO members in recognizing the rag-tag rebel band in Libya as the legitimate representative of the people, Niger’s President Mahamadou Issoufou states on a TV broadcast, that Niger, which borders Libya, is concerned that the crisis in Libya will lead to fundamentalists taking power

there, turning Libya into another Somalia. The Benghazi-area rebel stronghold is a hotbed of radical jihadists.

**September:** Abdelkarim Hasadi (aka Belhadj), leads the Tripoli brigade which spearheaded the defeat of loyalist forces there. Abdelkarim, the former commander of the LIFG, with offices in London, had been arrested in Afghanistan in 2004, interrogated by the CIA, and then handed over to Libya, an ally of the United States in counterterrorism. His organization, listed by the State Department as terrorist, is reported to have two training camps in Afghanistan before 2001.

Abdelkarim had been imprisoned by Qaddafi for some years.

**Oct. 20:** Qaddafi is captured and brutally assassinated, leaving Libya in chaos, and precipitating a process of ongoing civil conflict.



### The Aftermath

**Nov. 1, 2011:** According to the *Daily Mail*, the black flag of al-Qaeda was hoisted from the roof of the Benghazi courthouse, in celebration of NATO’s formally ending its military campaign.

**December 2011:** Reports indicate that the al-Qaeda leadership in Pakistan had sent experienced jihadists to Libya to build a new base of operations in the country. Between May and December 2011, one of these jihadists had recruited 200 fighters in the eastern part of the country. Documents seized in Iraq indicate that many foreign fighters who had participated in the Iraqi insurgency hailed from eastern Libya.

**2012: Feb. 1:** A document dated Feb. 1, under the name of Eric Nordstrom, the U.S. State Department Regional Security Officer in Libya, discusses the presence of al-Qaeda in Libya:

“Extremist groups and groups affiliated with extremist groups participated in fighting against the Ghaddafi regime. Al-Qaeda affiliated groups including Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb and other extremist groups are likely to take advantage of the ongoing political turmoil in Libya. The U.S. government remains concerned that such individuals and groups remain in Libya, engaged in fundraising, recruitment, procurement of arms and may use Libya as a platform from which to conduct attacks in the region.”

**March 7:** Russian UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin charges at a UN Security Council meeting, that a Libyan training center for Syrian anti-government rebels was operating, and arming the opposition fighters in their battle to overthrow the country's President Bashar al-Assad.

**April 6:** An IED (improvised explosive device) was thrown over the wall of the Benghazi consulate by two suspects, who were taken into custody, and then released, by members of the February 17 Brigade, which is reported to be infiltrated by al-Qaeda. The same two men later were hired as security guards by the UK's Blue Mountain Group, for deployment at the Benghazi U.S. compound.

**June 7:** The first public appearance of Ansar al-Sharia, a Salafist-Jihadist group committed to imposing strict Sharia law, in a demonstration in Benghazi. Elements of the February 17 movement are reported to have collaborated with Ansar al-Sharia. There are also reports that some Ansar members were hired as part of the security in eastern Libya.

**Sept. 11:** Ahmed Abu Khattalah, the founder of

Ansar al-Sharia, is present during the attack at the U.S. consular mission in Benghazi. Abu Khattalah has not been apprehended.

**Sept. 15:** Libya's interim President, Mohamed Yusef al Magariaf, says that he is certain that the deadly attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi on Sept. 11 was "premeditated," and organized by "experienced masterminds" from al-Qaeda. Armed militias, many of them neo-Salafi allied with al-Qaeda, had been gaining strength and had penetrated all of the relevant security institutions of the region.

Libyan officials have been warning U.S. counterparts for months that the Benghazi area was dangerous. According to one senior U.S. intelligence source, Ansar al-Sharia had directly penetrated the Benghazi regional public safety committee, and had full access to information on U.S. personnel and facilities, including a U.S. safehouse which was also attacked on Sept. 11, 2012.

*Douglas DeGroot and Ramtanu Maitra contributed to this report.*

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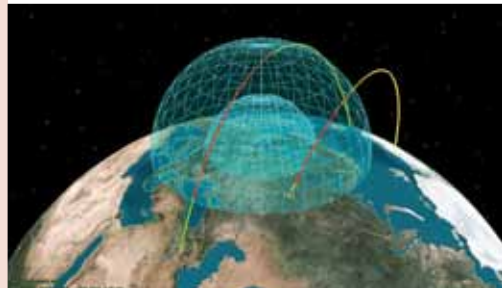
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