

# Congressional Testimony

## **Successes and Failures of the U.S. and NATO Intervention in Libya**

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Chairman Issa, Ranking Member Cummings, and distinguished members of the committee, it is an honor to appear before you to discuss the successes and failures of the U.S. and NATO intervention in Libya that began in March 2011. This is an important topic, one that is generally underappreciated by the American public. The military operation produced a large number of second-order consequences with which the U.S. and its allies will be forced to contend for years to come. Indeed, even though the Libya war was undertaken with the best of intentions, and NATO performed brilliantly in its operations, the war appears to be a strategic setback on the whole, and on net it may have already cost more lives than it saved.

The Obama administration was initially skeptical of military intervention in Libya when longstanding dictator Muammar Qaddafi began to crack down on the uprising against his regime in early 2011, adding proclamations worthy of a Bond villain to his military maneuvers. Some of Qaddafi's more outlandish statements include exhorting his followers to cleanse the streets of "the greasy rats" who opposed him, and referring glowingly to China's Tiananmen Square massacre, explaining that China's righteousness was more important than the lives lost in Tiananmen.<sup>1</sup>

At the start of the weekend of March 12-13, defense secretary Robert Gates—who was outspoken about his opposition to military action in Libya—"spoke for the dominant view within the administration" when he publicly voiced doubts about intervention.<sup>2</sup> Christopher S. Chivvis, a senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation, explains that at the time two major arguments existed within the administration for military intervention. The first was humanitarian: the concern that, if he wasn't stopped, Qaddafi would slaughter Libyan citizens. The second argument related to "Arab Spring" uprisings that were changing the political face of the Arab world:

The second argument was a strategic one enmeshed in a wider calculus about the Arab Spring: that decisive support for the revolution would vividly demonstrate that the United States supported the uprisings across the region and could thereby deter other regional leaders from crushing legitimate civilian protests by force. If Qaddafi were allowed to cudgel his population into submission, authoritarian leaders in Yemen, Bahrain, and elsewhere could be emboldened to do the same. Not acting in Libya, in other words, would put the United States on the wrong side of history, encourage other Arab leaders to choose violent repression over peaceful reform, and could reverse a democratic surge expected to be in the U.S. interest in the long haul.<sup>3</sup>

Although Chivvis does not mention it, one factor that seemingly drove the view that the uprisings were in the U.S. interest was the fight against al-Qaeda and affiliated movements that had, at that point, dominated America's strategic agenda for almost a decade. Early in the Arab Spring, U.S. analysts overwhelmingly believed that the revolutionary events were devastating for al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups because they undermined its

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<sup>1</sup> "Defiant Qaddafi Vows to Die as Martyr, Fight Revolt," Reuters, February 22, 2011; Ian Black, "Qaddafi Urges Violent Showdown and Tells Libya 'I'll Die a Martyr,'" *Guardian* (U.K.), February 22, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher S. Chivvis, *Toppling Qaddafi: Libya and the Limits of Liberal Intervention* Kindle ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), loc. 1143 of 6472.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 1198 of 6472.

narrative and could remove the underlying grievances that drew people to jihadism.<sup>4</sup> For their own part, jihadist strategists expected that, rather than harming the movement, the revolutionary events would yield significant advantages for it.<sup>5</sup> Senior al-Qaeda leaders

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<sup>4</sup> This testimony employs the terms *jihadist* and *jihadism* to describe the militant movement with global ambitions that claims its inspiration from salafi Islam. This terminology is controversial amongst terrorism researchers, and also within government, in large part because it is derived from the religious term *jihad*. I employ this language in large part because it has the benefit of being organic: it is the way that those within the movement refer to themselves. Virtually all terms that could be used to describe this movement have their own limitations, and as the terrorism researcher Jarret Brachman notes, the labels *jihadism* and *jihadist* have “been validated as the least worst option across the Arabic-speaking world,” including being employed in Arabic-language print and broadcast media. Jarret M. Brachman, *Global Jihadism: Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 5.

My conclusion that the belief that revolutionary events in the Arab world were catastrophic for al-Qaeda helped to drive the military intervention in Libya is formed by my conversations with U.S. government analysts from 2011-2014. One media report published before the decision to go to war in Libya that illustrates the widespread analytic view that the revolutions were harmful to al-Qaeda is Scott Shane, “As Regimes Fall in Arab World, al-Qaeda Sees History Fly By,” *New York Times*, February 27, 2011. In the article, numerous Western analysts describe the revolutions as extremely harmful to al-Qaeda because it was confined to the sidelines. Paul Pillar of Georgetown University commented, “So far—and I emphasize so far—the score card looks pretty terrible for al-Qaeda. Democracy is bad news for terrorists. The more peaceful channels people have to express grievances and pursue their goals, the less likely they are to turn to violence.” Brian Fishman of the New America Foundation said, “Knocking off [Hosni] Mubarak has been Zawahri’s goal for more than 20 years, and he was unable to achieve it. Now a nonviolent, nonreligious, pro-democracy movement got rid of him in a matter of weeks. It’s a major problem for al-Qaeda.” Steven Simon of the Council on Foreign Relations described the uprisings as a strategic defeat for jihadism, explaining that “these uprisings have shown that the new generation is not terribly interested in al-Qaeda’s ideology.”

For public writings arguing that the Arab Spring would undermine al-Qaeda published around the time that the decision to go to war in Libya was made, see Jason Burke, “Amid All the Turmoil in the Middle East, al-Qaeda Remains Invisible,” *Guardian* (U.K.), February 25, 2011 (“That recent events pose a challenge to al-Qaeda is clear. Its rhetoric was already tired before the ‘Arab spring.’”); Paul Cruickshank, “Why Arab Spring Could be al-Qaeda’s Fall,” CNN, February 21, 2011 (arguing that “the burgeoning democracy movement across the Middle East appears to have caught al-Qaeda off guard and threatens to reduce the terrorist group to irrelevance”); Paul Cruickshank, “Why Egypt Revolt Threatens al-Qaeda,” CNN, February 6, 2011 (arguing that “al-Qaeda has an Egyptian problem” because the region’s revolutionary events can “deflate its claims to be the only vanguard for change in the Middle East,” and thus make the group appear irrelevant). The view that al-Qaeda had experienced a major strategic setback due to the uprisings became even more pronounced when its longtime leader Osama bin Laden was killed on May 1, 2011. See Fawaz Gerges, “The Rise and Fall of al-Qaeda: Debunking the Terrorism Narrative,” *Huffington Post*, January 3, 2012; Dan Murphy, “The Future of al-Qaeda and Its Likely Leader,” *Christian Science Monitor*, May 9, 2011; “Bergen Correctly Predicted bin Laden’s Location,” NPR, May 3, 2011; Fareed Zakaria, “Al-Qaeda is Over,” CNN, May 2, 2011. I have addressed the U.S. analytic community’s failures on this issue in Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, “Interpreting Al-Qaeda,” *Foreign Policy*, January 6, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> See Ayman al-Zawahiri, “And be Neither Weakened nor Saddened,” Al-Sahab Media, August 15, 2011; Hamzah bin Muhammad al-Bassam, “Heeding the Advantages and Lessons of the Two Uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia,” Ansar Dawlat al-Iraq al-Islamiyah, February 25, 2011; Hani al-Siba’i, “The Release of Prisoners After Nearly Twenty Years of Injustice,” Ansar Dawlat al-Iraq al-Islamiyah, February 23, 2011; Atiyatallah Abd al-Rahman, “The People’s Revolt... The Fall of Corrupt Arab Regimes... The Demolition of the Idol of Stability... and the New Beginning,” distributed by the Global Islamic Media Front, February 16, 2011; Hamid bin Abdallah al-Ali, “The Joy Lies in the Harvest of the Two Revolutions,” posted on al-Ali’s official website, February 15, 2011. For a comprehensive review of early salafi jihadist perceptions of the impact the Arab Uprisings would have on the movement, see Daveed Gartenstein-Ross & Tara Vassefi, “Perceptions of the ‘Arab Spring’ Within the Salafi-Jihadi Movement,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 35 (2012), pp. 831-48.

believed that Qaddafi's fall would specifically help their movement. For example, when al-Qaeda emir Ayman al-Zawahiri eulogized senior al-Qaeda figure Atiyatallah following the latter's death, he referenced how enthusiastically Atiyatallah watched the advance of rebel factions in Libya. "He told me the good news of the imminent conquest of Tripoli by the mujahedin," Zawahiri said in his audio message. "The shaykh stayed up through the night he was martyred, following reports of his mujahidin brothers' conquest of Tripoli."<sup>6</sup> The fact that Western analysts generally ignored salafi jihadist strategists' perceptions of the Arab Uprisings helped contribute to misreadings of what the revolutionary events would mean for the militant movement.<sup>7</sup>

Though the arguments for intervention were not persuasive to the majority of the administration's decision-makers as the weekend of March 12-13 began, the administration's thinking rapidly reversed, in favor of military action, in the week that followed. A couple of changes drove the administration's reversal. One was rapid advances made by Qaddafi's forces, as they succeeded in "pushing rebels out of the oil port of Ras Lanuf on March 11 and crushing the uprising in Zawiyah."<sup>8</sup> Having secured their hold over both Ras Lanuf and Zawiyah, Qaddafi's forces marched on Benghazi, which was the National Transitional Council's (NTC) base of operations. These Qaddafi victories resulted in a second major change: Alarmed by developments, the Arab League issued a statement asking the U.N. Security Council to immediately impose a no-fly zone over Libya to protect civilians.<sup>9</sup> Chivvis writes that the Arab League vote "was a critical step on the road toward intervention."<sup>10</sup> The combination of Qaddafi's advances and the Arab League vote helped swing the administration's preferences toward military action.

The shift in the U.S.'s preferences in turn led America to push for a stronger Security Council resolution than previously countenanced, and its passage in turn paved the way for NATO's military intervention. It didn't take long for Qaddafi to fall from power, and ultimately meet his gruesome end. The capital city of Tripoli fell into rebel hands in August 2011, and Qaddafi was found by rebels, beaten, and shot to death on October 20.

Rapid as Qaddafi's fall was, the intervention is widely regarded as a success. Writing in *Foreign Affairs*, Ivo Daalder and James Stavridis described the operation as a "model intervention." They elaborated that "the alliance responded rapidly to a deteriorating situation that threatened hundreds of thousands of civilians rebelling against an oppressive regime. It succeeded in protecting those civilians and, ultimately, in providing the time and space necessary for local forces to overthrow Muammar al-Qaddafi."<sup>11</sup> Oliver Miles, the former British ambassador to Libya, described the intervention as "a great success," stating that though there were many concerns in Britain about the Libya war at the outset, "I think most people are convinced, now, that it was good and the result is good."<sup>12</sup> Another

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<sup>6</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Message of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt: Message of Support and Affirmation," October/November 2011.

<sup>7</sup> See discussion of this point in Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, "Interpreting al-Qaeda," *Foreign Policy*, January 6, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Chivvis, *Toppling Qaddafi*, loc. 1223 of 6472.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Leiby and Muhammad Mansour, "Arab League Asks U.N. for No-Fly Zone Over Libya," *Washington Post*, March 12, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Chivvis, *Toppling Qaddafi*, loc. 1233 of 6472.

<sup>11</sup> Ivo H. Daalder & James G. Stavridis, "NATO's Victory in Libya: The Right Way to Run an Intervention," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2012.

<sup>12</sup> "NATO's Intervention in Libya Deemed a Success," NPR, October 21, 2011.

representative article, published in *Foreign Affairs* at the end of 2012, noted that “a year and a half ago, Libya seemed as though it would be the country where the Arab Spring came to an end.” In contrast, the article noted that following Western intervention, Libya had come to stand out “as one of the most successful countries to emerge from the uprisings that have rocked the Arab world.”<sup>13</sup>

The Libya intervention was indeed a success in many ways. As Daalder and Stavridis note, NATO was able to respond with extraordinary speed to the developing situation in Libya, and was able to save the lives that Qaddafi would have taken had he succeeded in capturing Benghazi. Also remarkable, Daalder and Stavridis observe, is that this was accomplished “without a single allied casualty,” and at a cost of just \$1.1 billion.<sup>14</sup>

But though the NATO mission was superb in its execution and achieved its immediate objectives, it was a much more problematic intervention than is commonly acknowledged. The intervention has produced significant ripples, and in fact one of the primary rationales for intervention advanced within the administration was that doing so would have second-order consequences: as several commentators have noted, there was a real feeling at the time that the changes sweeping the region might be reversed if Qaddafi’s advance on Benghazi were not stopped.<sup>15</sup>

Though the desire to see the spread of democracy and the fall of brutal dictators who have long dominated the region is noble, noble intentions do not automatically make a course of action wise. NATO’s intervention came at a time when there had already been wrenching changes in the region for which it was difficult to predict the challenges that would inevitably arise: both Tunisia’s Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak had been toppled for power, and there were further revolutionary rumblings. So the choice to intervene represented not just a decision to stop Qaddafi’s advance on Benghazi, but also to speed up the pace of change at a time when the U.S. already had deep questions about what regional events would mean for its interests, and how to respond. This made it more difficult subsequently for the U.S. to act to secure its interests, and to influence events on the ground in the region in a way that could save further lives. As this testimony explains at length, the intervention in Libya left behind a country beset by instability, where the central government has never been able to re-establish control. The intervention has had a destabilizing effect on Libya’s immediate neighbors, most significantly Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria, and also helped to destabilize Mali, significantly contributing to a jihadist takeover of north Mali that would prompt another intervention, this time led by France. NATO’s intervention also accelerated events in Syria, where a tragic civil war has claimed over 150,000 lives.

Taking into account these consequences of NATO’s intervention, it is not clear that lives were saved on the whole. As one of my contacts in the intelligence community recently put it, “lives that were saved in Benghazi turned into lives lost in Timbuktu.”<sup>16</sup> Al-Qaeda and the jihadist movement, rather than being undermined by the intervention, ended up with a new foothold in Libya that also strengthened their efforts in neighboring countries. In short, removing the immediate emotions of the situation that prompted NATO’s intervention and

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<sup>13</sup> Dick Vandewalle, “After Qaddafi: The Surprising Success of the New Libya,” *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Daalder & Stavridis, “NATO’s Victory in Libya.”

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Chivvis, *Toppling Qaddafi*; Vandewalle, “After Qaddafi.”

<sup>16</sup> Discussion with senior U.S. military intelligence officer, April 21, 2014.

looking at the broader effects of the decision to go to war in Libya, it appears to have harmed America's strategic interests and made the region more, rather than less, dangerous.

### Libya: Fractured Power and Instability

Since Qaddafi's fall, no central government has been able to establish itself. Indeed, observers question whether there is a unifying idea that can keep Libya together as a cohesive entity. After all, as regional specialist Alison Pargeter has noted, the fact that Libya's three distinct parts—Tripolitania in the west, Cyrenaica in the east, and Fezzan in the south—came together as a country in the 1950s is itself “an accident of history,” born from the victorious Allies' maneuvering following the Second World War.<sup>17</sup> Even the changes that have occurred since Libya's independence—the country's unification, urbanization, modernization, and Qaddafi's authoritarian rule—have not eliminated the significant distinctions among the regions.



The NTC, which was formed in 2011 to represent the anti-Qaddafi rebels internationally, was never strong enough to unify the country politically.<sup>18</sup> The central government's writ is particularly weak in the eastern part of the country, which had a more strained relationship with the central government during the Qaddafi years as well. With the government in Tripoli having difficulty projecting its writ beyond the capital, a fractured system of dozens of factions and militias, as well as hundreds of splinter groups, collectively controls most of Libya's territory.<sup>19</sup>

The main result of the central government's weakness is an absence of security throughout the country. The various violent non-state actors (VNSAs) who collectively control so much territory in Libya are not only hostile to the central government, but also to each other. A recent *Los Angeles Times* report on the country describes “a grim cycle of assassinations, abductions and firefights in the streets.”<sup>20</sup> As competing VNSAs search for any advantage or bargaining chip in their rivalries, kidnappings have become common, with targets including both Libyan and foreign officials, as well as businessmen.<sup>21</sup>

Illustrating Libya's security problems, within a single six-day period earlier this month, gunmen in Libya kidnapped Jordan's ambassador, kidnapped an adviser at Tunisia's embassy (the second Tunisian diplomat kidnapped within a month), and broke into Portugal's embassy. Though not all the perpetrators of these acts are known, both Tunisian diplomats were taken by jihadists, whose resurgence in Libya will be discussed shortly. The situation has grown so severe that Sri Lanka's foreign employment bureau has suspended

<sup>17</sup> Alison Pargeter, *Libya: The Rise and Fall of Qaddafi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher S. Chivvis & Jeffrey Martini, *Libya After Qaddafi: Lessons and Implications for the Future* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2014), pp. 36-37.

<sup>19</sup> Laura King, “Libya Remains in the Grip of Rivalrous Rebel Factions,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 13, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> “Libya's Militias Play Their Cards for a Seat at the Political Table,” *The National* (U.A.E.), April 16, 2014.

sending migrants workers from that country to Libya due to security concerns.<sup>22</sup>

A few additional incidents, striking the top levels of Libya's government, further drive home the instability with which the country is forced to contend. In April to May of 2013, armed militias undertook a two-week siege of the foreign and justice ministries in Tripoli as a means of pressuring the parliament to pass a "political isolation" law that would place restrictions on what positions within government Qaddafi-era officials could hold.<sup>23</sup> It is worth reflecting on just how humiliating this was for the central government: its own ministries of justice and foreign affairs were shut down, in its own capital city, for *two weeks* based on a political dispute with non-state actors. The equivalent for the United States would be gunmen forcibly shutting down both the Department of Justice and Department State for a two-week period. Even Libya's then-prime minister, Ali Zeidan, was kidnapped and held by a rebel faction—briefly but quite dramatically—in October 2013.<sup>24</sup> After Zeidan was removed from office due to an incident that will be discussed momentarily, his interim replacement, Abdullah al-Thani, lasted for less than a month before he also decided to resign because he and his family had been targeted in an attack.<sup>25</sup>

The central government's weakness has created a feedback loop in which its efforts to exploit its oil resources to expand its budget have consistently been thwarted—which has, in turn, further weakened the government. One consistent problem has been VNSAs, rather than the government, controlling the country's oil resources. At this point, the major ports and oil fields in eastern Libya have been shut for around nine months. Illustrating this, in late March 2014 a militia held Libya's eastern ports: Not only did this prevent the government from profiting from oil exports, but the militia actually attempted to export oil itself, loading up a North Korea-flagged tanker.<sup>26</sup> This incident further demonstrated the central government's weakness: though the government threatened to blow up the tanker if it left the port, its forces essentially watched helplessly as the tanker left for international waters (though some members of pro-government militias pursued the vessel by boat). This humiliating incident caused the parliament to sack Zeidan as prime minister. The conflict between the militias and central government was ended not by government forces, but by U.S. Navy SEALs boarding the tanker. After fleeing Libya for Germany, Zeidan commented on the incident to the press: "Really there is no army, I thought there was one, but then I realized there really isn't any."<sup>27</sup>

The shutdown of Libya's ports and oilfield has reduced oil production from 1.4 million barrels per day down to 200,000 bpd. This has, in turn, forced the government to undertake severe austerity measures. The head of the parliament's budget committee, Mohammed Abdullah, has said that the government's budget has to be cut by a third, and that

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<sup>22</sup> Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, "Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau Says Has Decided to Temporarily Suspend Sending Sri Lankan Migrant Workers to Libya," April 22, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> "Deal with Former Rebels Ends Libya Siege," Al Jazeera, May 12, 2013.

<sup>24</sup> Chris Stephen & Nicholas Watt, "Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan Calls for Calm After Kidnapping," *The Guardian* (U.K.), October 10, 2013.

<sup>25</sup> Sam Frizell, "Libya PM Quits, Says He Was Targeted in Armed Attack," *Time*, April 13, 2014. When he subsequently spoke to the media about the reasons for his resignation, al-Thani emphasized the pressure from parliamentarians and a media campaign against him, and deemphasized—though still mentioned—the violence directed at his family. See "Why I Resigned—Libyan PM," *Daily Times* (Nigeria), April 28, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Patrick Markey & Ulf Laessing, "Armed Militias Hold Libya Hostage," Reuters, March 30, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

infrastructure and development projects will be halted.<sup>28</sup>

The central government's weakness is systemic in nature. In contrast to Tunisia and Egypt's relatively peaceful transitions, Libya's prolonged civil war destroyed the old structures of Qaddafi's government. The central government's major seat of power is Tripoli and its writ is limited in the east, where the means of oil production are located. This is particularly problematic for the country's future given the serious questions about whether Libya can be sustained as a unified entity.

### Revival of Jihadist VNSAs

As previously noted, some of the rash of kidnappings that have plagued Libya have been carried out by jihadist groups. As previously noted, that was the case for both Tunisian diplomats who were abducted in a one-month period. On April 20, a group called Shabaab al-Tawhid released a video showing one of these diplomats, Mohammed Bel Sheikh, crying and pleading with his government to negotiate with his captors.<sup>29</sup>

This kidnapping is symptomatic of a broader problem: contrary to the prevalent predictions of analysts in early 2011, jihadist groups, including al-Qaeda, have experienced significant growth in Libya since Qaddafi was toppled from power. One comprehensive report on this topic, entitled *Al-Qaeda in Libya: A Profile*, was published in August 2012 by the Library of Congress's Federal Research Division.<sup>30</sup> The report notes that al-Qaeda's senior leadership is attempting to create a clandestine network in Libya, and explains some of its efforts in that regard.

There are several VNSAs in Libya through which al-Qaeda may enjoy influence, or which may perhaps be new faces of al-Qaeda. One is Ansar al-Sharia in Libya (ASL), which is most notorious for its role in the September 2012 attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi. A second possibility for al-Qaeda to influence events on the ground in Libya is remnants of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). Though some former LIFG members now align themselves with the government, *Al-Qaeda in Libya* notes that "some former members of LIFG may be among those helping to create the al-Qaeda network." Al-Qaeda's senior leadership has also dispatched emissaries to Libya. *Al-Qaeda in Libya* mentions an operative known as "AA," whom Ayman al-Zawahiri sent in 2011. This is almost certainly a reference to Abdul Baset Azzouz, who had managed to mobilize more than 200 fighters by the end of 2012.

Overall, while it isn't clear how many al-Qaeda aligned groups and individuals are active in Libya, *Al-Qaeda in Libya* concludes that "a few hundred al-Qaeda members" are operating there, and that salafi jihadists aligned with al-Qaeda ideologically have come to control "dozens of mosques and prayer halls in the country."<sup>31</sup> The report concludes that "al-Qaeda appears to constitute a significant threat to the state-building process in Libya."<sup>32</sup>

Since the report's publication, little has occurred that is likely to reverse the gains made by al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups. Jihadist groups continue to take advantage of

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<sup>28</sup> Feras Bosalum, "Libya Slashes Budget by a Third to Offset Loss of Oil Revenue," Reuters, April 21, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Feras Bosalum & Tarek Amara, "Tunisian Diplomat, in Video Message, Urges Government to Negotiate with Libyan Kidnappers," Reuters, April 21, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, *Al-Qaeda in Libya: A Profile* (Washington, DC: 2012).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 25.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

the new environment in Libya in several ways. One is training for militant activities. A variety of jihadist groups, including al-Qaeda, have operated training camps in Libya.<sup>33</sup> These camps exist largely because new opportunities arose after Qaddafi's fall from power, as the central government has been unable to effectively control southern Libya. Muhammad al-Zawahiri has connected his brother, al-Qaeda emir Ayman al-Zawahiri, with the Muhammad Jamal Network (MJN), which has used this safe haven in Libya to establish an enclave. The connections between Zawahiri and the MJN became clear after Muhammad Jamal's November 2012 arrest: as the U.S. State Department's designation of Jamal explains, his "confiscated computer contained letters to al-Zawahiri in which Jamal asked for assistance and described MJN's activities, including acquiring weapons, conducting terrorist training, and establishing terrorist groups in the Sinai."<sup>34</sup> As the *Wall Street Journal* has reported, MJN operates camps in Libya that include training for suicide missions, and has been able to smuggle fighters into other countries through Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula's established networks.<sup>35</sup>

A second way jihadist groups have been able to benefit from developments in Libya is the flow of arms into neighboring countries. Most of the "vast stores of weapons" that have flowed out of Libya have been "small arms of Eastern European origin."<sup>36</sup> However, observers suspected early on that more sophisticated weaponry, such as surface-to-air missiles, may also have escaped Qaddafi's arsenal, and more recent evidence—including the downing of an Egyptian military helicopter in Egypt's Sinai by militants—tends to confirm these fears. The flow of Libyan arms into Mali had an impact on jihadist militancy's growth in that country, as this testimony will discuss subsequently. Several U.N. Security Council reports prepared by a panel of experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 paint a picture of the broad diffusion of Libyan arms, and the impact that this diffusion has had on regional conflict. These reports observe that both "significant quantities of arms" and also fighters have been moved from Libya into Egypt and the Sahel.<sup>37</sup> The report also notes a flow of arms from Libya into and Mali (both of which will be discussed subsequently), as well as more far-flung places, including, potentially, the Horn of Africa. As a result, the report found that illicit arms flows from Libya were "fuelling existing conflicts and enriching the arsenals of a range of non-State actors in the region and beyond."<sup>38</sup> The impact of this flow of arms extends far beyond jihadist VNSAs, but it has certainly worked to the advantage of jihadist groups.

A third way jihadists have benefited from the situation in Libya is by using its territory as a safe haven. As this testimony discusses subsequently, the Libya safe haven proved

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> Office of the Spokesperson, U.S. Department of State, "Terrorist Designations of the Muhammad Jamal Network and Muhammad Jamal," Oct. 7, 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Siobhan Gorman & Matt Bradley, "Militant Link to Libya Attack," *Wall Street Journal*, October 1, 2012.

<sup>36</sup> Christopher S. Chivvis & Andrew Liepmann, *North Africa's Menace: AQIM's Evolution and the U.S. Policy Response* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2013), p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> United Nations Security Council, "Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011) Concerning Libya," March 9, 2013, p. 12 [hereinafter Security Council Arms Report, 2013]; see also United Nations Security Council, "Final Report of the Panel of Experts Established Pursuant to Resolution 1973 (2011) Concerning Libya," February 19, 2014 [hereinafter Security Council Arms Report, 2014]. The Sahel is the geographic region bordered by the Sahara desert in the north, the Sudanian Savanna in the south, the Atlantic Ocean in the west, and the Red Sea in the east.

<sup>38</sup> Security Council Arms Report, 2013, p. 5.

important to jihadists and their allies following the French-led intervention in Mali, allowing them to flee their advancing foes and attempt to regroup.

And a fourth issue is the potential for the combination of these factors—training camps, widely available Libyan arms, and a physical safe haven—to cause Libya to be used as a staging ground for future attacks. This was certainly the case for the January 2013 hostage crisis at Algeria’s In Amenas gas plant, which occurred just 30 miles from the Libya-Algeria border. The attackers reportedly trained in camps in southern Libya and used Libyan arms when attacking the facility.<sup>39</sup> More than 800 people were taken hostage in that attack, and at least thirty-nine foreign hostages were killed.

### **Regional Impact: North Africa**

The impact of these various factors that bolster militant groups can be felt throughout the region. Libya has an extremely porous eastern border with Egypt, much to the alarm of the Egyptian government. The panel of experts that the U.N. Security Council empowered to examine the flow of arms from Libya specifically noted that “the increased availability of weapons” empowered a variety of VNSAs, and singled out Egypt as one place where this dynamic was particularly powerful.<sup>40</sup> Briefings that the panel received in Israel indicated that some of the weapons that were moved into both Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula (a particularly unstable area) and also the Gaza Strip “included man-portable air defense systems and anti-tank guided missiles.”<sup>41</sup> An incident vividly illustrating these concerns occurred in January 2014, when Sinai-based militants shot down an Egyptian military helicopter with a surface-to-air missile. Both the U.N.’s expert panel and also press reporting suggested that the most likely place from which militants may have obtained such weaponry was Libya, where there had long been concerns that such weapons that had been in Qaddafi’s arsenal would reach VNSAs.<sup>42</sup>

There are numerous other signs of how Libya’s deterioration is influencing the security situation in Egypt. On March 19, Egyptian security forces raided what has been described as a “workshop” in Arab Sharkas, near Cairo, where a cell was making bombs, explosive belts, and similar devices. Six militants and two security officers died in the raid. Authorities claimed that the militants were associated with the group Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, a claim verified five days later when the group issued an official statement.<sup>43</sup> This was a significant

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<sup>39</sup> Paul Cruickshank & Tim Lister, “Algeria Attack May Have Link to Libya Camps,” CNN, January 23, 2013; Gianluca Mezzofiore, “Algeria BP Siege: Mokhtar Belmokhtar Militants Trained in Jihadi Camps in Libya,” *International Business Times*, January 18, 2013; Richard Spencer, “Libyan Arms That Went Missing Under Qaddafi ‘Fueling Multiple Conflicts,’” *Telegraph* (London), April 10, 2013. The U.N. Security Council report on the diffusion of Libyan arms states that the panel of experts “is currently unable to comment on media reports that militants involved in the In Amenas attack and their weapons had come from Libya,” but mentions a couple of possibly corroborating facts. First, the report states that “traffickers coming out of Libya have used the border near In Amenas to smuggle materiel into Algeria in the past.” Second, the report also notes that the weapons and ammunition used by the hostage-takers “bear strong similarities to materiel present in Libya.” Security Council Arms Report, 2013, p. 30.

<sup>40</sup> Security Council Arms Report, 2014, p. 14.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>42</sup> See *ibid.*; David D. Kirkpatrick, “Militants Down Egyptian Helicopter, Killing 5 Soldiers,” *New York Times*, January 26, 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Jamaat Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, “Obituary of the Epic Heroes of ‘Arab Sharkas in al-Qaliyyūbiyyah,” March 24, 2014, available at *Jihadology*, <http://jihadology.net/2014/03/23/new-statement-from->

operation, as five tons of explosives were seized. Egyptian security sources told the media that Libya was the point of origin for this enormous quantity of explosives, and that weapons seized in the raid had also come from Libya.<sup>44</sup>

Tunisia is similarly concerned that the security situation in Libya is already having an impact inside its borders. There is a continuing flow of arms from Libya into Tunisia, which has strengthened the military capabilities of Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia (AST), the country's major jihadist group, against which the Tunisian state has now launched a major crackdown.<sup>45</sup> Though the crackdown appears to be going well for now, and AST may be up against the ropes, it certainly hasn't been defeated yet. And if AST succeeds in coming back to pose a major challenge to the Tunisian state, it will likely rely heavily on securing advantages and survivability from outside Tunisia's borders.

Both Tunisian law enforcement and also international police organizations have placed the blame for the proliferation of weapons in the country on Libya's shoulders.<sup>46</sup> AST has been involved in smuggling arms originating from Libya into Tunisia, and has also been stockpiling weapons. As Tunisian interior minister Lotfi Ben Jeddou commented, "The large number of seized weapons inside the country could sustain a war."<sup>47</sup> Further, Mustapha Ben Amor, Tunisia's director general of national security, said that AST members receive training in Libya, and that the group is funded from Libyan sources (amongst others).<sup>48</sup>

There are also other ways in which AST has benefited from the situation in Libya. Last year, after the Tunisian government issued an arrest warrant for AST's emir Abu Iyad al-Tunisi, he fled to Libya. The Arabic-language newspaper *Essahafa* hypothesizes that, while there, he may have met with Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the emir of the notorious jihadist group Signatories in Blood, which executed the aforementioned January 2013 attack at the Tigtantourine gas plant near In Amenas, Algeria. Another connection that Abu Iyad seems to have made during his exile in Libya is political figure Abdelhakim Bilhadj, a former LIFG commander. Tunisian attorney and investigator Taieb Laguili has alleged that Bilhadj provided Abu Iyad with shelter from authorities.<sup>49</sup>

Illustrating the plausibility of this claim, Bilhadj chose as a media adviser Al-Wathiq Billah, the former emir of the jihadist web forum Global Islamic Media Front.<sup>50</sup> After he was released from a Tripoli prison following Qaddafi's defeat, one of Billah's first acts was sending his greetings to the Ansar al-Mujahedin Network, another jihadist web forum. "He is well,

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[jamaat-an%E1%B9%A3ar-bayt-al-maqdis-obituary-of-the-epic-heroes-of-arab-sharkas-in-al-qaliyyubiyah/](http://jamaat-an%E1%B9%A3ar-bayt-al-maqdis-obituary-of-the-epic-heroes-of-arab-sharkas-in-al-qaliyyubiyah/).

<sup>44</sup> See Ahmed Eleiba, "Networks of Terror," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, March 27, 2014.

<sup>45</sup> For a comprehensive account of how the conflict between AST and the Tunisian state escalated, see Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, Bridget Moreng & Kathleen Soucy, *Raising the Stakes: Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia's Shift to Jihad* (The Hague: ICCT, 2014).

<sup>46</sup> Monia Ghanmi, "Tunisia Confronts Arms Smuggling," *Magharebia*, September 25, 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> "Tunisia: Al-Qaeda Funds Ansar al-Sharia, Tunisia Reveals," *All Africa* August 29, 2013.

<sup>49</sup> Daveed Gartenstein-Ross & Kathleen Soucy, "Abdelhakim Bilhadj and Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia," *FDD Policy Brief*, October 8, 2013.

<sup>50</sup> See Nasir al-Haqq2, "Do You Remember the Brother Al-Wathiq Billah, the Former Emir of the Global Islamic Media Front?," posted to Ansar al-Mujahedin Network, October 14, 2011 (explaining Billah's relationship with Bilhadj; the post was subsequently removed from the website); author's conversation with senior U.S. military intelligence officer, April 28, 2014.

and sends you his best and salutes the people of the blessed jihadist media,” one user relayed.<sup>51</sup> In March 2014, Billah tweeted in response to President Obama’s visit to Saudi Arabia that nobody needed to be consulted before the killing of Americans, and also posted a eulogy to Sanafi al-Nasr, an al-Qaeda figure who had been reported (incorrectly) as having been killed in Syria. Bilhadj’s questionable allegiances, and the possibility that he may be sheltering Abu Iyad, illustrates the advantages that AST may derive from Libya as a safe haven.

Algeria is similarly concerned about the impact Libya will have on its security. Though the In Amenas hostage crisis, and its connections to Libya, served a grisly warning, Algerian officials had long been concerned about the impact NATO’s intervention would have on it. As the intervention began, Algerian officials warned the press that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) may be able to exploit developments, and isolated the diffusion of arms—including, potentially, SA-7 surface-to-air missiles—as a particular concern. In addition to concerns about the flow of arms, the fact that jihadists could enjoy a safe haven in southern Libya is also a concern for Algeria: Mokhtar Belmokhtar, who was responsible for the In Amenas attack, is now reportedly based in Libya.

AQIM is of particular concern to Algeria, as it is an outgrowth of the Algerian militant outfit Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), and as such the group considers Algeria to be one of its highest priority targets. As southern Libya descended into essentially an ungoverned space, extremist groups such as AQIM have benefited. A letter from AQIM emir Abdulmalek Droukdel to Belmokhtar that the Associated Press recovered from north Mali speaks of the need to take advantage of events in Libya. AQIM has taken advantage in some of the ways that Algeria warned of, as “there are numerous reports of AQIM commanders visiting Libya for weapons purchases.”<sup>52</sup> Illustrating these concerns, Algerian troops discovered an enormous cache of weapons near the Libya border in October 2013, allegedly including “100 anti-aircraft missiles and hundreds of anti-helicopter rockets, landmines and rocket-propelled grenades.”<sup>53</sup>

## North Mali

It is well known that a collection of al-Qaeda-linked jihadist groups—including AQIM itself—and Tuareg separatist groups gained control over north Mali following the onset of the Arab Uprisings, thus prompting a French-led intervention in January 2013. The push for a jihadist takeover in the north began in January 2012, when a collection of VNSAs made advances. By April 2012, they “had consolidated control of the northern regions of Kidal, Gao and Timbuktu.”<sup>54</sup> Although not all of these VNSAs were jihadist in orientation, jihadists ended up in a dominant position, and they implemented a hardline version of sharia law. Human Rights Watch reports that the “often-widespread abuses” inflicted on civilians “included sexual abuse, looting and pillage, summary executions, child soldier recruitment, and amputations and other inhumane treatment associated with the application of Islamic law.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Nasir al-Haqq2, “Do You Remember the Brother Al-Wathiq Billah, the Former Emir of the Global Islamic Media Front?” posted to Ansar al-Mujahedin Network, October 14, 2011.

<sup>52</sup> Chivvis & Liepman, *North Africa’s Menace*, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> Lamine Chikhi, “Algerian Troops Find Huge Arms Cache on Libyan Border,” Reuters, October 24, 2013.

<sup>54</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Mali,” *World Report 2013* (2013).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

The Tuareg rebellion against Mali's government has a long history behind it, but Qaddafi's overthrow would transform the dynamics in north Mali. Libya's dictator had been a longtime supporter of Tuareg separatism, and with Qaddafi gone the Tuareg separatists had lost a major patron.<sup>56</sup> Jihadist groups were able to exploit the Tuaregs' loss of Qaddafi as a patron and forge an alliance rooted in convenience far more than ideology.

There were other ways that NATO's intervention in Libya contributed to the jihadist takeover of north Mali. Many Tuareg rebels—almost certainly thousands—went to Libya to fight as mercenaries on Qaddafi's side.<sup>57</sup> Following the dictator's defeat, they “helped themselves to a considerable quantity of sophisticated weaponry before returning to Mali.”<sup>58</sup> The international press was able to discern by February 2012—months before VNSAs would consolidate their control over north Mali—that the return of these heavily armed former mercenaries had “reinvigorated a longstanding rebellion and blossomed into a major challenge” for Mali.<sup>59</sup>

The French military intervention, dubbed Operation Serval, pushed the jihadists from the areas that they control. However, there are clear signs that, a year later, the jihadists are back. The *Guardian* explains:

According to local sources but also the security forces, jihadists have regained a foothold in several areas. Islamists have pressured families hostile to their presence to leave their homes. Over the past six months al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has murdered several people who helped the French military in Mali, in particular Tuareg members of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNL). At least 10 people have been killed.... Three groups are involved in the insurrection in northern Mali: AQIM; the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (Mujao); and Ansar Dine, led by the Tuareg Iyad Ag Ghaly. The latter group are the most visible in the field, concentrated in their traditional sphere of influence, north of Kidal, close to the border with Algeria.<sup>60</sup>

Not only did NATO's intervention help to produce the jihadist takeover of north Mali, but the safe haven jihadists have been able to find in southern Libya has played a role in these groups' comeback. Fighters from both Ansar al-Dine and AQIM fled from advancing French and aligned forces into southwest Libya, where they blended with local militants.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See Peter Chilson, *We Never Knew Exactly Where: Dispatches from the Lost Country of Mali* (Washington, DC: The FP Group, 2013), loc. 69 of 1649; Boureima Hama & Niger Agadez, “With Qaddafi's Fall, Tuaregs Lose Powerful Ally,” AFP, September 10, 2011.

<sup>57</sup> Chilson, *We Never Knew Exactly Where*, loc. 69 of 1649; Peter Gwin, “Former Qaddafi Mercenaries Describe Fighting in Libyan War,” *The Atlantic*, August 31, 2011 (quoting an estimate that “roughly 10,000 Tuareg remained in the Libyan army, most of them from Mali”).

<sup>58</sup> Adam Nossiter, “Qaddafi's Weapons, Taken by Old Allies, Reinvigorates an Insurgent Army in Mali,” *New York Times*, February 5, 2012.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Jacques Follorou, “Jihadists Return to Northern Mali a Year After French Intervention,” *Guardian* (U.K.), March 11, 2014.

<sup>61</sup> Adam Entous, Drew Hinshaw, & David Gauthier-Villars, “Militants, Chased From Mali, Pose New Threats,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 24, 2013; Chivvis & Martini, *Libya After Qaddafi*, p. ix (noting that “southern Libya verges on becoming a safe haven for al-Qaeda-linked groups recently chased from Mali by French military forces”).

## The Syrian Civil War

Today the Syrian civil war is one of the world's most tragic ongoing conflicts, with over 150,000 people killed since the onset of the conflict. It is certainly the most consequential conflict in the world in terms of the future of the jihadist movement, as Syria's civil war will be every bit as meaningful for this generation of jihadists as the Afghan-Soviet war was for militants coming of age in the 1980s—but the impact of the Syrian civil war will likely be even more widely felt.

Both the Syrian civil war and the Afghan-Soviet war can rightly be considered first-order humanitarian disasters, justifiably inflaming passions throughout the Muslim world and beyond. Because of the devastation wrought by both wars, many of the VNSAs who showed up to defend Muslims against their antagonists gained legitimacy from the clerical class and popularity at the street level. Unsurprisingly, both conflicts attracted a large number of Sunni Muslim foreign fighters from abroad, with well over 10,000 joining the forces in Syria that opposed longstanding dictator Bashad al-Assad.<sup>62</sup> Jihadist factions have been a particular draw for foreign fighters.

In the Afghan-Soviet war, relationships among jihadists were forged on the battlefield that endured for decades and profoundly changed the security environment in many countries: Al-Qaeda itself was one of the outgrowths of these relationships. But while Communists were the enemy in the Afghan-Soviet war, the Syrian war has taken on a more sectarian hue. Iran has steadfastly supported Assad's embattled regime, and the Quds Force, an elite unit within the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), has deployed in support of Assad's government. Hizballah militants and Shia irregular fighters from multiple countries have also entered Syria to support Assad. This dynamic has already produced sectarian ripples that did not exist in the Afghan-Soviet war.<sup>63</sup> There are two additional reasons that the impact of the Syrian civil war will likely be more widely felt than that of the Afghan-Soviet war. First, transnational jihadist networks did not exist at the beginning of the Afghan-Soviet conflict: rather, they were forged during the course of it. In contrast, the transnational jihadist movement was already well established at the start of the Syria civil war. Second, we now live in a far more networked world than we did during the Afghan-Soviet war.

NATO's intervention in Libya had an impact on the Syrian civil war in several ways. First, the intervention ultimately allowed foreign fighters to train in Libya, and travel from Libya to Syria. Ansar al-Sharia in Libya (ASL) has been known to train jihadists in Libya who are then sent to fight in Syria: videos of its training camps have surfaced publicly.<sup>64</sup> Libya is a relatively easy place from which fighters can make their way to Syria. A second way that the NATO intervention contributed to violence in Syria is the massive stockpile of arms that was left behind, allowing militants in Libya to shuttle these weapons to the Syrian

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<sup>62</sup> See Aaron Y. Zelin et al., "Up to 11,00 Foreign Fighters in Syria; Steep Rise Among Western Europeans," *ICSR Insight*, December 17, 2013. In addition to the Sunni foreign fighters that this testimony focuses on, the conflict has also attracted Shia foreign fighters who entered the battle on Assad's side. For some of the best work on this subject, it is worth following Phillip Smyth's excellent feature "Hizballah Cavalcade" at the website *Jihadology* ([www.jihadology.net](http://www.jihadology.net)).

<sup>63</sup> See Aaron Y. Zelin & Phillip Smyth, "The Vocabulary of Sectarianism," *Foreign Policy*, January 29, 2014.

<sup>64</sup> Aaron Y. Zelin, "New Evidence on Ansar al-Sharia in Libya Training Camps," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, August 8, 2013.

opposition.<sup>65</sup> The Syrian rebels have received weapons and manpower not only from VNSAs in Libya, but also the new Libyan government, which was naturally sympathetic to the Syrian rebels' cause given its own revolutionary origin.<sup>66</sup>

Another way that NATO's Libya intervention may have influenced events in Syria is that it likely caused Qatar to be more aggressive in its support of the Syrian opposition. Since Qatar strongly backed the Libyan opposition, it naturally viewed Qaddafi's fall as a major foreign-policy victory.<sup>67</sup> Had Libya not been such a quick victory for the anti-Qaddafi forces, Qatar may have been forced to moderate its foreign adventurism.

Counterfactuals are always a difficult proposition, and given the many factors driving the Syrian rebellion, it is not clear how significant a contributor the Libya intervention was in escalating the Syria conflict. While the *degree* of difference that NATO's intervention made can be debated, it's clear that the intervention helped escalate the Syria conflict to some extent. This would be a worthwhile area for further study.

## Conclusion

NATO's intervention in Libya was thus executed nearly flawlessly, yet despite this superb tactical execution the decision to go to war appears to be a strategic mistake (although the intervention did produce some benefits that different people will place different values on, such as the end of Qaddafi's dictatorial rule). The Libya war does not attract the attention in the U.S. of another foreign-policy blunder, the Iraq war, and for good reason: no American lives were lost in Libya, the conflict drained far less money from the Treasury, and the immediate result was to save Libyan lives (even if other lives were lost as a second-order consequences).

But this does not mean that the decision to intervene in Libya is unimportant. The Libya war speaks to the power of flawed analytic assumptions, in this case the widespread belief about the impact that regional revolutions would have on al-Qaeda and jihadism. It speaks also to the cost of taking actions that will speed up events when the pace of change has already produced great uncertainty. The war raises further questions about second-order consequences; and about the responsibility-to-protect doctrine in a resource-constrained environment.

In weighing the costs and benefits of NATO's operation, one would naturally begin with the immediate danger that spurred NATO to act: the likelihood that Qaddafi would have ruthlessly crushed the opposition to his regime in Benghazi. Some scholars believe that, even though lives were saved in Benghazi, on net the fact that NATO prolonged the war in Libya cost more lives than it saved. Alan Kuperman of Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, Austin argues that the intervention in fact cost lives in Libya, as Qaddafi had recaptured most of the country at that time and was about to put an end to the conflict. Kuperman argues that NATO's intervention in fact "enabled the rebels to resume their attack, which prolonged the war for another seven months and caused at least 7,000

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<sup>65</sup> C.J. Chivers, Eric Schmitt & Mark Mazzetti, "In Turnabout, Syria Rebels Get Libyan Weapons," *New York Times*, June 21, 2013.

<sup>66</sup> Ruth Sherlock, "Libya's New Rulers Offer Weapons to Syrian Rebels," *Telegraph* (U.K.), November 25, 2011.

<sup>67</sup> Mehran Kamrava, *Qatar: Small State, Big Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

more deaths.”<sup>68</sup> While commentators are often tempted to bolster their case with the most favorable set of facts to support their position, recall the difficulty of undertaking counterfactual analysis. It’s unclear if Kuperman’s conclusion is correct, but his point that the intervention likely prolonged the conflict in addition to saving lives at Benghazi seems to be. The fact that NATO’s intervention had the effect of both saving and also taking lives in Libya should be part of any analysis of the net effect of the conflict. And further, the situation that NATO’s intervention left behind in Libya has cost further lives inside the country, as well as in Mali, Egypt, Algeria, and possibly Tunisia (where levels of violence have been lower, and the direct connection to lives lost is murkier). The intervention also empowered jihadist groups while placing the United States in a more difficult strategic position in the region.

This is why, on net, when I evaluate NATO’s intervention in Libya, I cannot join with those who proclaim it to be a success. Though NATO did its job extraordinarily well, an intervention whose main purpose was saving lives may have ended up claiming more lives than it preserved; and the war certainly helped jihadist groups who are hostile to the United States and its allies while setting back U.S. regional interests.

It may be difficult to hear that such a well-intentioned intervention seems to have produced more harm than good—and the intentions behind the Libya war were certainly rooted in a genuine concern for human life. However, it is necessary to evaluate the impact of any military we take with clear eyes.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

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<sup>68</sup> Alan J. Kuperman, “Lessons from Libya: How Not to Intervene,” Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, September 2013.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
Witness Disclosure Requirement - "Truth in Testimony"  
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Name: Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, Ph.D.

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2011. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

2013: Department of Defense - \$27,078.84 for LDESP Lectures

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Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies  
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4/28/14

# Daveed Gartenstein-Ross

Senior Fellow, Foundation for Defense of Democracies

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Security Studies Program, Georgetown University



Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and an adjunct assistant professor in Georgetown University's security studies program, focuses his research on the challenges posed by violent non-state actors, and specializes in the study of al-Qaeda and affiliated organizations. He is the author or volume editor of thirteen books and monographs, including *Bin Laden's Legacy* (Wiley, 2011), and has published widely in the popular and academic press. He also frequently conducts field research in relevant regions, including North Africa, the Persian Gulf, and South Asia.

Gartenstein-Ross has presented his research at events sponsored by the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Uppsala University (Sweden), the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (Israel), the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Counterterrorism Center, and U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, among others. He has been featured in the Distinguished Speaker Series at the University of Southern California's National Center for Risk and Economic Analysis of Terrorism Events (CREATE), and has been a keynote speaker at the Global Futures Forum.

In addition to his academic work, Gartenstein-Ross consults for clients who need to understand violent non-state actors and twenty-first century conflict. His client work has included live hostage negotiations in the Middle East, analysis of alternative futures for terrorist and smuggling networks in Africa's Sahel region, border security work in Europe, risk assessment of possible terrorist attacks on U.S. soil, and story and series development for media companies. He also regularly lectures for the U.S. Department of Defense's Leader Development and Education for Sustained Peace (LDESP) program.

Gartenstein-Ross holds a Ph.D. in world politics from the Catholic University of America and a J.D. from the New York University School of Law. He is a senior fellow at George Washington University's Homeland Security Policy Institute and a visiting research fellow at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism—The Hague. He can conduct research in five languages.