In War's Wake

The Struggle for Post-Qadhafi Libya

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It goes without saying that any inaccuracies and faults in our argument are our own.

Jason Pack
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Executive Summary

ON JANUARY 20, 2012, former Libyan ambassador to France Omar Brebesh was found dead, tortured by fighters from the city of Zintan for his links to former Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi. This incident was merely the latest in a long string of arbitrary violent acts carried out by the ragtag militias that overthrew Qadhafi. Although this volatility threatens to undermine the country's interim government, the National Transitional Council, the NTC has thus far been unable and unwilling to disarm these militias, integrate their elite fighters into formal military brigades, or demobilize those wishing to return to civilian life. The ensuing tension between the interim authorities and the militias is best characterized as a struggle between the "center," which controls national institutions, the flow of oil, and billions in unfrozen assets, and a marginalized "periphery" that can challenge the center's legitimacy via its use of force and appeal to local loyalties.

The periphery's strength stems from the unique events of the eight-month revolution. Eastern Libya (Cyrenaica) dislodged Qadhafi's forces just days after the protests started in mid-February, and Benghazi quickly emerged as the rebels' political center. Fighting in Western Libya (Tripolitania) fell into a different pattern. In key towns such as Misratah, Zintan, Zawiya, Zwara, and Gharyan, local rebels first evicted loyalist forces from their cities but later found themselves besieged by government troops on the outskirts of their towns. Some fell; others did not. After the imposition of a NATO-led and UN-approved no-fly zone thwarted Qadhafi's attempt to retake Eastern Libya in mid-March, the battles on the coastal road connecting Ajdabiya to Sirte were largely irrelevant to the success of the revolution. It was key towns in Tripolitania that bore the brunt of the meaningful fighting, with little support from the NTC. Later successes such as the capture of Tripoli, the killing of Muammar Qadhafi, and the seizure of his son Saif al-Islam were all spearheaded by Tripolitanian militias. As a result of their sacrifices and eventual triumph, these fighters are regarded as heroes in a society historically distrustful of the formal government.

The sentiments engendered by the 2011 uprisings are not new: a strong periphery is a recurring feature of Libyan history. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Ottoman governor of Tripoli was hard-pressed to extend his authority into the country's hinterlands and never exerted much influence in Cyrenaica. Since the end of the Italian colonial period in 1943, different segments of the Libyan periphery, consisting of nonurban tribesmen and urbanites of rural backgrounds, have actually ruled Libya—giving rise to new peripheries of the disenfranchised.

The British Military Administration (1943–51), the Cyrenaican-based Sanussi monarchy (1951–69), and the revolutionary regime of Muammar Qadhafi (1969–2010) all drew their upper echelons primarily from tribesmen of rural backgrounds. Qadhafi's regime survived until 2011 because even though it deliberately avoided building centralized bureaucratic institutions, it was powerful enough to quell the consolidation of rival power centers. Even at the height of his power, Qadhafi had to contend with occasional uprisings in the hinterlands. Today in his absence, local notables, tribal groupings, and militias all vie to prevent the NTC from extending its authority to their fiefdoms, and the NTC's weakness is compounded by the fact that it has not inherited functioning national institutions. This situation constitutes the key difference between postrevolutionary Libya and the neighboring Arab Spring regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, and seen in this light, it is no surprise that the NTC has been unable to bring the periphery into line.

Despite the internal challenges it faces, the NTC will remain the political and international face of post-Qadhafi Libya. Constructed to ensure geographical representation from areas across Libya, the NTC has decisively assumed the mantle of a sovereign interim government. It controls the country's purse strings and has a monopoly over Libya's foreign policy. Even though it faces a restless periphery wary of giving up the power and influence accrued during the eight-month revolution, there is little threat that such

forces will coalesce to offer themselves as a coherent alternative government. At the same time, a successful insurgency led by former Qadhafi regime elements and loyalists seeking to capture the center of power is impossible.

Yet despite the lack of a viable alternative, the NTC's ability to govern Libya is challenged by both regional and ideological militias. The strongest brigades come from Misratah and Zintan, which faced devastating loyalist offensives that lasted for months. The existential threat encountered by these fighters forged bonds and instilled battle skills lacked by other units. Today, militias from these two cities are engaged in an open struggle for supremacy in Libya, and on February 1, they exchanged gunfire in downtown Tripoli.

Other weaker militias have an ideological Islamist bent. Some commanders have experience fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, but have given up their international jihadist orientation to embrace a more nationalist focus. Among the most prominent Islamist units are the Tripoli Military Council and the February 17 Brigade from Eastern Libya.

The NTC must focus on institution-building and devise a workable formula for integrating the periphery into the new Libya, harnessing its energy and youth to the benefit of the nation. The militias are destined to form the backbone of the new Libyan National Army, which currently exists in name only. The NTC has a number of economic and political tools at its disposal to co-opt fighters. It has earmarked $8 billion for a Warriors' Affairs Committee to reintegrate combatants into civilian life by offering training grants, job search assistance, small business loans, and financial assistance for marriage. Though the NTC is well placed to underwrite such programs, it lacks the technical capacity to implement them. Washington needs to work together with intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations offering the NTC the necessary expertise to shepherd these initiatives to fruition. Additionally, the NTC should rely on the traditional patronage networks that have historically connected the center and the periphery in Libya. It has done so deftly by naming key Misratans and Zintanis to the posts of interior and defense minister, respectively.

The NTC can also consider devolving power to locally elected city councils to minimize discontent and ease worries that a new central government is determined to monopolize control. However, such a step is fraught with pitfalls and must be practiced carefully because it could weaken the NTC at the very moment it is attempting to project strength. All the same, the need for such devolution was made starkly clear by unrest in late January 2012 in Bani Walid, where local inhabitants rebelled after claiming that their local council did not represent them.

In short, the path ahead is uncertain. Many members of the NTC and the international community wonder if the interim authorities should avoid undertaking potentially divisive policies, since later governments may consider new legislation as lacking the legitimacy that an electoral government would possess. This paper suggests an alternative view: namely, that centralization, institution building, and defeating the inherent centrifugal force of the militias are imperatives for Libya. Only through immediate actions to address the current center-periphery imbalances can Libya achieve the security needed to jump-start the economy and hold free and fair elections.

Outside powers are well placed to help the NTC solidify its hold over the new Libya and have vested interests in doing so. France spearheaded the campaign to overthrow Qadhafi and is keen to work with the NTC to build strong state institutions. A stable Libya conducive to foreign investment will help France's commercial sector recoup the military expenditures the government incurred in toppling Qadhafi. Libya's former colonial overlord—Italy—is equally interested in ensuring the NTC's success and pro-business alignment. It is Libya's largest trading partner and consumes the lion's share of its oil exports. However, unlike France and other Western powers, Italy is likely to give primacy to its commercial interests and to buck collective international efforts to strengthen the NTC if they conflict with Rome's ability to carve out a special place for its companies in Libya.

Arab powers such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have established spheres of influence in the new Libya. Qatar nudged the Arab world to support

military intervention and later provided the rebels with financial assistance and weapons. Although the Qataris helped the NTC overthrow Qadhafi, they have not helped the council in asserting its authority. The Qataris have funded Islamist militias that are challenging the NTC by resisting steps to co-opt their fighters into an institutionalized army.

Amid this morass, the United States can do much to help the NTC manage the transition to electoral democracy. Washington can strengthen the NTC in its struggle to demobilize the militias by bringing large numbers of fighters to America to receive vocational training. To do so it will need to quickly reinstate its visa issuance system, which has been suspended. Opening a consulate in Benghazi could help as well.

Currently, both the NTC and the US appear to be operating under a 'security and legitimacy-first' doctrine which maintains that bold initiatives cannot be undertaken until further stability is achieved and a legitimate government takes office. This report counsels the opposite course, maintaining that simply waiting for elections in late June and future stability will undermine the likely success of both objectives. Immediate action against the militias is necessary before they entrench themselves in the Libyan social system. Innovative tools like anti-militia propaganda,

engagement with the political rather than the military wings of the moderate Islamists, and reaching out to the 'losers' of the Revolution are all options that the NTC should employ and that US policy makers should facilitate.

The Middle East has long been a penetrated system, where Arabs have blamed outside powers for meddling in their internal politics and economies to benefit external interests. By contrast, the NATO-led intervention in Libya in 2011 is a remarkable example of outside powers helping an indigenous Arab-led movement. One must not forget that the intervention only occurred because it was first called for by the NTC, then requested by the Arab League, and later endorsed by the UN. Therefore, this intervention and its aftermath can establish a new precedent for international and American actors supporting genuine social forces within the Arab world and rewiring America's previous dependence on dictators in the region. A stable and democratic Libya governed by the rule of law will not only promote stability throughout the Middle East and Africa, but will also increase oil production and make it unlikely that jihadi networks can take hold. Most crucial, it will augur a new trend where American interests can be secured via supporting popular forces inside the Arab world.

1 | Introduction

THE LIBYAN UPRISINGS that began on February 15, 2011, differed from those in Egypt and Tunisia by arising in and being dominated by the periphery.[1] The October 20 capture of Sirte and the death of Muammar Qadhafi on the same day brought the military phase of the conflict to an abrupt and climactic end. Prior to the fall of Tripoli three months earlier, NATO air protection had allowed grassroots militias to gradually develop inside Qadhafi-controlled territory. These enclaves were largely cut off from coordination with the rebels' center of power in Benghazi, where the uprisings began and where the rebels had created their own institutions. Each enclave operated without a true military command-and-control structure, and each local uprising generated many separate and often poorly disciplined militias. Yet these peripheral militias are now stronger than the interim government's national armed forces.

By the end of January 2012 it appeared that rival militias had made a truce in an attempt to strengthen themselves against the National Transitional Council (NTC), yet in recent weeks the conflict between the center and the periphery has degenerated into a struggle between regional militias. In early February, fighters from Misratah and Zintan exchanged gunfire in downtown Tripoli. The skirmishes reflect a jockeying for power to capture strategic assets such as the airport and prime downtown real estate. With the NTC powerless to stop these clashes, the council risks further deterioration in security and loss of faith among Libyans that their government can stabilize a country devastated by eight months of war.

If Libya's transition period is to culminate in a successful handover of power to an elected central government, the center must become more powerful than the periphery.

The gap between center and periphery is the latest manifestation of a uniquely Libyan pattern of weak central authority that has historically plagued the country and impeded the development of state institutions. The 2011 uprisings re-created the type of peripheral dominance that the Ottomans attempted—and failed—to eradicate from 1835 to 1911. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, an Ottoman governor ruled Tripoli, while regional notables ruled other coastal towns in Tripolitania (Western Libya) such as Misratah as well as noncoastal Cyrenaica (Eastern Libya), dominated by the Sanussi Sufi order. More distant regions in the interior were ruled by tribal groups that often refused to pay taxes or offer allegiance to the Sublime Porte in Istanbul. Italian colonial rule (1911–1942) did little to centralize authority; in fact, it further fragmented Libyan society. Since 1942, the periphery, consisting of nonurban tribesmen and urbanites with rural backgrounds, has continued to dominate the centers of power in Libya—first under the British Military Administration and its Cyrenaican Sanussi clients (1942–1951), then under the Sanussi monarchy (1951–1969), and finally under Qadhafi's revolutionary regime (1969–2010), most of whose upper echelons hailed from two marginal tribes, the Qadhadhfa and the Megarha. Although Qadhafi's regime deliberately avoided building institutions, it survived from 1969 to 2010 because it remained powerful enough to prevent the consolidation of rival power centers. Yet even at the height of his power, Qadhafi had to contend with occasional uprisings in the hinterlands.

Frustrated with the regime's degree of corruption and its ideologically driven attempts to centralize power, the 2011 insurgents drew their force by tapping into dormant, but not dead, regional solidarity networks to establish the militias that overthrew Qadhafi. Although the uprisings began in Benghazi and the rebels built their umbrella political organization there—the NTC—opposition elements in Cyrenaica were largely irrelevant to the fighting that eventually toppled the regime. The important militias that took the capital and ultimately killed Qadhafi were from Western Libyan towns such as Zintan and Misratah.

The power—and national reach—of these local militias was made profoundly evident by the capture on November 19 of Qadhafi's most prominent

son, Saif al-Islam, by brigades from Zintan. Similarly, forces from Misratah were responsible for capturing and killing Qadhafi himself in Sirte on October 20. Furthermore, from the August 22 conquest of Tripoli until the November 22 announcement of the interim cabinet's formation, the militias controlled most aspects of life in Western Libya. In the wake of relatively positive reception of the new cabinet and the unfreezing of vast Libyan assets at the end of 2011, the center appears to have developed a few more means of reining in the militias. Yet despite having access to over $20 billion in unfrozen assets[2] to create patronage networks and purchase loyalty, the interim government will need to do more to impose its will on the militias. Leadership—including a willingness to make difficult decisions—is required.

Many members of the NTC and the international community have recommended that the interim authorities avoid undertaking meaningful changes, given that later governments may view them as lacking the legitimacy of decisions made by elected leaders. Such an outlook relegates the struggle between the center and periphery to secondary status, behind the need to ensure free and fair elections culminating in the handover of power to a legitimate government over the summer. According to this view, the council's wisest course of action would be to avoid both the muck of politics and attempts to centralize authority by building institutions such as a national army, which could usurp prerogatives that peripheral actors have accumulated during the revolution. George Joffé of Cambridge University eloquently summarized this position: "The NTC's failure to grasp the nettle of security and military institution-building is not necessarily so serious in the long run. What actually matters is the electoral law and the elections themselves."[3]

This paper suggests an alternative view: that centralization, institution building, and defeating the inherent centrifugal force of the militias are immediate necessities for Libya's interim authorities. Only through urgent interventions to address the current center-periphery imbalances can Libya achieve the security needed to jumpstart the economy and hold free and fair elections.

To win this contest with the militias, the NTC will need to work with international actors to create jobs for disbanded militiamen and root out corruption, while simultaneously co-opting militia commanders by bringing them into the nascent Libyan army. It should also employ controversial tactics where necessary, including a strategic communications campaign highlighting both militia human-rights abuses and the wider threat that peripheral factions pose to economic recovery.[4]

Amnesty International's February 2012 report "Militias Threaten Hopes for Libya" points to the arbitrary nature of militia violence and its role in hindering Libya's transition to democracy. It should be translated into Arabic and widely disseminated by the Libyan authorities.

Western powers and the Arab League helped the NTC win the war; now it is time to help the NTC win the peace. Avoiding the deployment of foreign stabilization troops on the ground after Tripoli's fall was wise, but now is the time for foreign NGOs, intergovernmental organizations, private companies, and relevant foreign officials to aid in capacity building, job creation, and general nation-building. Although foreign actors must not overtly interfere in internal Libyan political developments, the United States and other powers should take a firm and proactive stance in the contest between the militias and the interim authorities.

2 | The Creation of a New Center

SINCE QADHAFI'S FALL, the NTC, first established as "the political and international face" of the disparate groups constituting the rebellion, has morphed into Libya's interim government. Though highly successful in its former role, the NTC has appeared ill suited for its current one.[5]

Selection of council members is based on geographical representation, and the number of council members has increased over time. In theory, members are chosen by municipal councils in the regions they represent, but in practice the NTC's senior officials have played a key role in the nominating process. During the revolution, the lists of NTC members were kept secret because many of the Western Libyan councilmen lived in areas under Qadhafi's control. Today, some names have still not been made public, making it difficult to know the council's true composition. According to leaked unofficial lists, the current council is believed to comprise sixty-one members. On November 22, 2011, the NTC appointed a new Executive Office (or cabinet) tasked with running the country's affairs until elections for a constituent assembly are held; the current deadline for those elections is June 23, 2012.

The NTC's Stranglehold on Formal Authority

The NTC has been highly effective in its quest to become the sole legitimate national authority in Libya. The complete collapse of the former regime, symbolized by Qadhafi's death, cleared the last formal obstacle blocking the NTC's full control over the center of Libyan power. Even prior to Tripoli's capture, the NTC had secured legal control of Libya's assets abroad and recognition by most of the international community as the country's legitimate government. Furthermore, the collapse of the old state media that Qadhafi used to demonize the rebels has left his disparate supporters with no outlets to chip away at the council's legitimacy.[6] Instead, the NTC has used new and supposedly free media outlets to bolster its reputation, skillfully employing its influence (but not total control) over domestic television stations (e.g., Libya al-Ahrar) and its access to pan-Arab outlets (e.g., Aljazeera) to project itself as the nation's constitutionally legitimate government.

At present, the council is unlikely to face any threat from an alternative "center" of power such as a Qadhafi-loyalist-led insurgency. The capture of Saif al-Islam, coupled with the disintegration of the last armed loyalist groups in Sirte and Bani Walid, renders such a scenario highly unlikely. This threat is even less realistic given that global jihadist networks, which have traditionally exploited conflict zones, would be unwilling to support a movement led by Qadhafi loyalists. The late January unrest caused by the revolution's "losers" in Bani Walid was not pro-Qadhafi or jihadist in nature. Rather, it stemmed from the resentment that residents harbor toward a local council imposed on them by the NTC. The disturbances are therefore symptomatic of peripheral discontent with the NTC's blunt attempt to centralize authority. They also reflect the council's stranglehold on formal authority but abject lack of institutional capacity. Initially, the interim authorities were unable to impose their will on the town—they capitulated to local demands and, in the end, relied on pro-NTC militias rather than the national army to reassert their authority.[7] Furthermore, the situation in Bani Walid is indicative of the larger situation in Libya, where grievances are predominantly local in character and are aggravated by ineffective centralization attempts that have failed to win the hearts and minds of the populace.

Even those who criticize the NTC or pine for the Qadhafi regime's return—as some of the protestors in Bani Walid certainly do—still accept the NTC as the new formal center of power. They are not attempting to create an alternative center; they acknowledge that only the NTC can pump the country's oil, secure access to the former regime's frozen assets, and has the right to negotiate with foreign governments and corporations. Nevertheless, the NTC's practical role as the vehicle for distribution of state resources and its

universally recognized status as the source of formal authority are not by themselves sufficient to ensure that the building of the new Libya is successful.

Formation of the NTC

After the uprisings began on February 15, 2011, lawyers, youth activists, and professors gathered in Benghazi to create an umbrella organization to unite the local factions that had dislodged regime forces from Eastern Libya. On February 27, they formed the National Transitional Council and chose former justice minister Mustafa Abdul Jalil as their chairman, announcing that they would act as the "political face of the revolution."[8] In an attempt to create a nationwide body, they selected representatives from each region, including those still under Qadhafi's control.[9] The NTC explained that it could not truly represent Libya unless it included all of the separate regional uprisings, which were constantly producing their own grassroots organizations.[10]

Initially, the NTC based itself in Benghazi because the city was the economic and demographic center of "liberated Libya," while the country's true center, Tripoli, was still under loyalist control. In practice, however, Benghazi remained the country's administrative center until the Declaration of the Liberation on October 23, well after Tripoli's fall. During this time, Libyan dissidents abroad and Cyrenaican actors were able to consolidate control over the council.

Between its creation and midsummer 2011, the NTC evolved into a semisovereign government administering a territory larger than France. It was hailed by international observers as remarkably effective in providing basic services, getting the banks running, and returning people to work. And from its inception, it was widely accepted as the legitimate government by residents of Cyrenaica. Following the fall of Tripoli, the NTC quickly gained the same formal legitimacy there, even though few knew much about the body.[11]

3 | The Periphery: Militias Seize the Local Initiative

ALTHOUGH THE NTC controls the center of the Libyan polity, it has not yet effectively cemented its ties to the periphery. Given the lack of preexisting formal institutions at the national level, the spontaneous local organizations created during the war must necessarily form the foundation on which the new Libya will be constructed. Yet only a strong center with viable links to the periphery can effectively oversee economic and political reconstruction.

Unfortunately, as with most central authorities, the NTC was late to understand the periphery's significance. It has repeatedly delayed rooting itself in those areas where the process of creating a new Libya is actually occurring. Although the council added members from besieged western areas prior to liberation, those representatives provided little in the way of local authority that the NTC could use to influence the periphery in a top-down fashion, particularly at a time when events were being driven by bottom-up processes.

The periphery's unique experiences during the revolution made it a strong counterweight to the center's legitimate authority. Although Cyrenaica was where the revolution erupted and the opposition established its seat of power, the fighting there soon reached a stalemate. By mid-April, regime and rebel forces were entrenched between the cities of Brega and Ajdabiya, with neither side able to advance more than a few miles. The true battle for the country shifted westward to areas that remained under Qadhafi's control. With NATO air cover securing the eastern "center" from regime attacks, the new periphery in Tripolitania bore the brunt of Qadhafi's assault.

Indeed, the unique circumstances under which the Tripolitanian militias were formed differentiate the periphery from the center. Brian McQuinn, an Oxford University doctoral student who spent extensive time with Misratah's fighters, notes how the existential threat they faced led to spontaneous solidarity networks laced with an intense esprit de corps.[12] Forced to fight for their lives as loyalists besieged the town, these rebels forged ties and gained fighting skills that those in Cyrenaica—safe from regime counterassaults and constant rocket attacks—did not.

The dynamic nature of the periphery in contrast to the stasis in Benghazi is best illustrated by events in Misratah after local militias dislodged regime forces from built-up areas. The city faced continual bombardment by medium-range Grad rockets launched from the town's outskirts, which remained under Qadhafi's control. Fighters could not lay down their weapons and return to civilian life because their homes still faced loyalist counterstrikes.

Unlike their Western Libyan counterparts, Cyrenaican militias never experienced such threats. Within days of the beginning of the uprisings, Cyrenaican brigades chased Qadhafi's security forces from the city and were never seriously threatened again. And once NATO forces thwarted regime counterstrike efforts against Benghazi, eastern militias and the NTC's nominal national army ceased evolving. In Benghazi, only Islamist units forged the types of bonds that can rival those of Tripolitanian militias.

Beyond the differences in military capabilities that divided east and west lay a more troubling conundrum. While eastern areas were under NTC control, the opposition pockets in Tripolitania—such as Misratah and the Nafusa Mountains—remained isolated islands in a sea of loyalists. The NTC had relatively little presence in such areas; the councilmen selected to represent those regions held no local authority there. And because the center could not protect these municipalities from Qadhafi's forces, they owed no fealty to the NTC. With no central political bodies to protect them from the regime's onslaught, these communities entrusted political functions to the militias that sprouted from within. Unlike in the east, where political and military authority were split, the western opposition united the two under the banner of the militias. Furthermore, in Western Libya the key role the militias played in defeating the regime only enhanced their legitimacy to play a political role.

In fact, in the absence of functioning NTC institutions, the militias have become judge, jury, prison guard, and executioner all in one. Many militias have political committees as well as judicial committees that operate outside the formal legal system but decide the fates of thousands of detainees or suspected former Qadhafi loyalists.

Although the United States and other external actors tend to view the peripheral rebels as spoilers, most Libyans embrace them as heroes. In the Libyan domestic discourse on the revolution, the individual freedom fighter (*tha'ir,* plural *thuwwar*) who abandoned his previous livelihood and left his home to risk his life fighting Qadhafi is the superman of the uprisings. Defenseless as solitary individuals yet formidable once banded together, the *thuwwar* showed resourcefulness, courage, and innovative organizational techniques that few Libyans thought their countrymen could achieve. Before the revolution, Libyan elites (especially educated women) held a poor opinion of their fellow citizens. Yet today, they are amazed at what the *thuwwar* have done and therefore believe that the new Libya must attend to individual fighters' needs.[13] Inasmuch as the *thuwwar* and not the educated NTC men in suits defeated Qadhafi militarily, every Libyan who took up arms or pretended to take up arms in the revolution is now seen as a legitimate political actor whose current and future deeds are to be looked upon with respect. This shift has meant that even previously unemployed, uneducated men from the lowest rungs of tribal society are now seen as respectable, deserving of social intercourse with their "betters" as well as benefits from the state.

It is difficult to convey the extent of this social change to those unfamiliar with the local environment in Libya. In many ways, the country's discourse maintains that an individual *tha'ir* can do no wrong in pushing for his rights or making demands on the state, no matter how arbitrary those demands may be. In the eyes of most Libyans, such men have proven their effectiveness, while the central authorities have yet to do so. At the same time, however, a *tha'ir* who remains involved with a militia or similar body risks tarnishing his image. Such fighters are viewed through the prism of groups that are resisting the establishment of a strong central government focused on providing security and stability. This is the crux of the social and political problems facing Libya today.

Frequently, the militias have attempted to perform the same functions the NTC has claimed for itself. In the special case of Tripoli, the NTC's stabilization and law-and-order functions were relatively redundant because the city already had a local council prior to its fall. By the time the NTC attempted to establish its presence there, the local council and the conquering militias had already taken charge of the city's stabilization.[14]

What united all of the fragmented peripheral movements with the center during the revolt was the desire to remove Qadhafi from power. Now that his regime has been toppled, these movements believe they have little incentive to continue working together, and power struggles are likely to emerge as they jockey for power. Lisa Anderson, a longtime Libya observer and president of the American University in Cairo, has warned of the dangers of "regionalist triumphalism," where "a series of local movements each proclaim their central role in defeating Qadhafi in an attempt to claim a privileged position in the new Libya." Although fragmentation into separate states is unlikely, the center and periphery are now rivals for the spoils of victory.[15]

The Periphery's Historical Dominance

The struggle between center and periphery since 2011 has re-created power relationships that prevailed during the Ottoman era, when a weak center was forced to grapple with a recalcitrant periphery. As discussed previously, an Ottoman governor ruled in Tripoli for most of the nineteenth century, while local notables held power in Tripolitania's coastal towns. Although nominally under Ottoman control, the hinterland largely kept its autonomy, refusing to pay taxes or homage to the authorities in Istanbul.

Although these distinct local power brokers united at times—first to oppose Ottoman attempts at centralization and later to fight the Italians—the animosities between various localities could not be patched over solely in the name of fighting an outside invader. The years 1919–1922 saw an intense Arab-Berber civil war

in the Nafusa Mountains, where the Italians backed and manipulated the Berber side to consolidate their control over Tripolitania.[16]

Libya's postcolonial history has continued this trend. Under British influence (1942–1951) and later the monarchy (1951–1969), tribally organized Cyrenaican elements backed by the Sanussi order shifted power from the Ottoman and Italian center of Tripoli to the previously peripheral areas of Benghazi and Bayda. The wealthy and educated urban traders representing the center progressively lost control, most noticeably as a result of siding with the Italian colonialists or backing Egyptian-inspired Arab nationalism against the British and the Sanussis.[17] For his part, Qadhafi leaned on Megarha and Qadhadhfa tribesmen from the remote, marginalized areas of Sebha and Sirte, respectively. In short, deep study of Libyan history over the past 150 years reveals a cyclical shift of power between the center and the periphery. Each time the periphery dislodges the center, it gradually constitutes a new center that is in turn dislodged.[18]

The 2011 Libyan uprisings witnessed two such cycles, as peripheral Benghazi conquered the center only to see itself quickly supplanted by new diffuse loci of power to the west. As former Oxford University geography professor Jean Gottmann postulated, "Peripheral location means [nominal] subordination to the center...A lack of resignation to such subordination would obviously lead to [continual] conflict and instability."[19] Like Afghanistan and Yemen, Libya may be yet another country in which the culture and history of peripheral actors do not allow them to accept a subordinate position, even to a center they accept as legitimate.

Today, Libya has shifted from a dictatorship back to its more traditional power structure, with a weak center having difficulty making inroads with a rebellious periphery. Local notables, tribal groups, and militias are all vying to keep the NTC from extending its authority to their fiefdoms. This fits the typology adumbrated by Professors Dirk Vandewalle and Lisa Anderson demonstrating that Libya under Qadhafi was unlike other despotic Arab regimes in that it was uniquely "stateless."[20]

Even amid this historical tension between center and periphery, Libyans have no appetite for separatism at present. The common protest chant of "No East, No West, Just One Libya with Tripoli as the Capital" reveals that they desperately crave national unity, notwithstanding their intense and varied local identities. The Libyan people's fervent embrace of the pre-Qadhafi Sanussi flag—despite its association with Cyrenaica—vividly testifies to this desire. Today's revolutionaries want locally accountable power and institutions that govern according to the rule of law, but not in the manner seen in Western countries. Rather, many of them hope to reinvigorate traditional kinship and local networks to create a social web connecting Libyans to both the state and each other. They tend to see the NTC as a dispenser of patronage. Likewise, many new NTC appointees from the periphery see their role as doling out benefits to their kinsmen.

The Islamists

Surprisingly, Islamist militias have diverged from other peripheral actors by establishing relatively close ties with the NTC. Many of these brigades are on good terms with NTC chairman Abdul Jalil and his senior staff, making themselves appendages rather than rivals to the country's new formal power structures.[21]

One faction that was particularly important as the uprisings drew to a close, but later faded, is the Tripoli Military Council (TMC). Because the NTC delayed its move from Benghazi to Tripoli after the capital fell, a local power vacuum emerged. TMC leader Abdul Hakim Belhaj, among others, quickly stepped into the media spotlight. His organization, then composed of more than 8,000 fighters, is unique in that it was the only militia to receive official recognition from Abdul Jalil.

Belhaj achieved fame by fighting in Afghanistan with Usama bin Laden and later returning to Libya in the 1990s to wage an armed uprising against Qadhafi. The CIA, with the help of British intelligence, eventually captured him in Thailand and handed him over to Qadhafi in Libya, where he was incarcerated. After his release in 2011, he trained with elite exiled Arab forces in the Nafusa Mountains in preparation for the assault

on Tripoli. Belhaj used his reputation as an Islamist fighter to establish his own links with the outside world. He skillfully employed a public relations firm to write an op-ed in his name for the British newspaper *The Guardian*.[22] He also conducted his own foreign policy with the help of the Qatari government.

Despite his presence in the headlines, Belhaj holds little formal power in the new Libya. Zintani and Misratan fighters squeezed him and the TMC out of the capital by the end of November. His star on the decline, he and some of his fighters left Libya for the Turkey-Syria border to train fighters against the Syrian government.[23] And on the political front, he was excluded from the interim cabinet—a predictable move, given the NTC's desire to demonstrate to its international patrons that it is not a front for an Islamist takeover. Nevertheless, Belhaj's links to other Islamists throughout Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, such as former members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, could allow him to mobilize opposition to the NTC and/or wait until the transition period is over and seek power electorally. Considered by some as the leader of the politically active Islamists who fought in the revolution, Belhaj could fairly easily align with a moderate Islamist politician and achieve a plurality in a future assembly despite his current isolation.

Elsewhere, other Islamists have consolidated power only to fumble it away. In Cyrenaica, former deputy defense minister Fawzi Bu Katif became head of the Eastern Rebels Association (*Tajamaua Thuwwar al-Sharq*), composed of 4,000 fighters.[24] Although it remains the largest force of Cyrenaican fighters who have not disbanded and returned to civilian life, it has fallen prey to infighting among eastern Islamists in recent months. The February 17 Brigade in Benghazi, considered the most elite of the Cyrenaican troops, strongly supports Bu Katif. In November, however, dozens of other militia leaders in Cyrenaica issued statements denying his leadership over the region's brigades and threatening reprisals if he continued to portray himself as head of the association.[25] As a result of such internal power struggles, the eastern Islamist militias are fading from prominence.

Islamists outside the militias have been active on the political scene as well. The Muslim Brotherhood has been preparing for upcoming elections, forming a political party and laying the groundwork for grassroots organization. The group is well organized and is trying to follow the Turkish, Tunisian, and Egyptian models by portraying itself as moderate. It is also attempting to rebrand itself for the political arena by creating a disciplined hierarchy and drafting a manifesto. Indeed, it has undergone intense reorganization over the past few months after being banned and driven underground by Qadhafi. On November 17, 2011, the Brotherhood held a conference in Benghazi and elected Bashir al-Kabti as secretary-general, replacing longtime leader Suleiman Abdelkader.[26] And on December 22, members in Tripoli announced an independent Muslim Brotherhood party.[27] The group's informal links to Brotherhood organizations in other countries afford it valuable experience to use in the electoral game. Additionally, Ali Salabi—an inspirational preacher connected to Egyptian Islamist Yusuf al-Qaradawi and loosely aligned with the Brotherhood—has recently entered the political arena with a new party called the National Gathering for Freedom, Justice, and Development.[28] He is extremely popular in Libya, and his entry into politics may signal wider acceptance by moderate unarmed Islamist elements of the new political structures established by the NTC.

Despite this flurry of political organizing, hardline groups such as the Salafists will devote most of its efforts to taking over mosques rather than winning control of municipal councils. To date, the different currents among the Salafistss have united only at the nongovernmental level, without forming a political party.[29] In a country where the previous regime muzzled religious leaders and the new government has yet to prove it can even function, control of mosques provides a powerful platform for setting the ideological agenda. In fact, small-scale fighting over mosques has already emerged between rival religious factions.[30]

Regional Militias: Misratah and Zintan

Even as Islamists try in vain to consolidate their power, the nonideological regional militias have already established themselves as the primary counterweight to the NTC. Numerically, and in fighting skill, the Misratans possess the most powerful militias. The area has approximately 200 brigades comprising more than 20,000 fighting and nonfighting members.[31] As the total population of Misratah is about 350,000, this represents a surprisingly high level of mobilization among young men. These militias work closely with the Misratah Military Council and are largely made up of civilians without prior military training. The brigades sprang up according to neighborhood and, as such, are connected only via loose alliances. Despite the potential for chaos, the Misratan militias are united by a cumbersome but functional command-and-control structure.[32]

Misratah has virtually reverted to being the capital of an independent city-state, as it essentially was from 1918 to 1922. Its security forces control the entrance to the city and establish checkpoints at night.[33] Their treatment of Qadhafi symbolized this fiercely independent streak: after Misratah militias captured and killed him in Sirte, they took his body back home as a trophy.[34] And two months earlier, they removed the infamous golden-fist statue from his Bab al-Aziziya compound and carted it back to Misratah. In addition, they have projected their power around the country by setting up barricades hundreds of miles from Misratah, completely independent of the fledgling NTC-sponsored national army and police.[35]

Meanwhile, the militias of Zintan, an Arab town in the Jabal Nafusa region, believe that their essential role in the liberation of Tripoli via the August 18 Gharyan conquest has been downplayed. The Zintani militias are arguably the most disciplined in Libya: they worked fairly closely with the NTC during the revolution, receiving weapons from Benghazi via a local airstrip. Unlike Misratah's rebels or the Islamists, a number of Zintan's senior commanders possess formal military backgrounds. They have been accused by both Misratans and Tripolitans of hoarding weapons and using their control of Tripoli's civilian airport to extort maximum advantage in the current intermilitia turf wars.[36]

On November 22—three days after Zintan militias captured Saif al-Islam—their commander, Osama al-Juwaili, was appointed to the post of defense minister, further solidifying their position in the new Libya. A former military trainer,[37] Juwaili is now in a position to use the levers of central authority against the center, should he so choose.

Some say that the Zintanis and the Misratans briefly formed an alliance to strengthen their position against the NTC. The rising power of both factions was marked by the January appointment of Yussef al-Manguish, a Misratan, as army chief of staff. Yet even if one discounts clashes between Zintani and Misratan militias on February 1 as merely accidental, it is doubtful the alliance was forged for this reason.[38] For one thing, the militias have no track record of controlling their component parts or ceding authority to others to aid in the construction of a new Libya. In fact, it appears that despite the goodwill of many individual militia commanders, the militias on the whole benefit from impeding a return to security and economic growth, as such developments would lead to their political marginalization.

4 | Strategies for the NTC

TO PREVENT AN inefficient fragmentation of authority, a low-intensity civil war, or a Pakistan-like co-optation of the security services by the militias and the Islamists, the interim Libyan authorities must rapidly centralize and institutionalize power.[39] The center has several different tools at its disposal, including economic incentives, requests for outside assistance, political patronage, calculated devolution of power, and propaganda.

Economics

The NTC's control of Libya's purse strings means it is never powerless. The council is the lawful guardian of about $150 billion in frozen assets throughout the world. As mentioned previously, it has received some $20 billion of these assets to date.[40] Around $8 billion has been earmarked for a Warriors Affairs Committee to reintegrate former fighters back into civilian life through a number of programs, including education and training grants, job search help, small business loans, and financial assistance for marriage.[41] Yet it remains unclear whether the Libyans have the capacity to spend this money effectively.

Currently, the NTC is employing traditional patronage networks to co-opt peripheral militias in the absence of functional training programs. Under Qadhafi, the state subsidized housing, food, and gasoline while employing those who could not otherwise find work. The NTC has continued this cradle-to-grave welfare model of government. To gain long-term authority, however, the NTC must not only continue these massive patronage schemes until the economy is strong enough to stand on its own, it must go beyond the mentality of subsidies and turn existing patronage schemes into job-training programs. Such programs are essential to Libya's success because until they have jobs, militiamen have little incentive to disband. Since short-term economic prospects are not conducive to new private-sector positions, the NTC is providing jobs of its own to get militiamen off the streets and sustain its legitimacy. Indeed, many of the positions that

are to be made available through the Warriors Affairs Committee are in the public sector.[42] NTC chairman Abdul Jalil has embraced this way of thinking, yet implementation remains the key challenge.

Requesting outside assistance. The United States and the UN can help bring the NTC's ideas to fruition. The council will soon have access to even more cash, but not to the expertise necessary to spend it properly through massive human-development and capacity-building schemes. To date, Washington has generously helped the Libyans in sectors such as healthcare, but Tripoli has not yet requested sufficient assistance in capacity-building sectors other than electoral preparedness. Capacity-building is the area where the United States can make the most immediate impact in Libya by readily linking political assistance with the establishment of training centers in fields such as hospital management, road construction, and university administration. Yet the United States, Britain, and most other Western countries are hesitant to offer such assistance until the Libyans request it expressly. Therefore, the NTC must reach out to the international community for technical expertise to help buttress its position against the periphery before it is too late. (For a full discussion of the U.S. and international roles, see the following chapter and the concluding policy recommendations.)

Political Patronage

In addition to subsidies and job training programs, the most powerful form of patronage available to the NTC is political appointments, and so far, interim prime minister Abdul Rahim al-Keib's use of ministerial appointments appears to be a qualified success. Both the Zintanis and Misratans have been given a stake in the cabinet, and even those militia leaders who were excluded from representation have praised the NTC. Abdullah Ahmed Naker, head of the Tripoli Revolutionists Council (but a Zintan native), described the cabinet's formation as the cue

for militias to switch from war to politics. Naker told reporters that the men under his command, whom he said numbered the impossible figure of 100,000, would transfer their allegiance to the Defense and Interior Ministries, though he did not say when.[43] Similarly, Abdul Hakim Belhaj announced that he recognizes the cabinet as legitimate and does not aspire to an appointment for himself, although his declaration appears to have been made in exchange for many of his men receiving upper-level positions in the security services and the Interior Ministry.[44] Although political patronage has worked well to bring peripheral players into the central political system, this approach has diminishing returns because it is impossible to create more top-tier cabinet-level positions to co-opt newly threatening actors.

Devolution of Power

Another potential arrow in the NTC's quiver is devolving power to the local level. Such federalism, however, has a bad reputation in Libya. From 1951 to 1963, the United Kingdom of Libya was ruled as a federated state of three provinces: Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, and the Fezzan.[45] This system of devolution led to endless inefficiencies and squabbling as local authorities never trusted the Libyan state to act on their behalf.[46] Today, with modern oil infrastructure and the "Great Man-Made River" crisscrossing all of Libya's regions, too much devolution of power is an even greater danger than it was then.

The country's population distribution—95 percent of Libyans live on 5 percent of the land—also presents a problem for future elections and the rationale for aspiring supporters of federalism.[47] People from sparsely populated desert areas tend to support federalism because their regions would be better represented than in a purely per-capita proportional system. This is reminiscent of debates about the structure of the new Libyan state between 1949 and 1951. If any complex electoral or federal system comes into being, the inhabitants of Cyrenaica and the Fezzan would have an incentive to collude to deprive Tripolitania—which holds 70 percent of the population but less than 25% of the land area—of its demographic share of representation.

Just such an antidemocratic bargain was struck between the Fezzan and Cyrenaica in 1950 and accounted for the ensuing weakness of the Libyan kingdom.[48]

Today, most Libyans support a united country and do not want to reintroduce the destabilizing and centrifugal forces of federalism. Experts such as Mansour Omar El-Kikhia not only acknowledge the dangers of a federal system, but also confirm that it is a nonstarter for the new Libya: "The new government will set the constitutional framework, and there's lots of pressures on them to develop a real state-wide, federal system. But what I see happening is that the new cabinet will not go in that direction because it won't serve it to go in that direction—it will [attempt to] reconstitute the power [base] in Tripoli."[49]

Insufficient devolution. Despite this aversion for federalism, Libyans are equally wary of a strong central government. If the NTC attempts to monopolize power, as many accuse it of doing, then the periphery—which controls the bulk of both heavy weaponry and the loyalties of the citizenry—may rebel once again. Although the militias are the most well-organized and well-armed parts of the periphery, any group of disaffected citizens would likely draw upon the zeitgeist of the Arab Spring and the example of Egypt's "perpetual" revolution to see that their demands are met. For example, many employees at the Ministry of Oil, the Central Bank, the Ministry of Education, the Great Man-Made River Water Usage Authority, and other technocratic ministries have protested until their bosses were forced to resign. The general complaint against such officials is that they are tainted by their association with the Qadhafi regime and that they monopolize authority rather than devolving it to localities, midlevel officials, and the citizenry. These protests indicate the periphery's organizational power relative to the representatives of centralized authority, who usually fail to mobilize counterdemonstrations.

Similarly, Benghazi residents have reportedly felt neglected since the NTC moved to Tripoli. They also feel underrepresented in the interim cabinet. Recently, this growing dissatisfaction in Cyrenaica—which is both the NTC's birthplace and a part of the excluded

periphery under Qadhafi—has led to protests over corruption and lack of transparency.[50] On January 21, 2012, these protests turned into a riot in which people stormed the NTC's Benghazi office, where chairman Abdul Jalil happened to be at the time. He emerged unscathed, as the protestors merely carried off furniture and office equipment. Yet some rioters had guns, and explosions from homemade bombs were reported nearby.[51] The resignation the next day of deputy NTC chair Abdul Hafiz Ghoga and Benghazi local council head Saleh el-Ghazal may hint at fractures that could cause future resignations in the cabinet as well.[52] According to anonymous NTC sources in Benghazi, some councilmen have decided among themselves that Zubeir Ahmed El-Sharif (the NTC representative for political prisoners) should become chairman if Abdul Jalil resigns over issues connected to the mishandling of the incorporation of the periphery and insufficient devolution of power.[53] So far, Abdul Jalil has said that he will continue to serve until the June elections. Yet certain foreign diplomats have long speculated that the cabinet will not survive in its initial incarnation until then, and many are now forecasting that this will happen even sooner than expected.[54] If the cabinet were to fail, the NTC would be hard-pressed to establish a more successful power-sharing agreement and effectively centralize authority. In that scenario, a new cabinet would be forced to further devolve power as the price of maintaining popular legitimacy, which at present derives not from holding a government post, but from participation in the revolution.

Since Qadhafi's fall, local communities are increasingly clamoring for control of their own affairs without formal federation. As discussed previously, recent events in Bani Walid further illustrate this phenomenon. In late January, area residents kicked out the representatives of the central government and demanded that the NTC make concessions. The NTC was forced to compromise and accept devolution of power to Bani Walid rather than negotiating from a position of strength and proactively initiating it.[55]

Since the beginning of the revolution and the concomitant deterioration in the central government's authority, various municipalities and regions have by necessity exerted more day-to-day control over their affairs. Paradoxically, Qadhafi's ideology of Jamahiriya (or "mass-ocracy") called for just this sort of local direct democracy in the form of Basic People's Congresses.[56] Although Qadhafi's implementation of this system was merely sham, it preconditioned Libyans for a devolution of authority. Arguably, then, a healthy degree of decentralization has naturally resulted not only from the uprisings, but also from the residual impact of Qadhafi's ideology.[57]

Yet too much devolution of power or federalism would ultimately be incompatible with the process of trying to rebuild Libya as a modern state with coherent institutions and infrastructure. Therefore, the NTC should preemptively delegate local powers to the spontaneous organizations that arose in each town during the uprisings, creating a chain of command that links these organizations to Tripoli. In other words, the way forward seems to be the extension of the NTC "brand" to cover all local militias and citizen groups, converting them into a national army and national administration. The Zintanis must run Zintan, and the Benghazi transparency activists must be involved in local Benghazi governance—but as representatives of the interim central government. Once they are institutionalized into the center, they will have less incentive to riot (as protestors did in Benghazi) or issue local ultimatums (as Zintani militias did when they used Saif al-Islam's capture as a bargaining chip to obtain control of the Defense Ministry or as militiamen from Suq Juma did when they stopped a Tunis Air flight from taking off in Tripoli in December).

To some extent this process is already happening, with local councils in most towns already rebranded as part of the NTC. Abdul Jalil must extend this inclusion to potentially threatening local actors, even those that disagree with his positions. For example, to ensure Benghazi's continued cooperation, he told reporters that as of January 22 he was suspending the NTC's six representatives to the area until the local council confirmed them or chose new ones.[58]

Propaganda and Popular Outreach

The logical option of simply disbanding the militias by incorporating them into the army and police is not a total solution—it must be pursued alongside other strategies. The NTC can chip away at the militias' popularity while solidifying its own by using propaganda, framing the debate so that the population sides with the center against the militias and other peripheral groups. To date, the council has been woefully ineffective in getting its message to the Libyan people. The militias have used Aljazeera, local posters, and word of mouth far more effectively than the central government. Failings in this regard are among the council's most significant—and avoidable—missteps.

During a January 3 speech in Benghazi, Abdul Jalil warned, "We are now between two bitter options. We deal with these violations [clashes between militias and their human rights abuses] strictly and put Libyans in a military confrontation, which we don't accept, or we split and there will be a civil war...If there's no security, there will be no law, no development, and no elections."[59] Building on this and similar speeches, the NTC should run television and print ads and erect billboards highlighting the abuses committed by wayward fighters and the economic disruptions caused by various protestors. For example, some brigades have rounded up innocent men, while citizen groups have had innocent bosses fired and their homes and offices ransacked. Others have exploited the security situation to exact personal vendettas.[60] Most Libyans seem exhausted with the nightly gunfire and frustrated by the militias' arbitrary diktats.[61]

Propaganda was a key element in the rebel campaign against Qadhafi. During the revolution, the rebels defeated the regime first in the moral and propaganda sphere and only later on the battlefield. In the PR battle the international community, led by shrewd Qatar, helped the rebels by providing a media platform to turn Libyans against Qadhafi while the West put forth the case of his human rights abuses. This strategy can serve as a model for the current struggle against the periphery, though there are associated risks: if this approach were to fail, it would likely foster an oppositional climate between the militias and the central government. Hence, it must be waged with great nuance.

On November 29, the Interior Ministry expressly forbid the militias from conducting their own justice system outside the NTC's judicial process. However, this decree has not fundamentally changed militia practice.

As mentioned above, one approach—recommended by Noman Benotman of the counterradicalization think tank Quilliam Foundation—is to publicly highlight the militias' human rights abuses. This could be remarkably effective in light of the people's overwhelmingly negative feelings about Qadhafi's abuses. A recent UN report on the militias highlighted similar violations, including the unlawful arrest of 7,000 detainees with no official accusations against them.[62]

A sustained propaganda campaign could weaken the militia's appeal among their local constituencies, making them less likely to make significant gains in upcoming elections. Currently, their legitimacy stems from their role in toppling Qadhafi; if, however, they disobey orders to disarm, make political missteps, or are seen as trying to rig the elections, they will quickly lose popular support. At present the militias derive a great deal of their popularity from advocating that former Qadhafi officials be barred from positions of public authority. The NTC should respond by partially embracing this position while publicly announcing that militia members who engaged in war crimes like torture, extrajudicial justice, or hindering the construction of new Libyan institutions will also be barred from future public employment. Such statements could drastically shift the public debate.

An alternative model of popular outreach is exemplified by the December 7 antimilitia demonstration organized by the Tripoli city council. Over 2,000 residents filled Martyrs Square to protest the continued presence in the capital of peripheral militias, such as those from Zintan and Misratah. Such demonstrations represent an attempt to channel popular displeasure with the militias toward strengthening the interim government. These demonstrations show respect for the *thuwwar* as individuals, but not for the militias as collectives. It will be interesting to see whether such locally-led antimilitia movements are re-created in other localities.

Enlist the international community in the PR war. To further the likelihood of success, the international community should facilitate the NTC's public relations effort, despite the risk of creating fissures in Libyan society. Just as the international community (eventually) spoke with one voice against Qadhafi, so it must now say with one voice that it will not let Libya become a failed state (with the proviso that no outside boots be put on the ground). If the international military campaign against Qadhafi was successful because it was backed by both Arab and Western states, so too should the campaign against the militias be backed by regional powers, including Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Certainly, propaganda calling for demobilization of units and registration of weapons will be more effective coming from Arab and Muslim allies than from the United States and Europe alone.

Outside powers could also help resolve the apparent tug-of-war between Abdul Jalil and Prime Minister Keib, who seems to believe that the chairman is being soft on Islamists and militias. Western pressure on Abdul Jalil to crack down on the militias or face losing support could succeed if pursued delicately and behind closed doors. Such a course would strengthen Keib's position. The Libyan revolution must remain Libyan, but outside actors can offer support and retain a "made in Libya" appearance by acting in unison with the Libyans and securing Keib's support. The local opponents of this international-coalition-based approach, namely the militias, are being hypocritical on this front, since they themselves benefit from outside help from Qatar. In fact, Libyans are more likely to view the Islamist militias, and not the NTC, as representing outside interests.

Caution from the Experts

So far, direct attempts to demobilize the militias have failed. On December 6, for example, Tripoli municipal council chief Abdel-Rafik Bu Hajjar announced a plan to force militiamen in the capital to give up their arms or join the nascent security forces by December 20.[63] Many simply refused to hand in their weapons, claiming that without their security protection, the capital would descend into chaos. Hence, militias from

Zintan, Misratah, and elsewhere have retained their strategic positions in the capital.[64]

Hajjar's failure, however, was predictable, because his plan lacked the right incentive structure or capacity to be carried out. Earning a government salary by joining the national security forces proved to be not as enticing to individual fighters as the NTC had anticipated. High-level militia members decided they would rather take the opportunity to gain additional political power by seeing their rivals disband first. On December 26, a group calling itself the Union of Libyan Thuwwar and claiming to represent 70 percent of the country's fighters demanded that the NTC give 40 percent of its seats to former fighters.[65] Again, the December 20 ultimatum's failure to achieve the desired effect of a mass handover of arms cast grave doubts concerning the effectiveness with which the center can impose its will on the periphery. The January 25 Bani Walid incident is in the same vein, with peripheral elements forming an impromptu political and military organization and rebelling against NTC attempts to impose authority.

In response, the NTC must forge an incentive structure that motivates whole militia units to join the new national army, police force, or job-training programs. Of course, absorbing existing militia units en masse carries certain dangers, since the units could retain their previous loyalties. The NTC may therefore need to break them up in the process of incorporating them.

According to George Joffé, local groups must take the initiative in transferring power to the center: the central authorities can facilitate this move, but they cannot initiate it. In his view, Libya will not become a unified country unless the different regional interests voluntarily cede some of their power to the center, lest change be forced upon them from the center. Additionally, he sees foreign intervention in Libyan power struggles as a very dangerous path, though he recognizes that external powers have certain technocratic and governance skills that Libya needs badly.[66]

By contrast, Noman Benotman, who has experienced Islamist militia life from the inside as a cofounder and combatant with the Libyan Islamic

Fighting Group, argues that the NTC—supported by the West—should take a bold stand against the militias. He preaches a divide-and-conquer strategy that runs counter to the purely consensual approach recommended by the International Crisis Group.[67] In his view, if each regional or ideological grouping can remain united and continue its recruitment drive, the militias will soon have the power to form their own alliances and take over the country's political scene. He believes that if Libya waits until the formation of an elected government before confronting the militias, it will be too late, since they can use the elections to cement their power if they uphold the status quo until the summer.[68]

The international community would be wise to heed both pieces of advice. George Joffé is correct in pointing out that nothing substantial can be achieved without significant local buy-in, and that the international community must act very cautiously and humbly in Libya. Yet Benotman is also correct in highlighting the dangers of a totally hands-off approach and the reasons why international engagement cannot wait until after elections.

The Militias' Volatile Solidarity Networks

The shared local experience of the uprisings has created intense feelings of group solidarity within the militias, sentiment that draws on preexisting familial, tribal, and ideological connections yet is distinct from them. Each new set of local groups that participated in the revolution has developed its own fresh feelings of *asabiyya* (esprit de corps). Wolfram Lacher has described the new political groupings as a recasting of familial and class solidarities that existed prior to Qadhafi under the monarchy. Christopher M. Blanchard of the Congressional Research Service has followed suit, seeing the resurfacing of tribal loyalties as the primary divisive force in the new Libya and the underpinning of the militias' separate agendas.[69]

The reality is more complex, however. The militia's solidarity networks certainly draw upon old resonances of family, tribe, and class, but they also transcend them. For example, the Zintani militias oversee the Western Military Council, which includes Arabs and Berbers, former military officers and unemployed civilians, townsmen and rural elements. These spontaneous *asabiyya* networks generated by the uprisings are stronger than old tribal or class ties, but they necessarily remain volatile.

If the militias are able to provide materially for their members and the NTC does not intervene, these *asabiyya* networks will become entrenched.[70] Both Libya and the West have a core interest in preventing the militias from becoming deeply rooted in society. Hence, the interim government, with outside support, must act while these elements are still vulnerable, before they have taken over the local political scene. With the correct actions undertaken, using a wise mixture of the strategies outlined here, the militias' *asabiyya* will prove transitory rather than transformative.

5 | The Role of Outside Powers

THE UNITED STATES and its Western and Middle Eastern allies have a variety of interests in Libya's future, all of which would be well served by cementing the NTC's centralization efforts. Each country should therefore help the council establish its authority however possible.

France

The French government was the driving force behind the international community's decision to intervene in Libya. President Nicolas Sarkozy led the way by calling for a no-fly zone and Western military intervention.[71] When it became clear that air power alone was not enough to topple Qadhafi, France sent in military advisors to guide airstrikes and work with the rebels. It was also the first country to recognize the NTC as the legitimate Libyan government.

Prior to the conflict, France did not have a large economic stake in the country. For example, the French oil company Total produced only 55,000 barrels of oil per day in Libya.[72] But, despite its low profile in the country, France is heavily dependent on Libyan petroleum products, which constitute 15 percent of Libyan imports and accounting for approximately 11 percent of French consumption.[73]

France's involvement in Libya largely stems from Sarkozy's desire to adopt an activist approach and return his country to international prominence. He has consistently advocated an Atlanticist foreign policy that does not shy away from inserting the nation in external conflicts. To this end, he increased French involvement in Afghanistan and rejoined NATO's military command, from which President Charles de Gaulle had withdrawn in 1966.

Following this Atlanticist paradigm, even if Sarkozy loses to Socialist candidate Francois Hollande in the upcoming presidential election, France will remain a key player in the new Libya and will work closely with Washington to strengthen the Libyan government. The French government is also planning to establish a program in France to train the Libyan security forces, to be funded by Qatar. Nevertheless, senior French officials have indicated that their country expects to gain future compensation for its military outlays. In August, Foreign Minister Alain Juppé stated, "When I am asked about the cost of the operation (the defense minister speaks of one million euros per day) I remark that it is also an investment in the future."[74]

Italy

Of all the foreign powers involved in the Libyan conflict, none has more at stake than Italy, which colonized Libya from 1911 to 1943 and is the country's largest trading partner. Italy is also the largest importer of Libyan oil, accounting for 28 percent of all purchases in 2010.[75] ENI, the Italian national oil company, is the largest foreign producer of Libyan petroleum products, pumping approximately 17 percent of all Libyan oil.[76] ENI also owns 50 percent of the Greenstream natural gas pipeline that produced around 10.5 billion cubic meters of gas in 2010[77] and provides Italy with about 10 percent of its gas consumption.[78] Indeed, Libya is ENI's biggest theater of operations, accounting for 15 percent of the company's total oil and gas production.[79]

For his part, Qadhafi long sought to invest his country's oil wealth in Italy. Today, Libya holds a 7.5 percent stake in the Italian banking group UniCredit, a 2 percent share in Italian automaker Fiat, and a 2 percent interest in Italian defense contractor Finmeccanica.[80]

Italy's dependence on Libya for energy and investment capital left Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi reluctant to denounce Qadhafi with the same speed as did his British and French counterparts. Five days after the violence erupted in February 2011, he defended his decision not to contact the Libyan leader: "The situation is still in flux and so I will not allow myself to disturb anyone."[81] Nevertheless, once it became clear that the Western powers would move to create a no-fly zone, Berlusconi threw his support behind the rebels.

Today, Italy, like other Western nations, supports a strong NTC and its aspirations to create a powerful

central government. But unlike its counterparts, Rome and its business enterprises have been known to blaze their own trail in Libya to protect their commercial interests and special relationship with the country, frequently getting out ahead of the international consensus.[82] Therefore, Italy's primary diplomatic focus in Libya will be not only retaining but expanding its commercial preeminence in the country.

Qatar

If France pushed the Western powers to intervene in Libya, it was Qatar that worked behind the scenes to secure the Arab League's cover, enabling the UN Security Council to adopt Resolution 1973 authorizing the no-fly zone. The tiny Persian Gulf emirate followed up this success by becoming the first Arab country to recognize the NTC as Libya's legitimate government.

But Qatar did not limit its efforts to mere diplomacy. When it became apparent that the NATO bombing campaign alone would not suffice to topple Qadhafi, Doha played a crucial role in arming the rebels. Beginning in April 2011, it supplied French Milan antitank missiles and Belgian FN rifles. Over the course of the revolution, Qatar provided more than 20,000 tons of weapons in eighteen shipments.[83] Qatar also brought hundreds of Libyan fighters to Doha to train. And during the final campaign to take Tripoli, Qatari special forces[84] fought shoulder to shoulder with the militias and "supervised" their plans, according to the Qatari chief of staff.[85]

This involvement was not spurred exclusively by humanitarian motives, but also by economic and, more crucially, geostrategic factors. Qatar had major investments in Qadhafi's Libya. In 2008, it concluded agreements to invest $8 billion.[86] Moreover, as the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas, Qatar saw Libya's gas reserves as a gateway to Mediterranean markets that would give it a crucial advantage against Russia, the number-two LNG exporter.

Furthermore, over the past few years, the Qataris have come to realize that "the only way to protect their sovereignty against traditional Saudi meddling in their internal affairs is to act like a regional power. By pitching a stake in every major regional issue, they

become more resilient to the frequent great power gales of the Middle East."[87] This approach has been evident in the emirate's proactive policies toward the Arab Spring. Qatari strategists clearly believe that creating and supporting a sympathetic new government in Tripoli would greatly support their regional agenda. This logic has compelled Qatari patronage of a broad spectrum of emerging political movements throughout the Arab Spring countries, especially among moderate Islamists. As the Saudis were slow to abandon their old allies in North Africa, the Qataris have usurped their position as the primary Gulf presence in the region. Some observers have even spoken of emergent Qatari imperialism.

Reinforcing these geostrategic imperatives is a web of close personal connections between the Qatari royal family and Libya. In the words of analyst Blake Hounshell, "Qatar's ties to Libya run surprisingly deep: the Qatari emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, made close Libyan friends [connected to the Sanussi dynasty overthrown by Qadhafi] during his time studying in Britain, while the father of his second wife, Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al-Misned, lived and worked in Libya during his political exile in the 1970s." As a result, Sheikha Mozah herself spent part of her youth in the country.[88] She later formed links with Mahmud Shammam, who served on the board of Aljazeera and is now a member of the NTC. Sources in Qatar note that for much of the conflict Shammam had virtually unfettered access to Qatar's ruler. He also headed the Qatar-backed satellite channel Libya al-Ahrar, which beamed pro-rebel propaganda into Libya from Doha at the same time Qadhafi's own state television was removed from Arab satellites.

Qatar did not limit its support to secular leaders such as Shammam. It also funded Islamists, repeating the strategies it used in Tunisia and Egypt. As with Shammam, Qatar built on preexisting Libyan diaspora networks based in the emirate. The most active of these is led by Ali Salabi, an Islamic cleric and Libyan dissident jailed in the 1980s by Qadhafi, who has lived in Qatar for decades. Despite his lifelong opposition to the Qadhafi regime, Salabi was involved in Saif al-Islam's campaign to persuade the

Libyan Islamic Fighting Group to renounce violence. During much of the uprisings, Salabi served as an Aljazeera studio analyst, and Qatar in turn used Salabi's personal networks to fund the rebels. From the start of the conflict, Doha was funneling assistance to the February 17 Brigade in Benghazi, and in April it became the primary patron of Abdul Hakim Belhaj's Tripoli Military Council.

In summary, Qatar is connected to secularists (e.g., Shammam), non-militia-aligned Islamists (Salabi), Eastern Islamist militiamen (Fawzi Bu Katif), and Western Islamist militiamen with jihadist backgrounds (Belhaj). Therefore, its assistance does not aid the Libyan center in its struggle with the periphery. Quite the contrary: the disparate networks of Qatari patronage have tended to aid peripheral elements in undercutting the center's agenda.

United Arab Emirates

The UAE played a subdued but still crucial role in legitimizing international involvement in Libya. It was one of only three Arab nations (along with Jordan and Qatar) to provide aircraft to enforce the UN-mandated no-fly zone. While Qatar sent six fighter jets,[89] the UAE sent twelve.[90] In April, it sent a massive overland aid shipment, with forty trucks carrying nearly thirty tons of food each.[91] And in June, it became the second Arab country to recognize the NTC as the legitimate government.

Like Qatar, UAE companies have a number of investments in Libya. The al-Ghurair Group owns 50 percent of the country's largest oil refinery (in Ras Lanuf) and recently announced that it would invest $1.5 billion to upgrade it.[92] Other UAE ventures own stakes in the First Gulf Libyan Bank[93] and power plants in Tripoli.[94] The emirates have also relied on long-standing ties with Libyans to penetrate the country. For example, former NTC prime minister Mahmoud Jibril had firm roots in Dubai, where he lived for some time; he was the UAE's point man on Libyan policy.

Overall, the UAE's policy toward Libya has been more "center-centric" than Qatar's. As a result, it has helped strengthen the NTC rather than support regional/factional actors.

Washington and the Current State of Play

The United States played a supportive role in both the diplomacy that led to Resolution 1973 and the ensuing post-Qadhafi engagement. In fact, the use of certain U.S. military technology and personnel was a sine qua non for the no-fly zone's success. Yet Washington has been exceedingly reluctant to leverage this fact and secure specific U.S. interests in Libya. In fact, the Obama administration has instead pursued a consistent "lead from behind" policy.[95] This approach, combined with the high number of American-educated ministers in the new Libyan cabinet, has engendered universal respect in both the streets and the corridors of power. It has also left many Libyans clamoring for increased U.S. engagement now that the fighting is over.[96]

Rhetorically, Washington is committed to helping the interim authorities create job-training programs for militia members while providing advice on how to build a national army, collect weapons, and deactivate man-portable air-defense systems (MANPADS) and other heavy weapons.[97] In short, the official American position is to help the center in its quest to consolidate its authority and incorporate the periphery. Yet in the words of a recent Congressional Research Service report, "The Obama administration has not publicly disclosed plans for U.S. participation in multilateral post-conflict security, stability, or reconstruction operations in Libya."[98]

To date, little has been achieved from Washington's postconflict efforts because security concerns prevent civilian U.S. government staff from rapidly increasing their numbers and directly interacting with militia members outside Tripoli and Benghazi. In fact, U.S. personnel are active almost exclusively in those two cities. This pattern is similar to that of the UN and other powers. By not engaging outside the large cities, foreigners are merely exacerbating existing tensions between the center and periphery and further fueling causes for peripheral discontent.

Moreover, the few programs that are in place face serious challenges. In the words of one Tripoli-based American diplomat who had extensive experience

working with Libyan officials during the Qadhafi period, "The Libyans don't yet have the capacity to successfully interface with foreign-led capacity-building programs. The current institutions are far more convoluted and ineffective than even those under Qadhafi."[99] Sadly, this lack of capacity has prevented the sector-by-sector needs-assessment team formed by the UN, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank from deploying to Tripoli, which would help jump-start the economy and build the institutions that the Libyan government needs to accommodate and disburse newly unfrozen funds. This leads to uncertainty regarding what Libya's reconstruction budget will actually be in 2012.

In short, the Libyan authorities are facing multiple Catch-22s. They cannot demobilize the militias until they have a functioning national army, but they cannot establish a functioning national army until they demobilize the militias. Similarly, they cannot effectively accept outside assistance without functioning ministries and a stable bureaucratic chain of command, yet building that capacity seems to require foreign assistance. Last, and most insidiously, foreign companies in the oil and infrastructure sectors cannot invest or return to work in Libya until the economic and security situation improves, but the economic and security situation will not improve until foreign companies are on the ground, jump-starting the economy and creating jobs.

Since the massive number of loose weapons is a critical problem and has already resulted in a flow of heavy weaponry to Tuareg rebels in Mali, sparking a localized rebellion (see the concluding section of this paper), both the international community and the United States have focused the bulk of their efforts on securing arms. During the period of U.S. engagement with the Qadhafi regime (2003–2010), deactivating Libya's large supply of MANPADS was a diplomatic priority, and after the uprisings broke out in 2011, the U.S. MANPADS Task Force deployed to Libya. Its efforts were relatively successful, as they drew upon existing intelligence and the NTC allowed task force members to embed in rebel units. Although more than 5,000 of an estimated 20,000 unaccounted-for surface-to-air

missiles have been deactivated, it remains impossible to know how many MANPADS are missing from Libyan stockpiles. Therefore, sustained engagement with the Libyan authorities will be needed to ensure border security and to inventory militia armaments.[100]

On December 2, 2011, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2017 to prevent small-arms proliferation out of Libya. And in Washington, legislation aimed at securing stockpiles of Libyan weapons has received broad bipartisan support, even as programs to facilitate economic reconstruction have proven contentious and remain underfunded.[101]

Apart from the sector of weapon security—where the Libyans actively reached out for American assistance—outside actors are hesitant to engage, and the interim government is hesitant to ask for help because it knows its legitimacy is perilously thin. Indeed, Western powers appear to be operating in Libya with an anti-nation-building, hands-off approach. In conversations with the authors, most foreign diplomats mentioned that the primary lesson they learned in Iraq and Afghanistan is that locals must have total ownership over the process of building state institutions. Extrapolating from this quite reasonable lesson, the international community is deathly afraid of proactively suggesting programs to Libya's interim authorities and has been content to sit back and see what assistance the Libyans request. It remains unclear whether this is the right approach or even the proper conclusion to draw from the Iraqi and Afghan experiences. An alternative lesson could be that the obsession with force protection and security impeded the broader missions of institution and state building.[102] There are encouraging signs that the United States has learned to carefully engage with the local population even before the security situation is completely safe. In this vein, the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service is in the process of reviewing procedures that would allow U.S. embassy officials and contractors to downgrade their security posture and facilitate immediate engagement.[103]

In summer 2011, when the outcome of the conflict was still in the balance, the UN's then special advisor for postconflict and transition issues, Ian Martin, envisioned putting a sizable UN footprint on the ground

once Qadhafi was ousted. This vision failed to materialize for a number of reasons: first, for the very good reason that it was not needed, since Tripoli fell without a widespread humanitarian disaster that would have necessitated greater UN involvement; and second, because after Tripoli fell, the NTC was preoccupied with cementing its authority in the newly conquered territories and saw international agencies and foreign assistance as a threat to that goal rather than a buttress. Only after the cabinet was formed on November 22 did the interim authorities begin calling for more assistance, and even then in a haphazard fashion that persists today.

One optimistic Washington-based U.S. diplomat covering Libya downplayed this problem in a recent conversation with the author, arguing that "Post-November 22 engagement has been highly positive, and although the Libyans' capacity issue is currently a very real one, there has been tremendous change in the past month or two. In the medium term the characteristically Libyan lack of capacity could all but disappear." Yet according to a Tripoli-based professional actually involved in dispensing capacity-building assistance, "Even after the appointment of the cabinet it has remained difficult to identify Libyan interlocutors, and the relevant Libyan authorities keep on changing or have no easily discernible organizational structure."

On the American side, bureaucratic and political hurdles have also impeded involvement. For example, the U.S. Agency for International Development had no official budget for Libya in 2011 because prior to the uprisings Libya was classified as a rich country that could handle its own development needs.[104] Despite this, USAID officials found ways to activate small grants, and in July, the agency's Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) established a branch in Libya with $5 million in funding to help with civil society training.[105] OTI's Libya office still lacks a job-training function and is therefore not directly involved in training militiamen or helping Libyan bureaucrats train their new staffs.

The most active component of American involvement to date has been the Middle East/North Africa Response Fund—a $50 million pool of money apportioned annually by Congress that either the State Department or USAID may tap into.[106] All told, U.S. sources accounted for approximately $100 million of Libya's nonmilitary funding in 2011, with the vast majority going to humanitarian assistance and very little to capacity building or vocational training.[107]

January 2012 marked the beginning of an NTC drive to register militiamen in Tripoli and Benghazi who wish to enter the national military, get private-sector jobs, or return to education. Yet the council appears to have registered only a few thousand of the hundreds of thousands of fighters. As mentioned previously, the Warriors Affairs Committee has set aside $8 billion for these programs, but has demonstrated a lack of institutional capacity to use the money effectively.[108] Some U.S. diplomats and bureaucrats remain particularly gun-shy about this capacity gap because they were burned in Iraq on similar nation-building programs. Furthermore, the partisan climate and economic crisis make sweeping Libya initiatives unpopular in Congress—even though such efforts could speed Libya's return to security, letting the oil flow and unleashing billions of dollars of opportunities for U.S. companies. Furthermore, Libyan authorities have repeatedly expressed their willingness to pay for outside technical assistance. But, of course, concretizing what they want and how Washington could provide it is another matter.

6 | Policy Prescriptions

GIVEN THE PARADOXES outlined in the previous chapter, what can the United States and other Western nations do to foster a positive outcome in Libya's transition process and its preparation for upcoming elections? Western policymakers appear to have grasped that in order to secure their own financial and strategic interests in Libya, they must lend a hand in the country's reconstruction. Yet they have failed to understand that the ideal model for such involvement is to help the weak center institutionalize itself and incorporate a restive periphery. The following recommendations highlight ways to implement that ideal on the ground.

▶ **Establish the U.S. government as a matchmaker between Libyan officials and the American private sector.** Ian Martin, who leads the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), is currently the main go-between connecting the Libyan government and the various foreign governments and companies operating in the country. He is universally respected and highly competent, and his small staff and vast connections with foreign institutions provide matchmaking between Libyan needs and the foreign governments and institutions that can provide effective assistance. UNSMIL's structure, though, is derived from similar UN agencies designed to disburse funds to poor countries—it is not equipped to facilitate private-sector, for-profit engagement, a void currently being filled by Italy and the Persian Gulf nations. Meanwhile, the United States has shown more urgency in its demands to participate in security- and democracy-related assignments such as deactivating MANPADS (which the State Department has partially outsourced to DynCorp), promoting civil society through the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and USAID/OTI, and preparing for elections through a range of government and NGO programs.

To date, the worldwide firewall between the American government and private sector has left U.S. officials dangerously behind the curve in Libya, as European and Gulf governments have larger staffs, more

businesspeople on the ground, less stringent bureaucratic regulations, and a history of greater engagement in the country. To counteract this, State Department officials need to cultivate matches between certain Libyan authorities and relevant U.S. government programs and private firms. Such engagement, coupled with outreach to Libya's expanding private sector, would simultaneously help U.S. diplomatic objectives, American companies, and the reconstruction of Libya.

Gene Cretz, Washington's current ambassador to Tripoli, acknowledges that U.S. commercial engagement—as opposed to engagement through UNSMIL—is the key to securing long-term American interests in Libya. But inasmuch as the biggest obstacle remains Libya's unreadiness for increased matchmaking, new directives from the State Department (and, possibly, higher-level engagement) could initiate contacts that would help U.S. officials in Tripoli kickstart relationships with the right Libyan interlocutors and increase their matchmaking role. Recently nominated ambassador John Christopher Stevens—who has many personal connections with relevant Libyan officials as a result of his services as special representative to the NTC from March to November 2011—will likely arrive in Tripoli soon, providing an ideal opportunity to begin prioritizing the embassy's matchmaking role.

▶ **Insist on U.S. involvement in UN activities related to healthcare and infrastructure rebuilding.** Following from the previous recommendation, Washington should expand its matchmaking focus to these areas in particular, since such involvement would establish long-term U.S. governmental and private-sector connections in Libya.

▶ **Reinstate visa issuance and consider opening a Benghazi consulate.** The United States should reinstate the visa process in Libya as soon as the security situation permits reopening the consular service, thus helping potential business partners and students avoid

the necessity of multiple trips to Egypt or Tunisia for such purposes. And in addition to rebuilding the embassy in Tripoli, damaged by Qadhafi's forces during the revolution, Washington should consider creating a consulate in Benghazi as well. Doing so would mark a return to the situation under the monarchy while publicly recognizing Benghazi's importance as an independent economic center, a symbol of the revolution, and a proposed home for a number of government institutions, including the National Oil Corporation.

Although reinstating the visa process in Benghazi and Tripoli sounds like a fairly easy task, it is actually quite complex from a bureaucratic standpoint. Visa reciprocity problems have dogged the bilateral relationship since Washington pursued detente with Qadhafi after 2003. Unlike the many foreign nationals who receive ten-year multiple-entry tourist visas to the United States, Libyans generally receive only three-month single-entry visas. This is a holdover from measures enacted in response to Qadhafi's discriminatory visa policy requiring American businesspeople to procure letters of invitation and submit to complex vetting processes. Therefore, the first step U.S. diplomats must take to jump-start relations is to create a new visa agreement guaranteeing a mutual easing of restrictions. The old logic of "reciprocity" should be abandoned by both sides.[109]

In this agreement, Libya should publicly recognize that the majority of Americans applying for visas are engaged in rebuilding the Libyan economy, while Washington should acknowledge that making it easier for Libyan students to study in the United States is the greatest piece of public diplomacy the State Department can pursue.

A second hurdle is the deliberate destruction of the American embassy by Qadhafi loyalists during the uprisings. At present, U.S. diplomats are working out of the ambassador's residence and other housing compounds. But post-9/11 U.S. regulations stipulate very high security standards for visa issuance that cannot be achieved without a separate entrance to the embassy compound's consular section—an arrangement that permits controlled public access up to a hard wall between American visa personnel

and outsiders. For that purpose, Washington needs Libyan cooperation in finding a new interim site in Tripoli and in bringing the necessary equipment into the country. Lack of such cooperation was a major stumbling block in creating the capacity for visa issuance during the Qadhafi era.

In addition to these logistical hurdles, the likelihood of delays extends beyond the complexities of getting an embassy compound in Tripoli and a consular compound in Benghazi: since the State Department is in the throes of a worldwide process of closing, not opening, consulates, it is difficult to convince the department's bureaucracy that a Benghazi consulate represents a permanent need and a wise investment. When Benghazi was the center of the rebellion against Qadhafi, however, department officials found many innovative ways to engage there. Today, the State Department should look beyond entrenched bureaucratic logic and regard the city as a special case of tremendous importance to the United States. In the post-9/11 age, stringent U.S. security requirements serve a necessary purpose in Libya's fluid postrevolutionary environment; therefore, Washington and the NTC should redouble their efforts to find a physical facility that meets these specifications.

▶ **Encourage militia veterans to pursue vocational training in the United States**. Both the militias and the interim government have expressed a desire for this measure. The Senate version of the relevant appropriations bill—S. 1601, which has yet to be passed—emphasizes the importance of exchange programs for Libyan students and in democracy promotion. Vocational training is particularly important because educated militiamen tend not to want to join Libya's new national army. The conscript army had very low prestige under Qadhafi, so young people with skills generally prefer to enter the high-prestige private sector. Furthermore, the very nature of the militias entails that they are noninstitutional, part-time, and focused on regional bonds. For all of these reasons, future brute force attempts to funnel the majority of militiamen into the new army are—like similar efforts in the past—destined to fail.

Accordingly, faster implementation of vocational training programs will get militiamen off the streets more quickly. Washington could enact special procedures to help these trainees enter the United States without prior acceptance by American educational programs. Most militia members do not have the English-language skills needed to undertake such an application or directly enroll in U.S. vocational training programs, so specifically designed procedures and programs would greatly increase their ability to study in America.

These programs should be administered by private U.S. vocational- and language-training firms, allowing them to turn a profit while helping Libyan students. NTC chairman Abdul Jalil has stated on numerous occasions how highly he values vocational education for the *thuwwar*. As such, the council or its successor would likely fund training centers in Libya staffed by external personnel, in addition to paying a generous allowance to former militiamen studying abroad.

▶ **Increase coordination between existing capacity-building and demobilization programs and ensure public-sector oversight.** Currently, USAID/OTI, the State Department's MEPI, NGOs, and the private sector are all involved in different and partially overlapping aspects of capacity-building and demobilization assistance. The different government agencies do not have a unified chain of command, yet in practice they coordinate weekly with loose oversight by the State Department's new Office of Middle East Transitions. The recent appointment of a "coordinator for U.S. assistance" in Tripoli is a further step in the right direction, but more is needed. As an expert practitioner in the field of international development assistance reported on his time in Tripoli, "There's a widespread belief that the key to DDR [disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration] is expanding capacity and opportunities. Donor coordination is vital and should be attainable, since in the Libyan arena there should be just a few key players—USAID, DFID, and ECHO—not the 'republic of NGOs' phenomenon seen in Haiti or Afghanistan."[110]

The disparate American organizations operating in Libya should not only have an on-the-ground coordinator and weekly meetings in Tripoli, they should also further unify their chain of command to establish a precedent. Specifically, they should be directly answerable to Amb. William Taylor, the special coordinator for Middle East transitions at the State Department.[111] This would allow intensive efforts in Libya to create the institutional know-how for less intensive engagement in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen. Given the U.S. role in the no-fly zone and Libya's status as the only Arab Spring country to date where the rebels have a decidedly pro-American agenda, the United States must invest its greatest efforts in Libya first, and then attempt to replicate its successes elsewhere. Enforcing the no-fly zone cost around $1 billion,[112] yet for lack of a comparatively meager sum and the creativity needed to spend it wisely, the United States risks losing the peace in Libya or, more likely, losing its place in the reconstruction effort. Turkey and Qatar have adapted quite dynamically to the new realities in North Africa with coordinated political, economic, and military assistance. As medium powers they have proved themselves far more nimble than the United States.

This can be reversed: the lessons learned at great cost in Iraq and Afghanistan can be brought to bear in Libya. First, government initiatives should make use of skilled civilians with backgrounds in the private sector, the academy, and the NGO world, as this group tends to conduct nation-building efforts more effectively than either the military or contractors driven by profit.[113] Libya's experience with Western consulting companies has been largely negative: McKinsey, Booz Allen, and the Monitor Group were well embedded in Qadhafi's Libya, and although they preached neoliberal economic reform, most locals saw them as propping up the regime. While devising ways to sugarcoat the regime's policies to outsiders, they were making money by selling advice that the Libyans could not or did not want to implement.

Libya today is already at an advantage—it is not under foreign military occupation, and the people remain very favorably disposed toward the U.S. and allied role in their country. Establishing the proper chains of command will allow for more efficient

assistance and help Washington gain institutional knowledge that can be applied to other Middle Eastern transitions.

▶ **Join allies in conducting propaganda efforts that support the interim government while delegitimizing the militias.** Standing on the sidelines is not an option in post-Qadhafi Libya. As outlined in the "Propaganda and Popular Outreach" section of chapter 4, antimilitia propaganda is essential—however divisive it may sound, and regardless of whether it leads certain fringe groups to view the central government as a tool of the West. The NTC's failure to engage in strategic communication with the Libyan people has been quite apparent and has exacerbated the current center-periphery dynamic.

▶ **Strike while the iron is hot.** Most policymakers are inclined to wait until local actors finish jockeying for power before initiating aid projects in a given country. Taking such an approach in Libya, however, would squander the NTC's brief window of opportunity to establish its legitimacy. American aid agencies should present viable plans to specific Libyan authorities rather than waiting for the power struggles in Tripoli to resolve themselves.

▶ **Provide experts to interface with the Libyan government and citizen groups.** Libyan representatives in the interim government and members of diaspora civil-society organizations have expressed a great desire for outside assistance in initiating a potential truth-and-reconciliation commission,[114] anticorruption tribunals,[115] and constitutional education.[116] Recent demonstrations in Benghazi demanding transitional justice have brought the issue to even greater prominence. A proactive U.S. stance on these rule-of-law issues would not only be welcome, it would fit into the key strategy of assisting Libya's central authorities, who are crying out for assistance in their struggle against the periphery.

▶ **Encourage grassroots democracy.** USAID, the embassy's cultural staffers, and the ambassador himself should lend their presence and assistance to democratization activity outside Tripoli and Benghazi by supporting Libyan NGOs, civil society efforts, and local political organizations in other locales. At present, the United States risks being associated with now-disgraced "over-centralizers" such as former prime minister Mahmoud Jibril and former oil minister Ali Tarhouni. Therefore, even as they help strengthen the Libyan center, American diplomats should support attempts to organize those components of the Libyan periphery that fall within the rule of law and are nonviolent, establishing connections between them and the center.

▶ **Work with moderate Islamists and mainstream militias.** When taking action in Libya, Washington must acknowledge that Islamism is here to stay throughout post–Arab Spring North Africa. At present, Qatar and Turkey are the main patrons of moderate Islamist movements; for its part, the United States should not shy away from supporting democratic movements and messages in Libya even when they have overtly Islamist resonance. Ideally, U.S. officials would extend an olive branch to nonmilitary manifestations of Islamist groups such as the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood. Unfortunately, a recent Congressional Research Service report *Libya: Transition and U.S. Policy* subtly advised the opposite: "The political ascendance of nonviolent Islamist opposition forces or the potential intransigence of any of the armed organized factions now active, including armed Islamists, also may create new challenges. The United States... have expressed concern about ... Islamist groups in Libya and are expected to seek to maintain counterterrorism cooperation with the post-Qadhafi government."[117] Paradoxically—at least for the uninitiated—the only way to maintain close counterterrorism support in Libya will be to support and interface with moderate Islamist groups. If the United States is seen as opposing Islam's new role in Libya's public sphere, it will facilitate the loss of U.S. prestige.

▶ **Don't forget about the "losers."** At the same time the Libyan authorities and outside players lend support to the embattled center, they must repair the rift with those who stayed on the losing side during the uprisings: namely, the Warfallah of Bani Walid, the

Qadhadhfa and Megarha of Sirte, and the Fezzan, all of whom have poor relations with the new government. In their own ways, these groups are advocating federalism or further devolution of power to the local level. Although such devolution has its risks and must be practiced sparingly, the losers must be treated graciously, especially if the NTC wishes to enlist them against the militias. The argument that devolution is impossible because these local leaders are former Qadhafi loyalists does not hold water and shows how poorly understood are the tribal and regional dynamics in the Libyan periphery. After all, failure to devolve power caused the ejection of NTC forces from Bani Walid in mid-January, as discussed earlier.

▶ **Create capacity-building partnerships with motivated locals.** To date, the NTC has practiced insufficient devolution. Had the NTC reached out to incorporate the "losers" with patronage networks, money, jobs, and devolution to elected local government, it could have prevented confrontations between the periphery and the center. Although it is essential that Western governments deal only with the

central authorities on national issues, American NGOs, USAID, and other capacity-building agencies can help at the local level through job creation and development. Moreover, this would likely help to decrease tension between the periphery and the center. Currently, international NGOs avoid places like Sebha and Kufra, citing the security situation. To bring these areas into Tripoli's orbit, the central authorities and their American interlocutors should establish dense linkages with international organizations and their know-how in order to create capacity-building partnerships between them and motivated locals.[118] This means the models of post-conflict nation-building, reconstruction, and stabilization can all be applied suitably to Libya. Otherwise, the militias will fill the vacuum created by the lack of institutions, expanding their functions to offer the social welfare and bureaucracy that the central authorities and international community are not providing. This phenomenon has been seen in Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, and other areas where deficient state institutions have left Islamists and militias as the only actors with the networks needed to provide services and jobs.

7 | Conclusion: Toward a New Paradigm

LACKING CIVIL SOCIETY institutions and local governance, Libya is not prepared for the shocks that the periphery can deliver to the center. Forty-two years of Qadhafi's rule have deprived the country of any mediating institutions. Yet, contrary to what one might expect, politics on a national level is already functioning, and the NTC has proved its staying power despite its underdeveloped governing capacity. What the center needs are connections to the local level and the robust institutions capable of forging them.

Put simply, both the Libyans and outside actors should embrace a paradigm shift and recognize that connecting the periphery to the center has become the top priority. And it will require patronage, institutionalization, job programs, vocational training, propaganda, and shrewd politics. The situation in Libya is not another iteration of the "stabilization" or "nation-building" models that have been practiced to various effect in other postconflict situations over the past decade. In Libya, outside actors are still respected, and the country's small population and vast resources change the calculus regarding what sorts of engagement can be contemplated.

Because the periphery already conquered the center during the revolution, the new paradigm must acknowledge that the periphery is where the majority of power will lie in the short term. Attempting to reverse this reality prematurely will backfire. Instead, the NTC must focus on institutionalizing existing local organizations and factions using the carrots of patronage and the sticks of propaganda. The international community, particularly the United States, can help the NTC in this process by offering capacity-building programs and a range of technocratic and political assistance, with the aim of creating jobs, establishing a new army, and giving militiamen who do not wish to join the armed forces an opportunity to pursue vocational training either abroad or in Libya. Indeed, the NTC must convince the most productive and positive elements of the periphery to participate in the bottom-up process of building a new nation. At

the same time, the interim authorities have a golden opportunity over the next few months to weaken the most disruptive militia elements before they become irrevocably rooted in Libyan society and seize power through elections. If the NTC puts off co-opting the militias, it may find itself the marginalized party in a political process it no longer controls. This would be unfortunate for ordinary Libyans seeking economic development and freedom. It would also fundamentally jeopardize Western interests in Libya.

A stable Libya is critical to Western security. Libya is important to the United States and other Western countries for five primary reasons: its oil industry, counterterrorism posture, geostrategic location, status as a precedent in the Arab Spring, and role as a paradigm for international cooperation in postconflict areas. Regarding the first issue, the NTC cannot achieve the level of security necessary to return to prerevolutionary oil production rates without demobilizing the militias, let alone attract the foreign investment needed to transform Libya from the world's twelfth-largest exporter of crude oil, as it was before the uprisings, to one of the top seven, as it was in the 1970s.[119] In 2010, production capacity was 1.8 million barrels per day,[120] while in the 1970s it was over 3 million. Libya still has the largest reserves in Africa.

At the end of 2011, NTC oil minister Nouri Berrouin stated that production had reached 1 million barrels per day, yet measured exports were only 0.7 million. A number of factors probably contributed to this difference:

- use of crude for domestic refining;
- diversion of crude to fill storage and pipelines that were depleted during the revolution;
- overestimation of some flows.

If Libya establishes an excellent security climate that allows for adequate investment, daily production of 2.3 million barrels per day could be attainable within three years. But if a bad security climate prevails due

to the periphery's dominance over the center, production could remain at its current low level in three years' time, since the further investment needed to improve production will be impossible.[121] In short, the West has a huge economic stake in the outcome in Libya.

Regarding counterterrorism: Libya would pose a greater proliferation risk than other Arab Spring countries—with the possible exception of Yemen—if it became a failed state. The likelihood of a dysfunctional Libya becoming a safe haven for al-Qaeda or Salafi jihadists is quite small. That said, Qadhafi created dense linkages with the Tuareg tribes of Mali and Niger, and many of these tribes have become increasingly connected to arms smuggling by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The ramifications of this are already being felt—with Tripoli weak and unable to control the borders, arms smugglers have trafficked MANPADS from Libya to destinations as far as Cote d'Ivoire. In addition, the vast flow of Libyan heavy weapons into Mali has sparked a northern Tuareg uprising against the government of Amadou Toumani Touré in Bamako. Recent reports indicate that the Malian rebels are veterans of Qadhafi's armed forces and that they are led by a Libyan commander.[122] Although Touré has claimed that his opponents are linked with AQIM, most evidence suggests that they are not. Nonetheless, these current events illustrate how interconnected the Saharan region is. If Libya were to become a failed state, it would rapidly destabilize all regional states by largely strengthening peripheral movements against incumbent governments. [123]

Moreover, if moderate Islamist elements are not incorporated into the government, and if the periphery remains distrustful of and disconnected from central authorities, then Libya's widespread support for peaceful Islamism and its gratitude toward the West for toppling Qadhafi could soon turn into sympathy for anti-Western jihadism.

Libya's geostrategic importance cannot be overemphasized: it represents a highly effective platform from which to project power into Egypt, the Mediterranean, and beyond. Thus, denying a hostile power—whether the Soviet Union or Qadhafi—the opportunity to destabilize surrounding countries from Libyan

territory has been a consistent and appropriate thread in U.S. policy since the end of World War II.[124] Presidents Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush all grasped Libya's importance. So too has President Barack Obama—at the key moment, he wisely chose to lead the NATO intervention "from behind." Similarly, the current effort to help Libya build its national institutions must also be supported from behind—but this time behind the Libyans rather than behind other foreign actors.

The scope of the change under way in Libya is the grandest undertaken in any of the Arab Spring countries. Lacking a national army, trade unions, civil organizations, and other key institutions, the country must be built from scratch. Formulas for successful international support of local initiatives derived in Libya will affect engagement in neighboring Egypt and other countries, such as Syria, that may soon be struggling to rebuild.

The Middle East has long been a "penetrated system,"[125] with Arabs blaming outside powers for meddling in their internal politics and economies to benefit interests antithetical to the region's inhabitants. By contrast, the NATO-led intervention in Libya is the greatest example seen in decades of outside powers helping an indigenous Arab liberation movement. One must not forget that the intervention occurred only because it was requested by the Arab League and later endorsed by the UN. Going forward, it could establish a new precedent for outside actors supporting genuine social forces within the Arab world. It could rewire Washington's previous dependence on dictators to protect U.S. interests. Most crucially, it could augur a new trend whereby American interests can be secured by supporting popular forces inside the Arab world.

In short, to back off at this stage would be to learn the wrong lessons from history, especially the history of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan. The key period to study is not the post-2001 intervention against the Taliban and subsequent imposition of nation-building efforts, but rather the 1979–1988 campaign to help the mujahedin fight the Soviets. Once the Soviet menace was ejected, the United States foolishly (and tragically) ended its engagement in Afghanistan. Victorious

militias were left to fight over the spoils of governance until the country descended into warlordism, paving the way for a fundamentalist, despotic, and terrorist-friendly Islamist movement to take center stage and unite the country.[126]

That tale is the most pertinent to present-day Libya: in both cases, U.S.-supported fighters initially held America in high esteem but had no experience in forming a government or staffing technocratic ministries once they prevailed on the battlefield. And again in both cases, leaving the different factions to fight it out among themselves represents abandonment of U.S. allies and responsibilities. The fact that Afghanistan and Libya share a pattern of peripheral dominance over the center only underscores the importance of doing what is necessary to avoid repeating that particular history.

Notes

1. The eight-month revolution is best understood as waves of separate yet loosely connected antiregime uprisings, and it is therefore described as such throughout much of this paper.

2. Prior to a more comprehensive release of assets in December, the NTC had access to less than $1 billion of unfrozen funds through the Libya Contact Group's Temporary Financing Mechanism (see the "Executive Summary to Date" on the TFM website, http://tfmlibya.org/en/financial-reports/5-executive-summary-to-date.html). On December 17, the UN lifted its sanctions on Libya's Central Bank (Patrick Worship, "UN Sanctions Lifted on Libya's Central Bank," Reuters, December 16, 2011). This triggered the U.S. Treasury Department to issue General License 11, which unblocked most Libyan assets (except for Libyan Investment Authority funds believed to be under the control of certain members of the Qadhafi family or the former regime; the text of the Treasury order is available at http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/libya2_gl11.pdf). The European Union quickly followed the U.S. lead and unfroze assets on December 21 (see http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/127073.pdf).

3. Email conversation with George Joffé, January 27, 2012.

4. This view is favored by Noman Benotman, a cofounder of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group and now a strategic analyst at the Quilliam Foundation specializing in countering jihadist movements.

5. For insights into the NTC's standing in Libya as of early 2012, see Christopher Stephen, "The Lesson of Bani Walid," *Foreign Policy*, January 28, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/01/27/the_lesson_of_bani_walid?page=0,0.

6. Previously, the Syria-based al-Rai satellite network broadcast statements by Qadhafi after Libya's state-owned channels ceased transmission, but the network has been shut down as of December 13, 2011. Its owner has pledged to give future media support to Qadhafi's daughter Aisha. See Albert Aji, "Anti-American Syria-Based TV Channel Closes," Associated Press, December 13, 2011, http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9RJMM5G2.htm.

7. Liam Stack, "Pro-Government Libyan Militia Routed from a Qaddafi Bastion," *New York Times*, January 24, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/25/world/africa/pro-government-libyan-militia-routed-from-qaddafi-bastion.html?_r=2&emc=eta1.

8. See the timeline of Libyan history on the NTC website, http://ntclibya.com/InnerPage.aspx?SSID=22&ParentID=20&LangID=1.

9. For an overview of the NTC's original members, see Barak Barfi, "Who Are the Libyan Rebels?" *New Republic*, April 30, 2011.

10. "Libya Opposition Launches Council," Aljazeera, February 27, 2011, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/02/2011227175955221853.html.

11. See Barak Barfi, "Transitional National What? Libyans Still Don't Know Who Their New Leaders Are," *New Republic*, September 1, 2011. See also David Gritten, "Key Figures in Libya's Rebel Council," BBC, August 25, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12698562.

12. Email exchange with Brian McQuinn in Misratah, November 31, 2011. Zintani militias faced similar pressures and evolved in the same way as their Misratan counterparts.

13. Ellen Knockmeyer, "Libya's Sexual Revolution," *Foreign Policy*, October 26, 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/26/libya_sexual_revolution.

14. *Holding Libya Together: Security Challenges after Qadhafi* (International Crisis Group, December 14, 2011), p. 7, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/115-holding-libya-together-security-challenges-after-qadhafi.aspx. Information also based on the authors' email conversations with the report's author Peter Cole, December 30, 2011.

15. Phone interview with Lisa Anderson November 2011; see also David Kirkpatrick and Kareem Fahim, "Former Rebels' Rivalries Hold Up Governing in Libya," *New York Times*, September 2, 2011.

16. Angelo del Boca, trans. Antony Shugaar, *Mohamed Fekini and the Fight to Free Libya* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

17. Anna Baldinetti, *The Origins of the Libyan Nation: Colonial Legacy, Exile and the Emergence of a New Nation-State* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

18. Both this cyclical pattern and the role of nonurban groups in catalyzing it are remarkably similar to that detailed in the typology of Islamic history put forth by Ibn Khaldun in his fourteenth-century *Prolegomena*. Fascinatingly, Libya appears to be the modern Arab state to which Ibn Khaldun's theories remain most relevant.

19. Jean Gottmann, ed., *Center and Periphery: Spatial Variation in Politics* (London: Sage, 1980).

20. For a thorough treatment of this idea, see Dirk Vandewalle, *Libya since Independence: Oil and State-Building* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998); Dirk Vandewalle, *A History of Modern Libya* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya* (Princeton University Press, 1986).

21. This assertion is based on the authors' extensive observations in post-Qadhafi Libya.

22. Abdul Hakim Belhaj, "The Revolution Belongs to All Libyans, Secular or Not," *Guardian*, September 27, 2011.

23. Ruth Sherlock, "Leading Libyan Islamist Met Free Syrian Army Opposition Group," *Telegraph*, November 27, 2011, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8919057/Leading-Libyan-Islamist-met-Free-Syrian-Army-opposition-group.html.

24. Author conversation with Fawzi Bu Katif, February 21, 2012.

25. According to author conversations with Noman Benotman in London and Cyrenaican militia leaders in Benghazi.

26. Francois Murphy, "Muslim Brotherhood Goes Public with Libya Summit," Reuters, November 17, 2011. For more information in Arabic, see "Interview with the Muslim Brotherhood's General Official Mr. Bashir al-Kabti," *Libya al-Yom*, December 12, 2011.

27. Khadija Ali, "Muslim Brotherhood to Contest Libyan Elections as Independent Party," *Tripoli Post*, December 24, 2011.

28. Michel Cousins, "Political Parties Mushroom in Libya," *Arab News*, November 17, 2011.

29. According to author conversations in Tripoli with Salafist and Brotherhood leaders.

30. Kim Gamel, "Islamic Hard-Liners Attack Rival Shrines in Libya," Associated Press, October 13, 2011.

31. *Holding Libya Together: Security Challenges after Qadhafi* (International Crisis Group, December 14, 2011), http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/115-holding-libya-together-security-challenges-after-qadhafi.aspx.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. Rania al-Gamal, "Qadhafi Family Demands Body," Reuters, October 21, 2011, http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/21/us-libya-idUSTRE79F1FK20111021.

35. Clifford Krauss, "Libyan Leader Seeks to Unite Factions with Cabinet," *New York Times*, November 22, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/23/world/africa/libyas-interim-premier-appoints-militia-leader-to-cabinet.html?_r=1.

36. Liam Stack, "Libyan Army Clashes with Militia in Tripoli," *New York Times*, December 12, 2011.

37. *Holding Libya Together: Security Challenges after Qadhafi* (International Crisis Group, December 14, 2011), http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/115-holding-libya-together-security-challenges-after-qadhafi.aspx.

38. See Christopher Stephen, "The Lesson of Bani Walid," *Foreign Policy*, January 28, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/01/27/the_lesson_of_bani_walid?page=0,0.

39. Although the majority of militias are regional and not ideological or Islamist in nature, bringing the few LIFG-trained fringe Islamists into the nascent security services would pose different problems than the integration of other regional militias, echoing Pakistan's situation. For the most part, members of regional militias were not involved in any resistance activities prior to the uprising and are more likely to abandon their current networks, since their *asabiyya* is more volatile and supposedly less permanent.

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41. "Libya's Government Allocating $8 Billion to Reintegrate Fighters into Civil Life," *Washington Post,* January 9, 2012, http://www.shabablibya.org/news/libyas-government-allocating-8-billion-to-reintegrate-fighters-into-civil-life.

42. Ibid.

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51. Ibid.

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99.   Author conversation with confidential source.

100.   See Andrew J. Shapiro "Addressing the Challenge of MANPADS Proliferation" a speech at the Stimson Center in Washington, DC on February 2, 2012 http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/rm/183097.htm

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105.   See USAID's webpage describing the initiative at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/transition_initiatives/country/libya/index.html.

106.   To read the relevant appropriations document, go to http://rules.house.gov/Media/file/PDF_112_1/legislativetext/HR2055crSOM/psConference%20Div%20I%20-%20SOM%20OCR.pdf.

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109.   Of course, the lengthy and annoying U.S. visa clearance procedures will be a fact of life for many years to come. Rather than reciprocity, then, U.S. diplomats should aim for an understanding that they will work toward treating Libyan applicants as they do applicants from Arab countries that have already established strong controls over their passport issuance process and a track record of close cooperation with U.S. officials on name checks.

110.   Author phone interview, January 24, 2012.

111.   Taylor is the ideal candidate to oversee such a role, having served in Baghdad as director of the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office in 2004–2005, and in Kabul as coordinator of international and U.S. assistance in 2002–2003. He also helped coordinate U.S. assistance to the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. See "Atlantic Council Hosts Ambassador William B. Taylor in New Role as Special Coordinator for Middle East Transitions," press release, November 4, 2011, http://www.acus.org/press/atlantic-council-hosts-ambassador-william-b-taylor-new-role-special-coordinator-middle-east.

112.   Christopher M. Blanchard, *Libya: Transition and U.S. Policy* (Congressional Research Service, December 8, 2011), fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/179576.pdf.

113.   Nathan Hodge, *Armed Humanitarians*: *The Rise of the Nation Builders* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011).

114.   Jason Pack and Sami Zaptia, "Libya Needs a Truth and Reconciliation Commission," *Guardian,* October 13, 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/oct/13/libya-truth-and-reconciliation-commission. In the Libyan context, "truth and reconciliation" refers not only to punishing former Qadhafi officials who are guilty of gross corruption and individuals who perpetrated attacks on civilians during the revolution, but also to incorporating former regime bureaucrats into the new Libya. South Africa is frequently mentioned as a positive model to follow, while the de-Baathification process in Iraq is cited as one to avoid.

115.   As envisioned by the NGO Transparency Libya and conveyed during an author conversation with Reem Maziq, January 5, 2011.

116.   As discussed during a joint London conference held by members of the Bingham Center for International Law and the Libyan Progress Initiative, December 1, 2011, http://www.libyanprogress.org/articles/constitutional-options-libya.

117.   Christopher M. Blanchard, *Libya: Transition and U.S. Policy* (Congressional Research Service, December 8, 2011), p. 8, fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/179576.pdf.

118.   As suggested by Noman Benotman of the Quilliam Foundation.

119.   Luis de Sousa, "Libya and World Oil Exports," TheOilDrum.com, February 21, 2011, http://www.theoildrum.com/node/7528.

120.   Due to OPEC mandates, Libya's actual production in 2010 was less than its capacity. Nevertheless, production capacity is the most relevant figure when analyzing the state of Libya's oil industry.

121.   Author interviews with John Hamilton in London and Tripoli prior to the publication of his report *Libya's Energy Future 2012* (London: CBI, forthcoming March 2012). Shukri Ghanem, then head of Libya's National Oil Corporation, adopted the 2.3 million figure as the industry's long-term target in 2009.

122.   Scott Stewart, "Mali Besieged by Fighters Fleeing Libya," STRAFOR, February 2, 2012. http://app.en25.com/e/es.aspx?s=1483&e=425616&elq=f9b9ce9bea484a2aac9b49bb23f073ce

123.   This paragraph is based on author conversations with experts on AQIM, Mali, and the Tuareg.

124.   Jason Pack, "Libya Is Too Big to Fail," *Foreign Policy*, March 18, 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/03/18/libya_is_too_big_to_fail.

125.   The implications of L. Carl Brown's notion of the Middle East as a penetrated system are further explored in, see Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, eds., *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002).

126.   See John Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (New York: Pluto Press, 2002). See also David B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

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