

RELEASE IN PART
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From: Sidney Blumenthal <sbwhoep[redacted]>
Sent: Thursday, October 25, 2012 9:57 AM
To: H
Subject: H: Latest intel: Libyan leadership private discussions. Sid
Attachments: hrc memo Libyan Leadership Private Discussions 102512.docx

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CONFIDENTIAL

October 25, 2012

For: Hillary
From: Sid
Re: Latest Libyan Leadership Private Discussions & Plans

SOURCE: Sources with direct access to the Libyan National Transitional Council, as well as the highest levels of European Governments, and Western Intelligence and security services.

1. During mid-October 2012 Libyan President Yusef el Magariaf stated in private that he and Prime Minister Ali Zidan have ordered National Libyan Army (NLA) Chief of Staff General Youssef al Mangoush to establish a more coordinated operational relationship with Misrata and Zintan militias in order to support expanded army operations throughout the country. According to a sensitive source, prior to the death of the United States Ambassador on September 11, 2012 Mangoush resisted greater reliance on these specific large militias, believing that such a move undercuts the government's efforts to disarm and demobilize all of the militias left over from the 2011 civil war. At this point, however, Mangoush agreed with Magariaf that the situation in the country is becoming increasingly dangerous and unmanageable. Accordingly, the Chief of Staff stated that he will work with Ousama al Jouwali, the leader of the Zintan forces to step up operations against the other militias, (supported by the Misrata troops), that also come from the mountainous region of Western Libya. At the same time he will instruct NLA troops under ground force commander General Khalifa Belqasim Haftar to pursue operations against tribal forces fighting on behalf of the Qaddafi family in Southern and Southeastern Libya.

2. (Source Comment: In the opinion of this individual, Magariaf and Zidan agree that Libya's future depends on the success of their efforts in this militia demobilization operation over the next six months. While they believe that the involvement of Ansar al Sharia forces, with the assistance of al Qai'da in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM), in the assassination of the U.S. Ambassador has focused the world business and diplomatic community on the reality of the security issues surrounding the militias, the President and Prime Minister also fear that the situation is far worse than Western

sources realize. Mangoush informs them that AQIM and radical Salafist groups are increasing their efforts to take advantage of the frustrations of the various militias with the government, using the attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi as an inspiration for their activities. Just as Ansar al Sharia began as a militia supporting the federalist claims of Eastern tribal leaders, and was then infiltrated by AQIM radicals, Mangoush believes many of the other regional and ethnic militias around the country could follow the same path, if his troops do not succeed in the disarmament program. He also agrees with Zidan that they must move quickly since Libya's tradition of avoiding the Sunni-Shia conflict that dominates most of Middle East is beginning to erode during this period of chaos.)

3. A particularly sensitive source noted that NLA operations have already begun against Ansar al Sharia forces south of Benghazi, after members of that militia/terrorist group killed four national policemen during a grenade attack at a roadblock in the Sousa Mountains. Under orders from Haftar Libyan troops surrounded more than 100 Ansar al Sharia fighters in the region of the town of Sousa. According to this sensitive source, the NLA suffered relatively heavy casualties in the fighting, but believe they captured a number of AQIM operatives and one of Ansar al Sharia's senior commanders, Sufian bin Qamu, who they believe ordered the attack on the police. Mangoush also reported to Zidan that Qamu had been previously captured by United States forces and imprisoned at the Guantanamo Bay facility.

4. At the same time the Libyan army and forces from the Misrata militia entered the town of Bani Walid approximately 100 miles south of Tripoli, in an area still loyal to the Qaddafi family, engaging in close fighting with pro-Qaddafi forces. During the fighting Haftar dispatched troops with heavier arms to support the Misrata forces. According to this source, the NLA downplayed the level of the fighting, in an effort to reassure the supporters of the Government. That said the NLA/Misrata force had captured the city center and the airport after suffering significant casualties. The Government forces entered the city after shelling opposition positions around the city hospital, using heavy mortars and motorized guns.

5. (Source Comment: In the opinion of this knowledgeable individual, while Magariaf and Zidan remain optimistic about the future of Libya, they believe that the security situation will remain tenuous throughout 2013. Magariaf also sees the national election scheduled for mid-2013 as a potentially complicating factor. According to this source, Mangoush and Haftar focused on Bani Walid under pressure from the Misrata commanders. These militia leaders were, according to a knowledgeable source, angered over the death of one of their senior officials, Omran Shaban, at the hands of pro-Qaddafi forces in Bani Walid. The Misrata commanders report that Shaban was one of the organizers of the Misrata militia unit that captured and executed Qaddafi in 2011 outside of the town of Sirte. The Misrata leaders, supported by the General National Council (GNC), demanded the surrender of the men who arrested and killed Shaban. As the fighting expanded through late September and early October, Magariaf and his advisors came to see Bani Walid as an important symbol of their commitment to disarm the militias and anti-government groups, and increased their involvement accordingly.)