

RELEASE IN FULL

CONFIDENTIAL

April 5, 2011

For: Hillary
From: Sid
Re: Backstory to Younus/Haftar conflict; Saif's play for power

Later report:

During the evening of April 4, 2011, sources with access to the Military Committee of the National Libyan Council (NLC) stated in confidence that rebel military officers continue to divide into factions aligned with various senior military officers and leaders in the NLC. There is also a degree of mistrust between the civilians, who have borne the majority of the fighting and regular army units that have turned against Muammar Qaddafi. Two officers in particular are vying for command of the rebel forces.

Former Minister of the Interior and long-time Qaddafi loyalist, General Abdel-Fattah Younus, joined the rebels early in the struggle, and after a tense vetting process was accepted by the NLC leadership group. Younus considers himself the commander of the rebel forces; however, his position has been challenged by the arrival from the United States of Colonel Khalifa Belgesia Haftar, who commanded the Anti-Qaddafi force known as the Libyan National Army (LNA) until he was driven from N'djamena, Chad in 1990. He took refuge in the United States, where he has lived for over twenty years.

Haftar and Younus were colleagues in the Qaddafi's military forces until Haftar was captured by the Chadian Army during the Libyan invasion of Chad in 1986-87. While in custody Haftar agreed to form the anti-Qaddafi force known as the LNA, which became a particular irritant for Qaddafi. For his part, Younus worked with dissident Chadian general (and current President) Idriss Debi to overthrow Haftar's patron in N'djamena, Hussein Habre. France played an important part in the struggle for Chad, and Younus played a valuable role in organizing French Military and Intelligence support for Debi. During this period Younus established a close relationship with officers of the French external intelligence service, the Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure (DGSE); a relationship that continues to this day. Younus and Debi believe that Haftar is associated with the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

The resulting personal conflict between Haftar and Younus continues today, as does, in the opinion of knowledgeable sources, Younus' relationship with the DGSE. According to one source, Haftar continues to point out to the NLC that a number of the mercenaries fighting for Qaddafi are from the Chadian Gorang tribe, who, in 1989, Younus helped persuade to support Debi, then an ally of the Libyan leader. These tribal forces have continued to work for Qaddafi over the years. Younus, in turn, points out that Haftar has been living in the suburbs of Washington DC, while others struggled against Qaddafi. According to one source, the younger rebels find these arguments confusing and frustrating.

(Source Comment : A knowledgeable source adds that Younus and Haftar agree on the fact that NATO forces will not have the same effect on the battlefield as the United States aircraft which launched the initial attacks against Qaddafi's forces on March 19 and 20. In particular, they are concerned that only the American A-10 « warthog » ground support aircraft are suited to deal with the remaining elements of Qaddafi's army. These officers believe that the Tornados and other sophisticated NATO aircraft are simply too fast to deal with the Libyan Army on the ground, now that much of their heavy equipment has been destroyed. One sources noted that NATO is equipped to fight the Russians, not the Libyans. The NLC plans to press United States officials for further commitment of these specialized resources.)

At the same time, rumors are circulating that Saif al-Islam, with the acceptance of his father, has forwarded a proposal to assume the reigns of power. Saif's plan suggests governing Libya under a constitutional democracy, in which he would serve as a transitional leader until formal elections could be held.

This proposal is not new. Saif first launched his ideas for reform in 2004, when he enlisted the help of outside consultants to develop a plan for Libyan economic prosperity. Entitled "LibyaTomorrow" this plan soon developed from an economic and social agenda into a political plan. Several times between 2004 - 2010, Saif was asked to leave the country by his father because he proposed reform measures that were not acceptable to most of the "old guard."

In his role as the President of the Qaddafi Development Foundation, Saif raised the idea of a constitutional democracy, while working to develop a constitution for Libya. Shortly before violence broke out in Libya, Saif, his colleagues, and consultants completed the final version of a proposed constitution. It never gained widespread support due to strong resistance from the "old guard."

Now that one of the major figures in the "old guard movement", Musa Kusa, has defected, Saif may feel empowered to put forth this document. Another reform initiative by Saif was the development of a free press. Saif was involved in launching the first Libyan media empire, Al-Ghad, which was not technically controlled by his father. This media empire, which included print, radio and television, was run by a youthful group of Libyans who were very tech and media savvy. Al-Ghad was shut down in 2010 during a very high profile disagreement between Saif and his father over its open criticism of Libyan issues. Muammar Qaddafi threw many of these young employees in jail while advising his son to leave the country for a "cooling off" period.

It is also likely that Saif's most recent plan for a constitutional democracy includes an element of freedom of the press as well as freedom of internet access. Saif and his brother Mohammed were in a very difficult battle with their younger brother, Mutassim, over the shutting down of You Tube – due to some videos of Mutassim celebrating on New Year's Eve and his father violently quashing rebellions in the West. Saif insisted on allowing You Tube to continue – but Mutassim wanted to block its access. Saif also proposed holding elections for a Libyan People's Congress.

Saif's proposal almost certainly contains his ideas regarding a strong role for Libyan NGOs. Saif helped arrange for the first trip by Amnesty International to Libya to visit the prisons, and then later followed up by announcing the release of several hundred prisoners. It is likely that Saif's vision for a constitutional democracy includes an active role for non-governmental organizations.

(Source Comment: According to knowledgeable individuals, the NLC is not prepared to accept a transitional government in which a member of the Qaddafi family plays a lead role. Too much blood or too little blood has been spilled for such a compromise at this time. The NLC is incapable of consolidating military gains and is on the verge of returning to the strategic military position it had before NATO forces intervened to stop Qaddafi's siege of Benghazi. In short, their negotiating position is weak. Moreover, the NLC has few leaders of sufficient stature to head a transition government that represents a workable compromise between pro and anti Qaddafi forces. On the other hand, and in spite of the military assistance and air coverage being provided by NATO to the rebel forces, Qaddafi remains in control of his destiny. He is negotiating from a relative position of strength and the Saif proposal reflects that.)