

RELEASE IN PART B6

**From:** Sidney Blumenthal <[redacted]>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 27, 2012 6:36 PM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** H: Intel, Libyan President. Sid  
**Attachments:** hrc memo Libya President 082712.docx

B6

CONFIDENTIAL

August 27, 2012

For: Hillary  
From: Sid  
Re: New President of Libya

**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. (Source Comment: As the new interim President of Libya Mohammed Yussef el Magariaf is determined to establish a democratic state based on Islamic principles. In the opinion of an extremely sensitive source, Magariaf sees this moment as the climax his entire life's work. Having first served deposed dictator Muammar al Qaddafi as a policy advisor and diplomat, in 1979 Magariaf became disenchanted with what he saw as the cult of personality that Qaddafi was building for himself while turning against the basic beliefs of the Islamist movement. Magariaf was member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in his student days and remains a devout Islamist intellectual, albeit one who believes that Islam can coexist and even work with the non-Muslim world, particularly the United States and Western Europe. This source also believes that Magariaf is convinced that Libya, with its great natural wealth, can become a leading player in North Africa, as well as the rest of the Islamic world. Magariaf is particularly well disposed toward the governments of the United States and France, based on past experiences with each during his struggle with Qaddafi. This source also believes that he remains hostile to the government of Omar al Bashir in Sudan. In 1989 Bashir overthrew Magariaf's ally, then Sudanese Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi and expelled Magariaf and his followers from Khartoum.)

2. According to the same sensitive source, Magariaf will also seek a discreet relationship with Israel. Political realities in Libya at present will dictate that this relationship be handled in a low key manner, but the new President of Libya shares many common friends and associates with the leaders of Israel and intends to take advantage of this situation to improve the lot of the Libyan people. Magariaf may, at times, be forced to make statements critical of Israel for his own political purposes, but believes he and his associates have the experience and sophistication to manage this issue. At the

same time Magariaf intends to pursue aggressively the regional political initiatives begun by National Transitional Council (NTC) President Mustafa Abdel Jalil. Magariaf will pursue the economic and security cooperation set out in the Cairo Declaration of July 29, 2012 establishing a regional bond between the new revolutionary governments of Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. This same individual notes that Magariaf is aware of the fact that Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi sees Libya as a key factor in Egypt's economic development; and the Libyan leader believes he can manipulate this situation to the advantage of the Libyan people.

3. A separate sensitive source stated on condition of strict secrecy that Magariaf intends to work with his security advisors to develop a plan for disarming the Islamist militias who fought against Qaddafi, without arousing their suspicion. He believes that the most important step in this matter will be providing the medical and economic services demanded by these militias in return for disarming. Magariaf also believes that he can manage the political ambitions of Islamist leaders like General Abdelhakim Belhaj, while preventing the growth of radical groups who might see Libya as a base of operations and support. Magariaf and his supporters believe that his Islamist/anti-Qaddafi credentials will allow him to manage these challenges, and if he can do so he will be able to win the presidency outright in the first full scale national presidential election in the spring of 2013.

4. This source adds that, while avoiding direct involvement in the Syrian crisis, the Magariaf government will support Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the rest of the nations calling for the end of the regime of Basher al Assad. Magariaf harbors a particular sense of hostility toward Assad, who was a longtime ally of Qaddafi, supporting him with equipment, intelligence, and advisors throughout the revolution of 2011. Magariaf realizes that this stance will also bring him into conflict with Syria's ally Iran, but does not believe Iran has a role to play in Libya, or the rest of North Africa.

5. According to an extremely sensitive source, in 1979 Magariaf, having become increasingly disenchanted with Qaddafi, fled Libya for Khartoum in Sudan, where in 1981, with the help of the government of Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi, Chadian leader Hissene Habre, Iraqi President Sadaam Hussein, and several Western states, he established The National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL), dedicated to overthrowing Qaddafi and establishing an Islamic democracy in Libya. Under the auspices of the NFSL, Magariaf also organized the Libyan National Army (LNA), based in Ndjamena, Chad. The LNA was commanded by the Colonel Khalifa Belqasim Haftar, who is now one of the commanding generals of the new Libyan Army. Under Magariaf's authority the Haftar force, which numbered between 2,500 and 3,000 troops, fought several battles with Qaddafi's troops, with mixed results. These attacks included a raid on Qaddafi's compound at Bab al-Aziza in 1986. The LNA also maintained a 50,000 watt radio station in Ndjamena, broadcasting anti-Qaddafi material into Libya. This radio station was supported by Western governments and Iraqi Military Intelligence.

6. The LNA's greatest success came in support of the Chadian Army under General Idriss Deby, in their overwhelming victory over Libyan troops at the battle Ouadi Doum in 1987. This victory forced the Libyan Army and Air Force out of Chad, and was supported by the French Air Force and other Western personnel. Following the battle Deby became a national hero in Chad. In 1990, with the support of Libyan intelligence officers, Deby, who had undergone military training in Libya and France, rebelled against and overthrew the Habre Government. At that time Deby, under Qaddafi's influence, forced the LNA to abandon Chad for Zaire, and eventually the United States. Magariaf and Haftar both settled in the United States, and while the LNA no longer existed as an effective force, Magariaf continued to maintain the NFSL as a political organization. In 2004 Magariaf and the NFSL joined the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition (NCLO), eventually returning to support the 2011 revolution.

7. (Source Comment: In the opinion of an extremely sensitive source speaking on condition of strict secrecy, Magariaf views himself as an Islamist politician who can work with both Islamic and

non-Islamic states, including Israel, if the relationships are properly managed. The Libyan President also sees the current situation as vindication for all of the problematic experiences he encountered in his long struggle against the Qaddafi regime. This individual believes that Magariaf intends to use his reputation for integrity, commitment to Islam, and his ability to work with divergent groups to establish himself as an effective interim President, and eventually the first elected Libyan Head of State in mid-2013. Magariaf plans to draw on all political, religious, and ethnic groups to form his cabinet, using his stature to form a representative government under the General National Council.)

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