

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, September 27, 2011 3:29 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: Update on Islamist threat to TNC

Worth a read.

From: Miller, Andrew P
Sent: Tuesday, September 27, 2011 1:58 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Cc: Shapiro, Jeremy
Subject: Update on Islamist threat to TNC

Jake,

Jeremy said you took note of the Islamist protests and asked for an assessment. Here's my quick take.-Andrew

Islamist forces do not command nation-wide support and probably do not represent a direct political threat to the TNC, but their advanced battlefield experience and access to weaponry could pose a significant military challenge.

- The Islamists are not particularly popular outside of certain areas of eastern Libya. Sallabi and his followers are as vilified as Jibril in much of the country. Indeed, many of the political groups that oppose Jibril, such as those centered in Misrata, view the Islamists with equal, if not, more hostility.
- Both Islamist and secular militias have operated with relative restraint so far. With Sirte and Bani Walid still in regime hands and Qadhafi on the loose, there is enough of a rationale to support continued cooperation.
- However, once operations against Qadhafi and the regime are wrapped up, this force for unity is likely to dissipate. It is at this point that militias, including the Islamists, will probably abandon caution and pursue a more aggressive campaign for power, perhaps including violence.

Even though the Islamists may not be able to displace the TNC, Jibril and his allies suffer from a serious credibility problem. If the TNC fails to make strides in giving other political movements (in Tripoli, Misrata, Zintan, and elsewhere) a real role in governance, it may find itself without a viable national political base.

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