

“Our Man in Tripoli”: US-NATO Sponsored Islamic Terrorists Integrate Libya’s Pro-Democracy Opposition

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)
Global Research, April 03, 2011
1 April 2011

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)
Theme: [Intelligence](#)
In-depth Report: [NATO'S WAR ON LIBYA](#)

Concepts are Turned Upside Down: The US-NATO military alliance is supporting a rebellion integrated by Islamic terrorists, in the name of the “War on Terrorism”...

There are various factions within the Libyan opposition: Royalists, defectors from the Qadhafi regime including the Minister of Justice and more recently the Foreign Minister, Moussa Koussa, members of the Libyan Armed Forces, the National Front for the Salvation of Libya (NFSL) and the National Conference for the Libyan Opposition (NCLO) which acts as an umbrella organization.

Rarely acknowledged by the Western media, Al-Jamaa al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah bi Libya, the Libya Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), is an integral part of the Libyan Opposition.

The Libyan Interim Council does not constitute a clearly defined entity. It is based on the representation from newly created local councils established to “manage daily life in the liberated cities and villages”. ([The Libyan Interim National Council » The Council's statement](#))

Opposition forces are in large part made up of an untrained civilian militia, former members of the Libyan armed forces, together with the trained paramilitary Libya Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG).

The Libya Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), which is aligned with Al Qaeda, is in the frontline of the armed insurrection.

The Al Qaeda Network as an Instrument of US-NATO Intervention

Both the LIFG as an entity as well as its individual members are categorized by the UN Security Council as terrorists. According to the US Treasury: “The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group threatens global safety and stability through the use of violence and its ideological alliance with al Qaida and other brutal terrorist organizations” ([Treasury Designates UK-Based Individuals, Entities Financing Al Qaida -Affiliated Libyan Islamic Fighting Group - US Fed News Service](#), February 8, 2006).

Concepts are turned upside down. Both Washington and NATO, which claim to be waging a “War on Terrorism”, are supporting a “pro-democracy movement” integrated by members

of a terrorist organization.

In a cruel irony, Washington and the Atlantic Alliance are acting in defiance of their own anti-terrorist laws and regulations.

Moreover, support under “*Responsibility to Protect*” (R2P) to opposition forces integrated by terrorists is implemented pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1973, which is blatant violation of UNSC resolution 1267. The latter identifies the *Al-Jama’a al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah bi-Libya*, the Libya Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), as a terrorist organization.

In other words, the UN Security Council is in clear violation not only of the UN Charter but of its own resolutions. ([The Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee – 1267](#)).

Historical Origins of The Libya Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)

Amply documented, the “Islamic jihad” has been covertly supported by the CIA since the onslaught of the Soviet-Afghan war. (See Michel Chossudovsky, *America’s “War on Terrorism”*, Global Research, Montreal, 2005).

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), using Pakistan’s military Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), played a key role in training the Mujahideen. In turn, the CIA-sponsored guerrilla training was integrated with the teachings of Islam:

“In March 1985, President Reagan signed National Security Decision Directive 166,...[which] authorize[d] stepped-up covert military aid to the Mujahideen, and it made clear that the secret Afghan war had a new goal: to defeat Soviet troops in Afghanistan through covert action and encourage a Soviet withdrawal. The new covert U.S. assistance began with a dramatic increase in arms supplies — a steady rise to 65,000 tons annually by 1987... as well as a “ceaseless stream” of CIA and Pentagon specialists who traveled to the secret headquarters of Pakistan’s ISI on the main road near Rawalpindi, Pakistan. There the CIA specialists met with Pakistani intelligence officers to help plan operations for the Afghan rebels.” (Steve Coll, *Washington Post*, July 19, 1992)

The Libya Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), *Al-Jama’a al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah bi-Libya*, was founded in Afghanistan by Veteran Libyan Mujahideens of the Soviet-Afghan war.

From the outset in the early to mid-1990s, the Libya Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) performed the role of an “intelligence asset” on behalf of the CIA and Britain’s Secret Intelligence Service, MI6. Starting in 1995, the LIFG was actively involved in waging an Islamic Jihad directed against the secular Libyan regime, including a 1996 attempted assassination of Muammar Qadhafi.

“Former MI5 operative, David Shayler, revealed that while he was working on the Libya desk in the mid-1990s, **British secret service personnel collaborated with the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)**, which is connected to one of Osama bin Laden’s trusted lieutenants. LIFG is now considered a terrorist group in the United Kingdom.” (Gerald A. Pereira, [British Intelligence Worked with Al Qaeda to Kill Qaddafi](#), Global Research, March 25, 2011, emphasis added)

Guerrilla-style terrorist attacks, allegedly with the support of MI6, were routinely conducted

against Libyan government security forces, police and military personnel:

"Fierce clashes between [Qadhafi's] security forces and Islamist guerrillas erupted in Benghazi in September 1995, leaving dozens killed on both sides. After weeks of intense fighting, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) formally declared its existence in a communiqué calling Qadhafi's government "an apostate regime that has blasphemed against the faith of God Almighty" and declaring its overthrow to be "the foremost duty after faith in God." This and future LIFG communiqués were issued by Libyan Afghans who had been granted political asylum in Britain... The involvement of the British government in the LIFG campaign against Qadhafi remains the subject of immense controversy. LIFG's next big operation, a failed attempt to assassinate Qadhafi in February 1996 that killed several of his bodyguards, was later said to have been financed by British intelligence to the tune of \$160,000, according to ex-MI5 officer David Shayler. While Shayler's allegations have not been independently confirmed, it is clear that Britain allowed LIFG to develop a base of logistical support and fundraising on its soil. At any rate, financing by bin Laden appears to have been much more important. According to one report, LIFG received up to \$50,000 from the Saudi terrorist mastermind for each of its militants killed on the battlefield." [2005] (Quoted in Peter Dale Scott, [Who are the Libyan Freedom Fighters and Their Patrons?](#) Global Research, March 2011, emphasis added)

There are contradictory reports as to whether the LIFG is part of Al Qaeda or is acting as an independent jihadist entity. One report suggests that in 2007 the LIFG became "a subsidiary of al Qaeda, later assuming the name of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)." (See Webster Tarpley, [The CIA's Libya Rebels: The Same Terrorists who Killed US, NATO Troops in Iraq](#), Global Research, March 2011)

Continuity in US and Allied Intelligence Operations: Al Qaeda Operatives in Yugoslavia

Since the Soviet-Afghan war, the Al Qaeda network has served as an "intelligence asset" for the CIA. Confirmed by a 1997 US Senate document, Al Qaeda operatives were used by the Clinton administration to channel support to the Bosnian Muslim Army in the early 1990s. (See US Senate, Republican Party Committee, Clinton-Approved Iranian Arms Transfers Help Turn Bosnia into Militant Islamic Base, <http://rpc.senate.gov/releases/1997/iran.htm>, 1998)

Amply documented, The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which was supported by NATO, had developed extensive ties to the Islamic terror network. (US Senate, Republican Party Committee, The Clinton Administration Sets Course for NATO Intervention in Kosovo, 1998, <http://rpc.senate.gov/releases/1998/kosovo.htm>, See also Michel Chossudovsky, [America's "War on Terrorism"](#), Global Research, Montreal, 2005).

Al Qaeda in Yugoslavia served as an intelligence asset in the context of NATO's "humanitarian war". Terrorist organizations were covertly supported and funded. In 1999, the NATO intervention came to the rescue of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) which was integrated by Al Qaeda operatives. (US Republican Party Committee documents on Kosovo, *op cit*):

"One of the most disturbing aspects of the present [terrorism] crisis [1998 in Kosovo] is that it may have been triggered by our own inept foreign policy in

Bosnia and Kosovo. There, beyond all common sense, we find ourselves championing Muslim factions who draw support from the very Islamic fundamentalist terrorist groups who are our mortal enemies elsewhere” (Col. Harry G. Summers, “Bringing terrorists to justice,” Washington Times, December 8, 1998, emphasis added. The late Col. Harry G. Summers (USA-Ret.) (1932-1999) was a Distinguished Fellow at the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA.)

Is Libya’s *Operation Odyssey Dawn* part of a US-NATO pattern? Support an insurgency integrated by terrorists with a view to justifying intervention on humanitarian grounds to “save the lives of civilians”?

This was NATO’s justification for intervening in Bosnia and Kosovo. What lessons for Libya?

Former Head of Libyan Intelligence “Double Agent” Moussa Koussa Defects to the UK

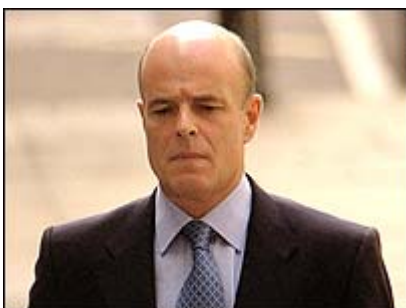
The LIFG was supported not only by the CIA and The British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) but also by factions within Libya’s intelligence agency, led by former intelligence head and Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa, who defected to the United Kingdom in late March 2011.

In October 2001, the head of Libyan Intelligence, Moussa Koussa, met Assistant U.S. Secretary of State William J. Burns. The Koussa-Burns encounter was of crucial importance. Present at the meetings were senior CIA and MI6 officials, including Sir John Scarlett, who at the time (October 2001) was head of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) of the Cabinet, reporting directly to Prime Minister Tony Blair. The JIC oversees, on behalf of the British government, the setting of intelligence priorities for MI6, MI5 and Defense Intelligence.

“Our Man in Tripoli” Moussa Koussa was to perform the role of a double agent. In secret meetings with Sir John Scarlett, it was “agreed that a British agent could operate in Tripoli”. ([Libya defector Moussa Koussa was an MI6 double agent](#), Sunday Express, April 3, 2011)



Former US Assistant Secretary of State William J. Burns



Sir John Scarlett, former head of Britain’s MI6

The development of the LIFG as a paramilitary jihadist movement as well its integration into anti-Qadhafi opposition forces bears a direct relationship to the central role played by double agent Moussa Koussa, who was instrumental in crafting close bilateral ties with the CIA and MI6.

In this regard, Moussa Koussa’s defection in late March has all the appearances of a

carefully staged operation. In an unusual twist, the deal was negotiated with the British government through the intermediation of a former leader of the Libya Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) who is now working with a London-based human rights foundation:

Noman Benotman, a friend of Libyan foreign minister Moussa Koussa, has told the BBC how **he helped organise his defection from the Gaddafi regime.**

Mr Benotman used to be a leader of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group but now works for the counter-extremism think tank the Quilliam Foundation.

He said he believed Mr Koussa would be negotiating with the British government and was very co-operative regarding intelligence.

The BBC's Gordon Corera added that the British government was in a dilemma over how to treat Mr Koussa because of his background as head of Libyan intelligence.

Mr Benotman told [BBC Breakfast](#) how he helped Koussa defect and how they used to be rivals. ([BBC Breakfast](#) April 1, 2011, emphasis added)

Ironically, Benotman was recruited as a Mujahideen to fight in the Soviet-Afghan war. He was one of the founders of the LIFG in Afghanistan. Focussing on issues of "counter-extremism", Benotman is currently a Senior Analyst at the Quilliam Foundation. His present responsibilities include reaching out "to current and former extremists and using Quilliam as a platform from which to share his inside knowledge of al-Qaeda and other Jihadist groups with a wider audience."

The CIA "Counterterrorism Program" in Libya

The bilateral ties established between the CIA-MI6 and Libyan intelligence in October 2001 provided Western intelligence agencies direct access and oversight within Libya, through its pro-US counterparts in Libya's intelligence agency led by Moussa Koussa. This agreement enabled Western intelligence to effectively infiltrate the Libyan Intelligence Agency which was under the helm of an MI6 Double Agent.

According to the US State Department in a 2008 report, the Libyan government "has continued to cooperate with the United States and the international community to combat terrorism and terrorist financing... U.S. officials hope to extend counterterrorism assistance to Libya during FY2010 and FY2011..." (See Christopher M. Blanchard, [Libya: Background and U.S. Relations](#), US Congress Research Service, July 16, 2010).

In 2009, Libyan Intelligence and the CIA established a joint counterterrorism program whereby Libyan intelligence officials would receive counterterrorism training by the CIA. This program was part of an agreement negotiated by Moussa Koussa with the CIA. It was also intended (in theory) to disband the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), with the support of CIA intelligence operatives. Bear in mind the ambiguity of CIA "counterterrorism": the launching of the LIFG in Afghanistan in the early to mid 1990s was part of a CIA project to create a Libyan arm of its Al Qaeda network.

Also in 2009, the imprisoned leaders of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) allegedly renounced their armed struggle waged against the Qadhafi regime in an agreement reached

with Libyan security officials. ([New jihad code threatens al Qaeda](#), CNN, November 2009)

What was the role of the US-Libya counterterrorism program from Washington's perspective?

Officially, it was to identify the names of LIFG members and disband the LIFG as an organization. In practice, the US-led operation in Libya, including the training of Libyan intelligence officials under CIA auspices, provided the Agency with a convenient smokescreen for conducting intelligence operations inside Libya.

The training program enabled the CIA to infiltrate and acquire trusted counterparts within Libyan intelligence.

The 2009 Counterterrorism program bears a direct relationship to the March 2011 Rebellion. It enabled the Agency, together with the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), to provide covert support to the LIFG in anticipation of the March 2011 armed insurrection.

The media suggests that the LIFG was disbanded (following the implementation of the CIA-sponsored counterterrorism program). There is no evidence to that effect. The LIFG remains on the (updated March 24, 2011) United Nations Security Council terror list:

QE.L.11.01. Name: LIBYAN ISLAMIC FIGHTING GROUP

Name (original script):

A.k.a.: LIFG F.k.a.: na Address: na Listed on: 6 Oct. 2001
(amended on 5 Mar. 2009)

Other information: Review pursuant to Security Council resolution 1822 (2008) was concluded on 21 Jun. 2010

(The LIFG Listing is on p. 70, <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/pdf/consolidatedlist.pdf>, Under the UNSC rules disbanded terrorist organizations are removed from the list in conformity with a delisting procedure. The LIFG has not been removed from the list). United Nations Security Council: [Consolidated List established and maintained by the 1267 Committee with respect to Al-Qaida, Usama bin Laden, and the Taliban and other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with them](#) (updated March 24, 2011).

Weapons and Covert Support to LIFG Rebels

There are indications that the CIA and MI6 continue to provide covert support to the Libya Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), which now constitutes the frontline of the armed insurrection against the Qadhafi regime.

Hakim al-Hasidi, the Libyan rebel leader, **has said jihadists who fought against allied troops in Iraq are on the front lines of the battle against Muammar Gaddafi's regime...**

Mr al-Hasidi insisted his fighters "are patriots and good Muslims, not terrorists," but added that the "members of al-Qaeda are also good Muslims and are fighting against the invader". (Libyan rebel commander

admits his fighters have al-Qaeda links, Daily Telegraph, March 25, 2011, italics added)

Abdul Hakim Al-Hasadi, is a leader of the LIFG who received military training in a guerrilla camp in Afghanistan. He is head of security of the opposition forces in one of the rebel held territories with some 1,000 men under his command. ([Libyan rebels at pains to distance themselves from extremists – The Globe and Mail](#), March 12, 2011)

The US-NATO coalition is arming the Jihadists. Weapons are being channelled to the LIFG from Saudi Arabia, which historically, since the outset of the Soviet-Afghan war, has covertly supported Al Qaeda. The Saudis are now providing the rebels, in liaison with Washington and Brussels, with anti-tank rockets and ground-to-air missiles.

Media Disinformation: Islamic Terrorists Join the Pro-Democracy Movement “in a Personal Capacity”

Admiral James Stavridis, NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, has tacitly acknowledged that “American intelligence had picked up “flickers” of terrorist activity among the rebel groups... Very alarming...” But we are not dealing with “flickers”. LIFG fighters constitute the backbone of the armed insurgency.

The Western media has also expressed its concern, while insisting that the Jihadists are “former” members of the LIFG who have joined the armed struggle “in a personal capacity” rather than as members of terrorist organization. According to Benotman in an interview with CNN:

“Dozens of former LIFG fighters have now joined rebel efforts to topple Gadhafi,” but he stressed that **they had done so in a personal capacity rather than organizing operations as a group.**

“Some Western counter-terrorism officials fret that a prolonged civil war in Libya could open up space for al Qaeda. Governments and NGOs have to be quick,” says Benotman, “in helping rebel-held areas develop education, health-care and the institutions of democracy.” (Paul Cruickshank and Tim Lister, [Libyan civil war: An opening for al Qaeda and jihad? CNN](#), March 23, 2011)

An Al Qaeda related terrorist organization integrates the Libya pro-democracy movement? Since when do terrorists act as individuals “in a personal capacity”?

Both the LIFG as an entity as well as its individual members are categorized by the UN Security Council as terrorists under UNSC resolution 1267. ([The Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee – 1267](#))

“Our Man in Tripoli”

Moussa Koussa was “Our Man in Tripoli”. The circumstances of his defection as well as the history of his collaboration with the CIA and MI6, suggest that for the last ten years, he has been serving US and Allied interests, including the planning of the “pro-democracy” armed insurrection in Eastern Libya.



Former head of Libyan Intelligence Moussa Koussa

Former head of Libyan intelligence Moussa Koussa played a central role in channelling covert support to the LIFG on behalf of his Western intelligence counterparts. Former CIA director George Tenet, while not explicitly referring to “Our Man in Tripoli”, acknowledges in his 2007 autobiography that “the easing of tensions with Libya [was] one of the major successes of his tenure, as it led to **cooperation between the two spy services against al-Qaeda.**” (quoted in [Intelligence Partnership between Qadhafi and the CIA on counter-terrorism](#), *op cit*)

There should be no doubt: NATO and the LIFG are bed-fellows. The Western military alliance is supporting a rebellion integrated by Islamic terrorists, in the name of the “war on terrorism”.

Who are the terrorists? In a bitter twist, while the Islamic jihad is featured by the US Administration as “a threat to Western civilization”, these same Islamic organizations including the Libya Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) constitute a key instrument of US military-intelligence operations in Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, not to mention the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union.

Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (Emeritus) at the University of Ottawa and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal. He is the author of The Globalization of Poverty and The New World Order (2003) and America's "War on Terrorism" (2005). He is also a contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica. His writings have been published in more than twenty languages.

[America's "War on Terrorism"](#)



by Michel
Chossudovsky
[also available in pdf format](#)

Related Articles



[All Out War on Libya, Surge in the Price of Crude Oil...](#)

“Humanitarian Wars are Good for Business”.... Speculators Applaud....

– by Michel Chossudovsky – 2011-03-18

.



[Insurrection and Military Intervention: The US-NATO Attempted Coup d'Etat in Libya?](#)

– by Prof Michel Chossudovsky – 2011-03-07

US and NATO military advisers and special forces are already on the ground.



The original source of this article is Global Research

Copyright © [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#), Global Research, 2011

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

About the author:

Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa, Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal, Editor of Global Research. He has taught as visiting professor in Western Europe, Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. He has served as economic adviser to governments of developing countries and has acted as a consultant for several international organizations. He is the author of 13 books. He is a contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica. His writings have been published in more than twenty languages. In 2014, he was awarded the Gold Medal for Merit of the Republic of Serbia for his writings on NATO's war of aggression against Yugoslavia. He can be reached at crgeditor@yahoo.com

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca